

吃苦

# EATING BITTERNESS

384 Broadway  
New York, NY 10013

October 14, 2017 - October 27, 2017  
Co-curated by Luke Cheng and Simon Wu

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LULU MENG  
SIMON WU

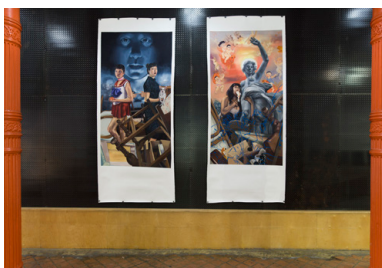
## DANNI LIN

These scroll paintings are my way of denying the invisibility and confusion—sometimes comical, often alienating—that comes with growing up in the United States without pre-established cultural relevancy or experience. Making works in oil paint, I co-opt the most traditional western masterpiece materials, while at the same time accessing low culture mass-consumer imagery by making works on paper and referencing the long tradition of Chinese propaganda posters. “Carp Pox” is a self portrait that fails to identify succinctly, culturally, ethnically, or sexually. My work builds an imagined history: piecemeal and patchwork; scrounged up from various cultural influences to create a defining iconography for the ‘mixed race’.



### 1. *Cho Chang in Chinatown* (2017)

Oil paint on paper  
48" x 84"



### 2. *Carp Pox* (2017) and *Hoarding in a Time of Existential Crisis* (2017)

Oil paint on paper  
51" x 120"

**JOCELYN CHUANG**

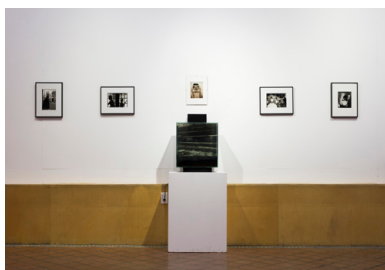
Luck is present across all cultures—through it, we project our hope onto objects and worship them on pedestals. Yet, readings of luck are subjective.

A tank full of fish, becomes a charm for prosperity with fish (yú 魚) mirroring surplus (yú 餘).

A brother born in 2000, becomes a double beacon for success as a millennial dragon.

His name Ethan, translates into Doctor (yīshēng) in Chinese—a sign for an auspicious profession.

Growing up Asian-American, I drifted between two planes of meaning, with the choice to ascribe things as happenstance or to equate it with luck and power.



**3. *Brother Among Yu* (2017)**

Set of five gelatin silver prints and fishtank  
11" x 14"

**TENAYA IZU**

In these works, I was thinking about how we organize our chosen and given communities—the labor and love given, lines drawn, severing of ties, aspirations and wishes, external judgements, conflation of associations etc: the rules of belonging. Thinking about all the folks intimate and tangential who've intentionally or unwittingly built the world around me, who therefore have come to make up my community, even if they are unaware. We are complex and disparate, yet bound together by history, proximity, policy, loneliness, compassion. We create talismans of protection, collectively laboring to will something otherwise improbable to happen. We choose sides sweetly, bitterly.



**4. *Biker Regalia* (2017)**

Embroidered acrylic fleece bathrobe, satin and linen, wooden stand  
10" x 55" x 64"



**5. *Little Vessel; or, leaving home and hoping to make everyone proud* (2017)**

Personal fabric scraps, 1000 pins, twin mattress, gift boat  
75" x 38" x 12"

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### 6. *Mask 5* (2016)

Fabric

Accompanied by Guardian article by Julia Carrie Wong: "'Scapegoated?' The police killing that left Asian Americans angry—and divided"  
23" x 12"

## SYDNEY KING

The term "generation loss" refers to the loss of quality that occurs after making subsequent copies of an image or recording. I wanted to observe this phenomenon physically, through the molding and re-casting of ginger. Ginger was my growing-up food—a gnarly, difficult root prevalent in many Japanese dishes. My Japanese side is essentially American. My mother was born in Los Angeles; her mother in Riverside; her mother in Hawai'i. We have different words for things, like soy sauce, money, and belly button (shoyu, okane, oheso), but we never spoke Japanese at home. My mother has a rare variant of foot shape where her second toes are longer than her first toes. When she was young, she was told that this meant she'd be wealthier than her parents. My father's toes are more common—the first metatarsal is longer than the second. I possess one of each.



### 7. *Generation Loss* (2017)

Archival pigment print, edition 1/3  
40" x 50"

## SERENA MADRIGAL GELB

After my mom passed away in 2013 I became increasingly interested in looking at old and new family photographs. In particular I have found hundreds of black and white snaps of my mom and her family spanning the early 1900s through the late 70s. These precious relics capture the otherness and glamor of her side of the family. As she got older, my mom began to avoid cameras, and as a result I have fewer more recent photos of her. However, they are equally fascinating, more because of their slight awkwardness and tension. As I painted, I drew from both collections to explore the connections and differences between her old and new lives.



### 8. *Mom* (2017)

Six paintings, oil and acrylic on cardboard  
24" x 35", 20" x 35", 35" x 20", 34" x 35", 35" x 24", 24" x 35"

**EMILY MADRIGAL**

The sculptures are my own body. Grey plaster filled the space in the mold that once enclosed my birthmarks, nipples, and freckled knee. The sculptures have no color and no face. They are me, but appear identity-less.

The photographs are the backs of images in my immediate family's photo albums and the front cover of one of these albums.

Family photo albums as an index of memories from which I can choose and use to complete my forgotten (Filipino) heritage.

Molds of my body as the exact impression of my individual shape that emerges looking nothing like me.



**9. *Crystal Archival Pink Time Stamp* (2017)**

Sculptures: plaster

Photographs: archival inkjet print; 40" x 60"

Dimensions variable

**LULU MENG**

"When Heaven lays a grand mission to a man, it will first distress him mentally and exhaust him physically. It will cause him to suffer from hunger and poverty, and subvert every bit of his effort. With which, it is to stimulate his ambition, forge his endurance, and remedy his defects to enhance the ability" — Mencius

These words by Mencius are mandatory to memorize in school. It deeply influences how people cope with difficulty in life. Only if one bears the great weight on the shoulder will one succeed.

My parents are rather open-minded. Yet, it is challenging to remove myself from the culture and history I came from.



**10. *Virtue and Reward* (2017)**

Inkjet print, rocks, ribbon, sand bags

Photograph, 35 x35 in

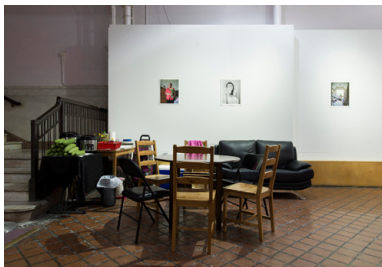
**LUKE CHENG**

When my parents first moved to the States, they worked in restaurants serving a foreign, syrupy version of their native cuisine. At home, they'd prepare the food they grew up with, including an unpleasantly bitter squash called *ku gua* (bitter melon). Their rule was that I always had to try a little, even if I didn't like it. Over the years, the bitterness became a friend to me, and I would continue to eat it into adulthood: in my studies, in Princeton's WASP-dominated social scene, and as a closeted young man afraid to burden my family. We found strength through our ability to *chi ku*, but occasionally, we'd be reminded that the bitterness we swallowed never quite disappeared.



**11. *Do not eat. For guests only* (2017)**

Overflowing bowl of White Rabbit Creamy Candy, replenished as needed  
8" x 8" x 8"



**12. *Eating Bitterness* (2017)**

Participatory performance in which the artist serves bitter Chinese foods to the public.



**13. *Waipo on July 4th in a new red shirt* (2016)**

Archival pigment print  
16" x 20"



**14. *Selina, age 13* (2012)**

Archival pigment print  
16" x 20"

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### 15. *Julia in the master bedroom closet* (2012)

Archival pigment print

16" x 20"

## SIMON WU

These sculptures are about my mother. Her name is Mya. She came to America with my father and me in 1995. She taught me to be frugal. I think frugality is a mindset that engrains itself in immigrant communities. It is a frugality that manifests emotionally as well as economically—stigma around mental illness is still particularly prevalent in East Asian cultures. These sculptures are made from discarded objects that I picked up in the streets of Chinatown. They are an attempt to give form to emotional frugality.



### 16. *Value Plus x3* (2017)

Set of three sculptures.

Styrofoam fish boxes, styrofoam fish lids, plastic bag, wood sticks, IKEA wagon, license plate, Totoro doll, puffy stickers, metal earrings, wooden sticks., transparency sheets, pear cozies.

Dimensions variable.

Special thanks to Chashama and THINK!CHINATOWN, as well as Nom Wah, Pearl River Mart, and Tsingtao Brewery.