



Candice Lin

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A Hard White Body,
a Porous Slip



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A HARD WHITE BODY,



About the Artist

Candice Lin's work engages notions of gender, race, and sexuality, drawing from post/de-colonialism, citizen science, anthropology, and feminist and queer theory. She has presented solo exhibitions at Portikus, Frankfurt (2018); Bétonsalon, Paris (2017); Gasworks, London (2016); and Commonwealth & Council, Los Angeles (2016). She has also exhibited widely in recent group exhibitions at Moderna Museet, Stockholm; New Museum, New York; HANGAR, Lisbon; Sculpture Center, New York; and Galeria Fortes Vilaça, Sao Paulo. A recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award (2017), Lin recently completed residencies at Davidoff Art Initiative, Dominican Republic (2018), Centre les Récollets, Paris (2017) and Headlands Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2016). Lin received her MFA in New Genres at the San Francisco Art Institute in 2004 and her double BA in Visual Arts and Art Semiotics at Brown University in 2001. Lin is Assistant Professor of Art at UCLA.



Logan Center Gallery
Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts
915 E 60th St
Chicago IL 60637

Tues - Sat
9am - 9pm
Sun
11am - 9pm
Mon
Closed

logancenter
exhibitions
@uchicago.edu

773.
834.8377

f @
LoganCenter Exhibitions

Exhibitions Curator
Yesomi Umolu

Assistant Curator
Katja Rivera

Exhibitions Coordinator
Alyssa Brubaker

Copy Editor
Andrew Yale

Designer
Some All None

Image Credits

Candice Lin: *A Hard White Body, a Porous Slip* 2018

In-progress installation view in the Logan Center Gallery. Photos by Robert Chase Heishman.

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Candice Lin: A Hard White Body, a Porous Slip is presented by Logan Center Exhibitions and curated by Yesomi Umolu, Exhibitions Curator with Katja Rivera, Assistant Curator and Alyssa Brubaker, Exhibitions Coordinator.

This exhibition is made possible by support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Reva and David Logan Foundation, and friends of the Logan Center.

Candice Lin: A Hard White Body, a Porous Slip is produced in collaboration with Bétonsalon - Centre d'art et de recherche & Villa Vassiliev and Portikus, Frankfurt/Main with contribution from Temporary Gallery, Cologne.

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Candice Lin — A Hard White Body, a Porous Slip



Opening Reception & Artist's Tour

Tuesday September 25

Logan Center Gallery

6:00 pm

maps, plant remnants, and herbal teas are submerged and float in the pool, referencing the life and often unrecognized work of Baret and Merian. The intersectional subjectivities and affinities of Baldwin, Baret, and Merian are brought to bear on the porcelain, ultimately challenging the material's valency as a signifier for purity in all of its machinations. Lin's recuperation of personal histories in her installation questions the authority of the archive, which often functions in the absence of marginal voices. Furthermore, her deep interrogation of material histories surfaces the oft troubled narratives surrounding human exploitation and the resignification of elements of the natural world within the colonial imagination.

A newly commissioned installation in an adjacent gallery references the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition through wall-sized illustrations of the fairgrounds scorched by a fire one year after its closing, placed alongside an image of a desiccated sugar cane field, a diagram of the sugar refining process, and the vaporized scent of burnt sugar and plastic. Intended to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Americas in 1492, the Chicago Exposition took place across the South Side in areas that are in close proximity to the Logan Center, including the Midway Plaisance and Jackson Park. Lin connects the rhetoric of industrial progress espoused at the Exposition—its racialized language and layout—with western modernity's reliance on violence and the exploitation of bodies, labor, and natural resources. The presence of sugar in the installation recalls the history of plantations across the Americas, which exploited land and enslaved populations in order

to harvest "exotic" goods and commodities for the European market. The smell of burning that fills our olfactory nerves evokes the practice in plantations across the Caribbean of burning the bones of indentured laborers into bone charcoal and using it in the sugar refining process. Lin thereby foregrounds the perversities of the Orientalist palette, in which the taste for "exotic" goods extends to the consumption of human remains.

Referencing the preoccupation with hygiene and sewage management during the Exposition, a low-tech circulatory system intermittently boils and distills urine—collected from the artist and the Logan Center's staff—and moves it into the main exhibition space where it mingles with the milky pool of liquified porcelain. Through this action, Lin implicates her own body and those of her contributors in the messy histories of power and exploitation. The strata of bodies and lives—whether human or nonhuman—that are present in this exhibition extends to visitors, whose own bodies and senses are undoubtedly activated through the installation's various sensory conditions. In this way, *A Hard White Body, a Porous Slip* forces an enmeshment of fragmentary histories with contemporary realities, stressing the continued embodiment of racialized, gendered, and classist narratives in our immediate environments and daily lives.

— Yesomi Umolu,
Logan Center Exhibitions Curator

RELATED PROGRAMMING

Opening Reception and Artist's Tour

Tuesday September 25
6:00pm

Logan Center Gallery

Lin will give an artist's tour of the exhibition at 6:30pm

In Conversation: A Hard White Body

Thursday October 11
6:00pm

Logan Center Terrace Seminar Room

Join us for a conversation on Candice Lin's project *A Hard White Body* and her exhibition at the Logan Center with **Lotte Arndt**, curator and writer, **Rizvana Bradley**, Assistant Professor of Film Studies and African American Studies at Yale University, and **C. Riley Snorton**, Professor of English and Gender and Sexuality Studies at University of Chicago.

Gallery Talk with Nance Klehm

Thursday October 18
6:00pm

Logan Center Gallery

Artist and social ecologist **Nance Klehm** will give a gallery talk centered on processes of distillation and waste management.

All events are free and open to the public

A Hard White Body, a Porous Slip

Los Angeles-based artist Candice Lin creates sculptural environments that breathe, seep, ferment, and decay. Working with an arsenal of sculptural forms that include finely crafted objects, natural compounds, and organisms such as plants, insects, and bacteria, Lin interrogates the ways in which histories of power and marginality are inscribed into bodies and into the natural world.

The artist's first solo exhibition in Chicago, *A Hard White Body, a Porous Slip* presents a fragile sculptural landscape composed of porcelain fragments submerged in liquid porcelain casting slip. Rotting plant material and other debris soak in the shallow pool, coloring the white liquid and

dirtying the ceramic surfaces. Alongside archival documents, organic material, and sculptural objects, the immersive installation also includes a video projected above the pool. Lin's installation extends the artist's ongoing exploration of material and nonhuman histories alongside the biographies of three historical figures: novelist James Baldwin, botanist and first woman to circumnavigate the globe Jeanne Baret, and naturalist Maria Sibylla Merian. Each of these protagonists negotiated complex power relations vis-à-vis normative constructions of race, gender, and sexuality throughout their lifetime. Material artifacts, organic matter and audio-visual material in the exhibition speak to their diverging and intersecting biographies as well as the instrumentalization of nonhuman agents in racialized, gendered, and classist narratives.

Lin's use of porcelain in the exhibition stems from her interest in tracing the status of porcelain in western society, where since the sixteenth century it has existed as an object of desire. This imported material came to represent notions of purity and refinement, owing to the "whiteness" of its surface and imperviousness to staining. This think-

ing can be mapped onto the discourses of race and identity prevalent during the global spread of European colonialism, which saw "whiteness" as synonymous with racial and cultural superiority. Curiously, given porcelain was an imported material originating from China, such notions existed concurrently with broader societal anxieties around preserving the purity of western society and safeguarding it against "foreign" influence. Lin's installation subjects the "hard white body" of porcelain to processes of degradation, staining, and contamination to surface these contradictions and to undermine the Orientalist logic around this material.

Lin's complication of porcelain's material stability is further accentuated by the fragments that fill the pool of porcelain casting slip, which are in fact sculptural remnants of a bedroom inspired by Baret's ship cabin as well as Baldwin's famed novel *Giovanni's Room*. Both Baret and Baldwin lived out identities that transgressed societal norms insofar as Baret cross-dressed as the male valet while travelling with her lover and employer Philibert Commerson, and Baldwin was a queer Black novelist. Research documents, a suitcase,



A POROUS SLIP