



CHRISTINE WANG

Devotional Art for Your Home

October 15–November 12, 2016

Night Gallery is pleased to present *Devotional Art for Your Home*, an exhibition of new work by Los Angeles-based artist Christine Wang. This will be her second solo exhibition at Night Gallery.

Alongside her artistic practice, Wang has worked for four years as a volunteer organizer against the expansion of jails and prisons in California. The concerns and ideals driving these two separate pursuits often dovetail, and Wang's work in *Devotional Art for Your Home* addresses the complexities surrounding the seemingly Sisyphean task of organizing a grassroots resistance to the prison industrial complex.

For this exhibition, Wang's oil and gold leaf paintings on panel acknowledge the personal and interpersonal levels of organizing. Referencing specific European religious paintings from the 15th century, Wang presents the absurdity of an individual attempting to engage such institutional behemoths as Western religious painting, the Catholic Church, or the systemic racism of the U.S. criminal justice system, all while juggling relationship dynamics and the mundane, practical demands of daily life.

Through a realistic, labor-intensive mode of painting Wang emphasizes her sincere belief in the messages she illustrates. Realism is not employed for the sake of illusion— though there are moments of irony in these works, there is no ironic distance. Drawing parallels between, as she puts it, “bad Catholics and stupid painting”, Wang points to the suspension of disbelief in the individual's means to counter such a massive, entrenched system. Avoiding incredulity directed towards painting's ability to deliver message, or towards grassroots organizing, requires repetitive rituals of belief.

Candles in the style of votive prayer candles dot the floor of the gallery beneath the paintings. *Candles that smell like Skid Row* react directly to the prodigious population of people living without homes in Los Angeles County. A count in May of this year by the L.A. Homeless Services Authority reached nearly 47,000 people. (1)

Absorbing such sobering statistics, which are linked causally and empirically to massive, predatory systems, and sustaining the belief that such systems can be countered, requires a strong sense of both humor and empathy. It is on the interpersonal level that we develop our sense of empathy in the first place, and in the same way that violence enacted in private is performing a larger, systemic, public violence, Wang suggests in this exhibition that the personal and emotional dimensions of organizing are invaluable to undertaking it.

(1) Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA).
[<https://documents.lahsa.org/Planning/homelesscount/2016/factsheet/2016-HC-Results.pdf>]

Christine Wang (b. 1985 Washington, DC) received her M.F.A. from UCLA in 2013, her B.F.A. from Cooper Union in 2008, and studied mural painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. Wang has had solo exhibitions at Night Gallery in Los Angeles, and Galerie Nagel Draxler in Cologne. She has also exhibited at Alter Space, San Francisco; Produce Model, Chicago; and Control Room and 356 Mission in Los Angeles. Wang has completed residencies at Skowhegan, Studio LLC Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, and Chashama North. She lives and works in Los Angeles.