

# HAWKINS HQ

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## **Press Release:**

Yan Wen Chang

*Jillian*

On view: January 11 - February 23, 2025.

Opening Reception: Saturday. January 11th, 6 - 9 PM.

**Atlanta, Georgia** — Hawkins Headquarters is pleased to present its first solo exhibition of new paintings by Yan Wen Chang at the gallery.

Yan Wen Chang employs painting and drawing to pinpoint intense psychological facets of the American Dream influenced by her own immigration to Toronto alone at 17. Chang's fascinations lie in the many dualities that make up her version of this dream; the optimism, the disillusionment, the pride, the desperation, the truths, and the fallacies. Chang's paintings rely on these contradictions, parsing the many factors that make up her experience of immigration within the complex matrix of North American culture.

*Jillian* delves into the complex psychological conditions of the 'self' foregrounding how divergent positions of being can coexist simultaneously within it at any given time. The title of the exhibition alludes to Chang's birth name 'Gillian'. By creating a fictional persona 'Jillian', Chang further creates distance and tension between identities to reposition the self as unfixed and defined beyond the autobiographical to include autofiction and abstraction.

Chang develops a compelling and iconic painting language in her practice where her portrait of self, car, five-pointed star, bouquet of roses, text and question mark recur. In *Jillian*, Chang depicts the doppelgänger of her traditional depictions of her self in mirror reflections and in scenarios of confrontation with her "twin". These encounters of selves occur in a car or elevator which are settings representative of the passage of time with no destination. In other works, Chang depicts the double with her iconic use of the question mark where the question mark's inverse twin placed next to its original coexist perfectly in the shape of a heart.

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To Chang, the double is symbolic of the binary forces that drive the American Dream — one defined to her as an intense desire that is hopeful and defiant, and its diametric a severe reality that is hopeless and desperate. She explores these conditions at their best, coexisting together in harmony, but also at their absolute intensity where they confront each other with heightened opposition.

*Jillian* is Chang's first solo exhibition in Atlanta and is the first of a two-part presentation of work exploring the double. The second presentation entitled *Gillian* will be exhibited in fall 2025 at Susan Hobbs Gallery in Toronto.

## **Bio:**

*Yan Wen Chang (b.1993) holds a MFA from the School of Fine Art and Music at the University of Guelph and a BFA from the Ontario College of Art and Design University in Canada. Her recent solo and two-person exhibitions include A.D. NYC, New York (2024); Weatherproof, Chicago (2024); and Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto, ON (2023). Her exhibitions in New York and Chicago were both featured in Artforum's 'Must See' lists in 2024. Chang's recent international art fair presentations include NADA Miami (2024); Atlanta Art Fair (2024), and Plural Contemporary Art Fair, Montreal (2024). Chang is represented by Susan Hobbs Gallery in Toronto where she will be presenting her second solo exhibition in fall 2025. Chang currently works and lives in Guelph, Canada.*

The artist acknowledges the support from the Ontario Arts Council and the Government of Ontario with this exhibition.



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