

Subject: EM: [Sprague Gallery] "Cayman Chen – Recent Collections" opens today and runs through December 12

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From: Inform

From: Visual Arts at HMC

Cayman Chen
Recent Collections

November 29-December 12, 2022

Sprague Gallery



We Are What We Eat, 2022. 5C Student Fashion Show, the Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College, February 25, 2022. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Sprague Gallery is pleased to announce *Cayman Chen – Recent Collections*, an exhibition of ready-to-wear by Cayman Chen (CMC '25, Psychology and Art). The exhibition presents two of the designer's latest collections: *We Are What We Eat* (2022) and *Fallen Leaves* (2022).

Both collections are Chen's response to fast fashion of a 52-season cycle; the consumerist culture formed by the media and the industry; and their social and environmental consequences, such as cheap, hazardous labor, waste, and pollution. The main materials in her work are found and vintage garments and fabric scraps. The method of production is slow hand making. And the design suggests a merge and coexistence of what the designer considers are in opposition to each other: in *We Are What We Eat*, human anatomy and the nonhuman leftover from today's fashion (e.g., fabric scraps, tags, and receipts); and in *Fallen Leaves*, human and nature, as well as innovation and tradition. Behind every form and method are Chen's doubts about the still present ghost of the modern invention and industrialization – human and innovation or "solutions" she criticizes in juxtaposition to nature and tradition or heritage in her statement are ones which are modern and haunt our habits to this day – and questions of sustainability and ethics.

We Are What We Eat, made in Winter 2021/2022 and first showcased in the 5C Fashion Show at The Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College on February 25, 2022, upcycles vintage garments with fabric scraps, found tags, and what Chen calls "faux receipts" that list her handwritten commentary and prices. Skeletal structures in partial exposure and transparency are merged and made muscular or extensive with consequences of material possession and overconsumption. *Fallen Leaves*, newly finished in Fall 2022, is a result of the designer's summer research in Singapore and Japan. Chen, perhaps haunted by the modern herself, began her trip searching for new technologies and materials for sustainability – "solutions" to solve all problems – and returned instead with more vintage pieces and fabric scraps including those from obi and kimono, thoughts on tradition or heritage of natural materials and slow production, and pace of the past. The contemporary garments she builds with the scraps and method of the past become sites of interaction between the old and the new and between hard edges and organic shapes.

Chen's statements for both collections are available for the viewers. The unsaid might be that her growing work, now furthered by the element of time, is heading toward postmodern compossibility and change.

Cayman Chen – Recent Collections opens on November 29 and continues through December 12, 2022. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 8AM to 5PM. The exhibition is open to the public. The Covid-19 guidelines will be updated as new information becomes available.

The exhibition is curated by arts director Julia Hong of the HMC Department of Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts.

Upcoming Exhibitions

[Vivian Monteiro](#)

January 23-February 10, 2023
Sprague Gallery

[Meghna Pamula](#)

February 21-March 10, 2023
Sprague Gallery

[E. Bacon Gershman](#)

March 28-April 14, 2023
Sprague Gallery

[HMC Department of Mathematics](#)

April 24-May 11, 2023

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