

Yu-Wen Wu
Re/Generation

October 5 - November 9, 2024

Artist Talk Moderated by Ruth Erickson, ICA/Boston Chief Curator
Friday, October 18 from 6:30 - 7:30 pm

(Brookline, MA – September 10, 2024) Praise Shadows is honored to present *Re/Generation*, the second solo exhibition at the gallery by Boston-based artist Yu-Wen Wu. Rooted in the artist's long standing observation of the natural world and its transformative power in storytelling, this body of work is both a tribute and a pivot from her recent celebrated exhibitions, including the Foster Prize at the ICA/Boston. Premiering in this show are rock sculptures, collage, and iterations of her beloved tea leaf installations.

An Artist Talk moderated by Ruth Erickson, Barbara Lee Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, ICA/Boston, will take place on Friday, October 18 from 6:30-7:30 pm. [Register here](#). Additionally, a new artist book titled *Under the Same Moon* will be available in the gallery's Art Shop. The publication features essays by curators Sarah Laursen (Harvard Art Museums), Gabrielle Niu (Gardner Museum), Anni A. Pullagura (Yale Center for British Art, National Gallery of Art and ICA Boston), Yutong Shi (MFA Boston) and Professor Ellie Choi (Brown University). Printed in both English and Traditional Chinese, the book was edited by Yutong Shi, designed by Open Rehearsal, Mary Y. Yang and Jialun Wang.

The land, trees, water, sky, and generations are the conceptual elements that inform the artworks in *Re/Generation*. Their symbiotic relationships within the natural world is a throughline in Wu's practice. *Artifacts*, a series of small-scale rock sculptures inspired by Chinese scholar's rocks situate the viewer by establishing a foundation of geography, place, time, and memory. As a child in Taiwan, Wu collected rocks while on walks with her grandparents, who created a shelf for her to place the found rocks. These ordinary materials became treasures imbued with significance for the artist, who has continued to collect rocks that capture her imagination. In the exhibition, a shelf will hold a group of small rocks set on ceramic bases. Another display in the gallery will feature larger rock sculptures on fitted wood bases, each unit a portal for contemplation, evoking a microcosm of the universe.

Reconsiderations of materials and reinterpretations of past work are central to Wu's approaches to this show. In one major example, the artist is debuting *Recitations*, a wall-based installation inspired by her beloved *Intentions* series made from Taiwanese tea, gold, and red thread. The largest version of *Intentions* was presented in a major floor to ceiling installation at the ICA/Boston, a section of which is now in the museum's permanent collection. *Recitations* exemplifies Wu's process of artistic iteration. In this new work, a strand of orbs in various dimensions made from Taiwanese tea is strung from three points on the wall. The lower portions of this strand finish as gentle spirals on a low pedestal. The orbs are in various hues of gold finish, while others are unadorned with gold and depicted in its true tea color.

One entire wall of the gallery will be dedicated to Wu's expansive drawing and journaling practices. Each work emphasizes aspects, or vignettes, of the natural world. Cumulatively, they serve as an illustrative narration by the artist, reminding us to celebrate, nurture and embrace the present and future of our environment. On one end of the wall, germinating yam plants are depicted. Roasted yams are a common and inexpensive food staple in Taiwan, sold as street treats with a sweet, memorable scent. In depicting the yam's roots and germinating plants, the promise of a future is implied. Also on this wall is *From Rocks*

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to *Clouds*, a new triptych collage depicting earth, living organisms, the sea and the sky. Installed alongside this are two works using shattered porcelain, sumi ink on rice paper, evocative of the constellations in the night sky.

A new format of Wu's well-known series, *Acculturation*, will be presented for the first time. Most recently, *Acculturation* was exhibited at the ICA/Boston, prominently installed on an entire wall. Using Taiwanese tea leaves combined with stems and leaves from local plants, Wu gilds these stems and applies each individually to the wall. In earlier presentations, *Acculturation* was displayed as a grid to give each stem individual notice; in *Re/Generation*, the layout is fluid, organic. Titled *Acculturation: Flow*, 49 stems float around one another in a shadow box, as if swirling delicately with the wind. The change of format from grid to organic is subtle, yet it represents a relinquishing to nature's whims and powers.

Wu addresses "regeneration" as a multifaceted construct. The shifts in format and presentation demonstrate change and growth within the artistic practice, while acknowledging the foundational significance of materials and ideas. In *Re/Generation*, the natural world is Wu's muse. Through materials collected and created, through drawings and observations, she shares its story.

About the artist

Yu-Wen Wu is an interdisciplinary artist living and working in Boston. Born in Taipei, Taiwan, Wu's subjectivity as an immigrant is central to her artwork. At the crossroads of art, science, politics and social issues, her wide range of projects include large-scale drawings, site-specific video installations, and community engaged practices. Wu is a current artist-in-residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. She was a 2023 recipient of the James and Audrey Foster Prize at the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, and a 2021 recipient of the Mass Cultural Council Artist Fellowship. Her work was recently on view at Taipei Dangdai and James Cohan Gallery, New York.

She has received many prominent public art commissions, including *Lantern Stories* (2020 and 2022) commissioned by the Greenway Conservancy, the Poetry of Reason at Tufts University, and a 2023 work made possible through Now + There and Boston's Transformative Art Grant, on view at Boston City Hall. Institutional collections include Boston Public Library, Harvard Art Museums, ICA/Boston, MIT List Visual Art Center, Princeton University Art Museum. Her shows have been featured and reviewed in New York Magazine, Boston Globe, Artnet News, BOMB Magazine, and Bloomberg Businessweek, among others.

About Praise Shadows Art Gallery

Praise Shadows Art Gallery is a contemporary art program based in the Boston area with a focus on exceptional artists working in all artistic disciplines. Our worldview is informed by the notion that the artworld's untapped and unrecognized potential is worth cultivating, supporting, and championing. Since our founding in December 2020, the gallery has placed artworks by our artists in esteemed public collections, and our exhibitions have been covered widely in major international media outlets. Our work is grounded by partnering closely with artists to develop opportunities in traditional and emerging models of creativity and entrepreneurship—exhibitions, commissions, brand partnerships, new technologies, and original concepts that no one has ever tried before. www.praiseshadows.com

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