



Jennifer Wen Ma (b. 1973, Beijing) moved to the United States in 1986 and graduated with an MFA in 1999 from the Pratt Institute. Her practice draws together elements and cultural references in sensitive and unexpected ways, bridging such diverse media as installation, drawing, video, public art, design, performance, and theater. Trained as an oil painter, Ma was one of seven members of the core creative team for the 2008 Beijing Olympics and received an Emmy Award for their broadcast. Since then, she has increasingly delved into the material and philosophical qualities of the Chinese ink tradition.

Her work has been shown around the world, including the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; and the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Her opera *Paradise Interrupted* was performed at Spoleto Festival USA in 2015, among other locations around the globe.

Learn more about her at www.littlemeat.net

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CORRELATING EVENTS

All events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

OPENING RECEPTION

Thursday, May 16, 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

HALSEY TALKS: UTOPIAS

Tuesday, June 11, 6:30 PM

FAMILY DAY!

Saturday, June 15, 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Open to all Halsey Institute members

LUNCHEON IN THE GARDEN: LAND ISSUES

Saturday, June 22, 12:00 – 1:00 PM
Bring a bag lunch and discuss land issues facing the Charleston region

CURATOR-LED EXHIBITION TOUR FOR MEMBERS

Thursday, June 27, 6:00 PM
Open to all Halsey Institute members

LUNCHEON IN THE GARDEN: RE-ENTRY INTO SOCIETY AFTER INCARCERATION

Saturday, June 29, 12:00 – 1:00 PM
Bring a bag lunch and discuss the issue of re-entry into society after incarceration

LUNCHEON IN THE GARDEN: FOOD JUSTICE

Saturday, July 6, 12:00 – 1:00 PM
Bring a bag lunch to discuss the issue of food justice in the Charleston region

LOCATION:

College of Charleston
161 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC 29401
halsey.cofc.edu

PARKING:

Available in the St. Philip St. and George St. garages

GALLERY HOURS:

Monday – Saturday, 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Open until 7:00 PM on Thursdays. During exhibitions, or by appointment.
Open on Sundays during Piccolo Spoleto 2019 (May 24 - June 9)
Free and open to all

CONTACT:

843.953.4422 or halsey@cofc.edu

BLOG:

Learn more about the exhibition at halsey.cofc.edu/learn

GUIDED GROUP TOURS BY APPOINTMENT:

Free tours are led by knowledgeable and experienced guides and can be adapted to various time lengths, group sizes, and ages. Contact halseytours@cofc.edu or call 843.953.5652 to schedule.

MISSION:

The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art at the College of Charleston School of the Arts provides a multidisciplinary laboratory for the production, presentation, interpretation, and dissemination of ideas by innovative visual artists from around the world. As a non-collecting museum, we create meaningful interactions between adventurous artists and diverse communities within a context that emphasizes the historical, social, and cultural importance of the art of our time.

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Jennifer Wen Ma

Cry Joy Park—Gardens of Dark and Light

May 17 – July 6, 2019



The painting surrounds a flower portal, which provides both passage between the *Dark Garden* and the light-filled installation that lies beyond. Evoking a botanical birth canal, the portal forces viewers to negotiate their way through the space, physically encountering the paper that lines the edge of the portal. Upon passing through, viewers find themselves in a garden with similar motifs; yet this one is shockingly bright and much more expansive.



Like its dark counterpart, the *Light Garden* consists of paper foliage sculptures installed in a different configuration, allowing viewers to encounter these sculptures in differently. Upon walking by a select few, the foliage will reach out towards visitors, contrary to the sculptures in the *Dark Garden*.

The artist has organized a series of interdisciplinary performances, which occur in the garden installations and will serve to further activate the exhibition space. Consisting of poetry, dance, music, and other formats, these performances create an ephemeral experience for visitors.

Created in similar styles but offering disparate effects, these gardens represent the opposing forces that exist in society. Via these differences, Ma explores the Rashomon effect in which an experience is perceived very differently by different people.

In her experience as a designer for the opening ceremonies of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, Ma witnessed how different people experienced Beijing and the events surrounding the festivities in completely disparate ways. In a sense, those who helped build the venues and prepare the city lacked access to the events; thus, they did not receive any fruits of their labors. Similarly, the architecture, cultures, and economies of Charleston and other cities in the American South were produced largely by an enslaved workforce that could not participate in mainstream society.

To use the exhibition as a springboard for conversations about vital issues that affect the Lowcountry community, Ma has organized a series of shared meals. The public will be invited to break bread together and discuss specific issues facing Charleston: land issues, education and children's issues, re-entry to society after incarceration, and food justice. These community meals provide a platform to engage the traditionally disenfranchised and recognize those who have endeavored to make Charleston a better place.



Jennifer Wen Ma *Cry Joy Park—Gardens of Dark and Light*

The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art is proud to present a commissioned installation by Jennifer Wen Ma, entitled *Cry Joy Park—Gardens of Dark and Light*.

The exhibition is an investigation into the construct of a utopia, inspired by the history of Charleston, South Carolina, a cultural and artistic capital of the American South, and an exemplar of its opulence and beauty. This installation aims to present both an alluring, gorgeous, and otherworldly garden, and its darker counterpart. The world created by the exhibition is a juxtaposition of utopia and dystopia, and is presented via an immersive sensory experience that utilizes various forms of communication to convey its message.



Immediately upon entering, visitors encounter a claustrophobic garden installation. Titled the *Dark Garden*, this environment alters the space of the gallery. Vines and flora, created via the artist's signature paper sculpture techniques, surround viewers at every turn. In some cases, the foliage actively recoils when visitors walk by.

At one end of the *Dark Garden*, a large multi-panel landscape painting augments the pictorial space of the garden. Using glass as canvas, the painting creates a new visual plane while reflecting the environment of the *Dark Garden*. The painting also reflects the appearances of the viewers walking amidst the installation, offering them a vision of a constructed paradise.

LUNCHEON IN THE GARDEN:

As a part of *Cry Joy Park*, Ma has conceived of a series of *Luncheons in the Garden* in which the public is invited to be a part of conversations dealing with themes of the exhibition. During three Saturdays in June and July, the public is invited to bring a bag lunch and break bread with the artist and members of the community in the Halsey Institute galleries. Each *Luncheon in the Garden* will feature a collaborative performance by musician, dancer, or poet relating to the theme. These Luncheons will discuss the following issues:

LAND ISSUES

Saturday, June 22, 12:00 – 1:00 PM

Without land, we would not have trees, gardens, or vegetation of any sort, the basis of a paradise. Everything under the sun has a right to live and to lay its head on the earth to rest, be it an ant, elephant, or human. The politics of land has put the world in a critical state; Charleston's local issues are reflections of the global condition. Habitat loss, homelessness, and gentrification have made land ownership/stewardship not just a human rights problem, but also an animal rights and environmental crisis.

RE-ENTRY INTO SOCIETY AFTER INCARCERATION

Saturday, June 29, 12:00 – 1:00 PM

Imagine if Adam and Eve were given a second chance after breaking the law of Eden and being expelled. What would a forgiving Eden be like? What restitution and codes of conduct would be necessary to allow them back? How do we bring the formerly incarcerated back into the fold of society, so they can become active and productive members of this paradise again?

FOOD JUSTICE

Saturday, July 6, 12:00 – 1:00 PM

Under the fruit-laden vines of the Gardens, this paradise is a perfect place to partake in food and drink while discussing food quality, nutritional value, safety, availability, access, and some of the humanitarian and environmental aspects of "putting food on the table".

