

PENLAND GALLERY

VIVIAN CHIU

Henrico, VA and Hong Kong

WOOD | Sculpture

Penland Affiliation | Penland Instructor 2023, Penland Winter Resident Distinguished Fellow 2022

Artist Information | Studio artist; teaching: adjunct professor at Virginia Commonwealth University; American Craft Council Emerging Artists Cohort 2022, New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship; residencies: Haystack (ME), Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts (NE), Anderson Ranch (CO), Sculpture Space (NY), Houston Center for Contemporary Arts, Penland Winter Residency; recent exhibition at Penland Gallery; collection: Center for Art in Wood; representation: FLXST Contemporary (IL)

Artist Statement | My work explores ideas of visibility/invisibility in relation to my identity as a queer Asian woman. Drawing inspiration from traditional woodworking techniques, I create large-scale wood sculptures through continuous processes of deconstruction and reconstruction. My recent work combines self-portraiture with niche craft techniques in wood and reimagines processes such as puzzle-making, stack lamination, and split-turning. These labor-intensive methods are not only a catharsis to alleviate psychological narratives; they also pay a conscious homage to my family's history and toils in factory work. Optical works are guided by queer and feminist theory and engage the viewer through ideas of perception, disorientation, and camouflage.

Growing up in pre-Handover Hong Kong and now living in America, I am aware of the conflicts and commonalities of Eastern and Western cultures - a constant source of concern and inspiration in my sculptural practice. I investigate the relationship and tension between desired individual freedoms, such as outspoken queerness, and conservative Chinese cultural values such as filial piety. My practice builds upon ideas of racial embodiment and Orientalism, particularly that of the Asian woman, and examines the mechanics of identity formation and the Asian body's place/non-place in Contemporary Art and Craft discourses.

Penland School of Craft | Penland Gallery & Visitors Center
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