

# ART SPIEL

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## Holly Wong: Guardian of the Spirits

FEATURED ARTIST



Holly Wong's solo exhibition *Guardian of the Spirits* at the Curfman gallery, Colorado State University at Fort Collins, combines sewn patchwork of silk, organza, other transparent materials, and drawings—to memorialize her mother whom she lost to alcoholism and domestic violence. The text for her show says that the installation is a “prayer for revolt against the limiting notions of beauty and body size.”

**Can you elaborate on how your work addresses “the limiting notions of beauty and body size?”**

We are surrounded by images in social media and television that celebrate fair skinned, thin, fragile women; those who do not take up space, who demand nothing. In response, I create large, expansive installations that occupy the environment, that seek to defy gravity. These works are a metaphor for my own body, its weight, floating, falling and rising. As a recovered anorexic, I resist the drive for disappearance and self-restriction by working with hundreds of yards of fabric and light reflective materials. I embrace the luxury and the generosity of these materials, stretching them across space, going beyond personal boundaries.

# BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

Can you tell us more about the installation in this show?

The namesake work in the exhibition *Guardian of the Spirits* is a sewn patchwork of silk, organza, cellophane, and foil with transparencies that involve a kaleidoscope of images and memories. My process is to create a transparent base which I then sew, cut, and sew back together again. Afterwards, I layer bloodlines or veins upon these surfaces using darker patterning so that it journeys through the metaphorical body of the work. This piece at once references the practice of cutting and starving oneself but also the power of mending and transforming.



I became attracted to working with light, reflective, transparent fabrics because it reminds me of the permeable separation between the living and the dead. In my current series *Quilt Suspensions*, I use a flat felled seam technique with transparent fabric. I combine these ephemeral materials with LED strip lighting and diffusion film as a proxy for my mother's spirit. The layers of pieced fabric are suspended over this light-spirit as a shroud or mourning cloth. Inspired by Chinese funeral customs, the quilt layers become burial blankets that are offered by the children of the deceased and layered upon their loved ones.



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# BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

Traditional drawing is a parallel element in my work. *She* is an immersive installation rendered with colored pencil on hand cut drafting film. Created during the early days of the COVID pandemic lockdown, I focused my mind on pre-Christian spirituality. The intense patterning of “She” reflects a celebration of life. Bright, rich, and excessive, these colors reflect my hunger to embrace life’s full potential.



**About the artist:** Holly Wong was born in North Miami Beach FLA. She was educated at the San Francisco Art Institute where she graduated with a Master of Fine Arts with a concentration in New Genres. Holly has participated in over 80 exhibitions including group shows at the de Young Museum, the Marin Museum of Contemporary Art, and Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Art. She is represented by SLATE Contemporary Gallery in Oakland, CA, ELLIO Fine Art in Houston, TX, and is a member of A.I.R. Gallery in Brooklyn, NY. Holly lives and works in San Francisco, CA.

All works in the exhibition are provided courtesy of SLATE Contemporary Gallery, Oakland, CA.

Full article: <https://artspiel.org/holly-wong-guardian-of-the-spirits/>