

Art is long and Time is swift.

– Charles Baudelaire



Peggy Chiang's exhibition *spleen and ideal* opens at Prairie in Pilsen on Saturday, April 23rd from 5–8pm. I am pleased to write this introduction to one of my best friends and sister in art.

Peggy and I met in 2007 in Baltimore, MD. Around then she reached her limit with painting trompe l'oeil and started to subvert its conventions by using a broader range of materials, particularly found and cast objects. Some of Peggy's earliest formal experiments involved making things like paper much more rigid and durable, but also working with risky things like sheets of glass. One of Peggy's earliest works was a rug that looked like the pelt of a golden retriever. I remember visiting her studio regularly as she combed dye through a sheet of white fake fur. She also sculpted its head using a taxidermy mold of a dog's teeth and jaws as an armature. Peggy's own dog was a labrador-beagle mix. I guess her works are *spectral*. From then on Peggy would sculpt a unique strain of Suburban Gothic vignettes.

In 2008 she made a work from a handcrafted paper bag in which she placed a novelty water fountain shaped like candles; at the time Peggy said she was thinking about the fountain of youth. In this show another fountain of sorts is modeled after an Yves Saint-Laurent "Opium" perfume display lamp and a patient simulator machine filled with tea. Poppy pods cast from bronze rest, libertine, across the gallery floor. One of the poppy pods is enclosed in what looks like a cat toy. Meanwhile, a sleeping cat is sealed in a pillowed vitrine that evokes the deep night.

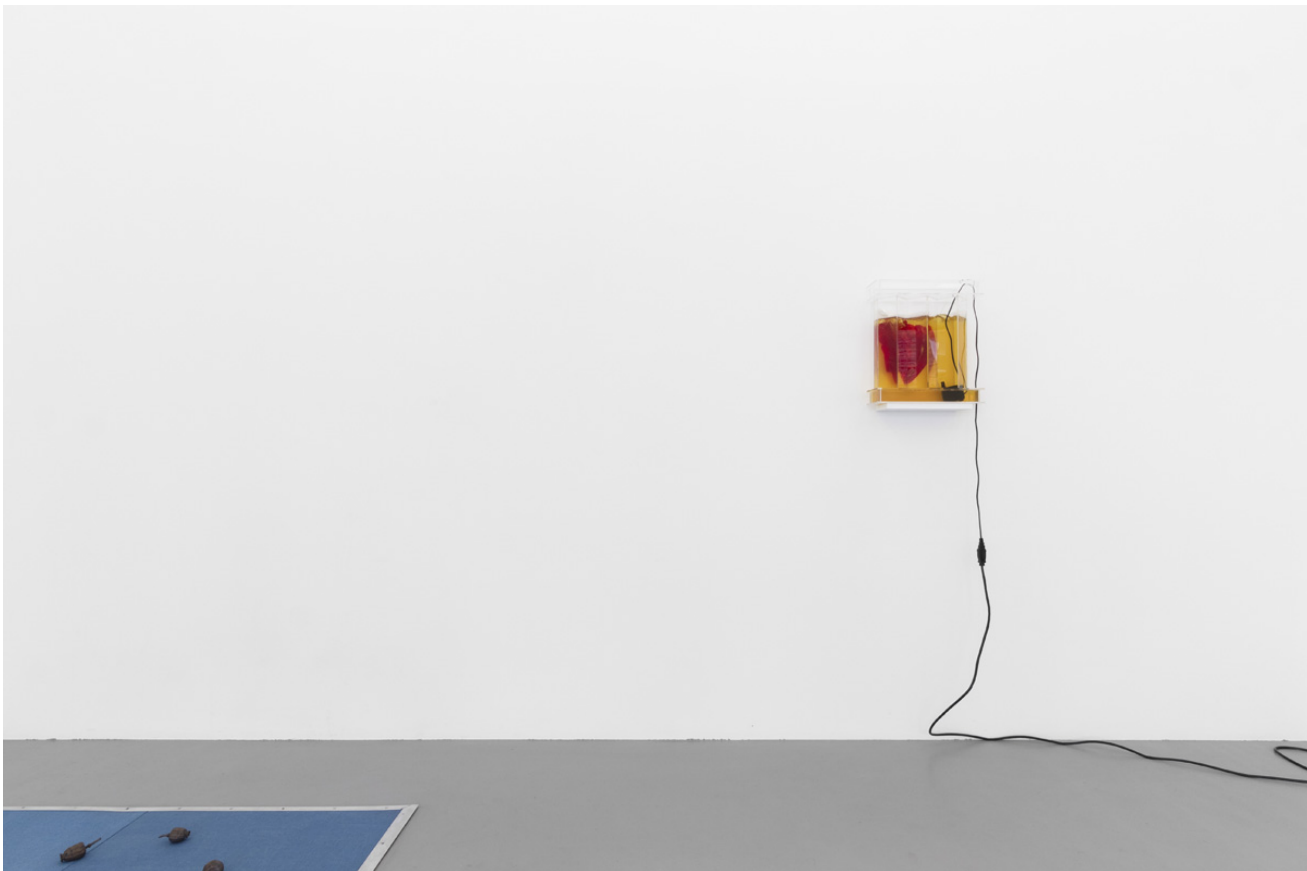
*My wasted cat, in searching for a litter,
Bestirs its mangy paws from post to post;
(A poet's soul that wanders in the gutter,
With the jaded voice of a shiv'ring ghost).*

Poppy, opium, and melodrama tint the lives of all artists in *The Flowers of Evil*, a collection of poems by Charles Baudelaire—from which this exhibition takes its title. Peggy's new works are fittingly patinated with neuroses and melancholy. And romance. The records *Spleen and Ideal* by Dead Can Dance and *Aku no Hana* by Buck-Tick are tied for the perfect soundtrack to this show.

– Max Guy



Installation view



Installation view



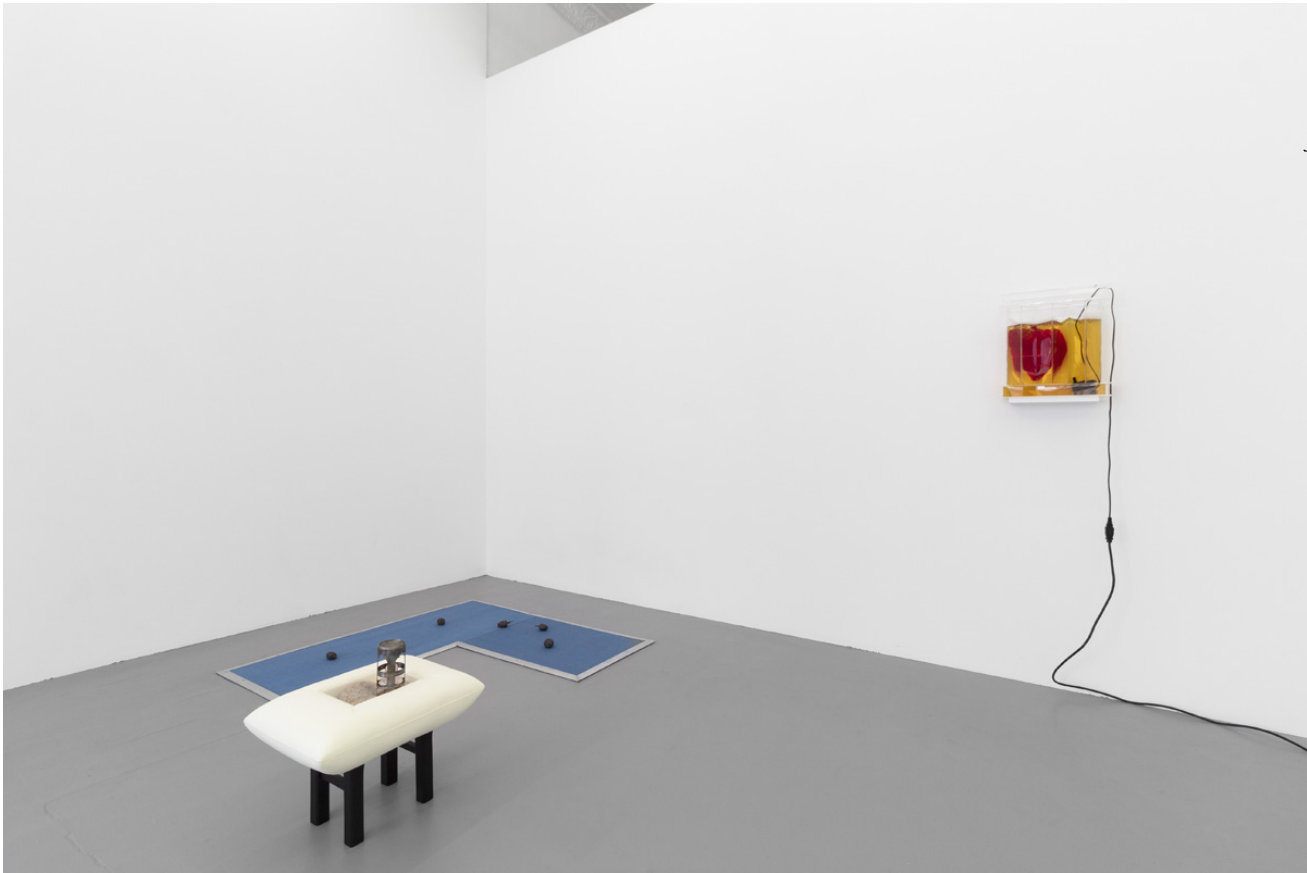
Fragrance (blood, clear fluid, mucus), 2022
plexiglass, tea, plastic bag, dye, submersible water pump



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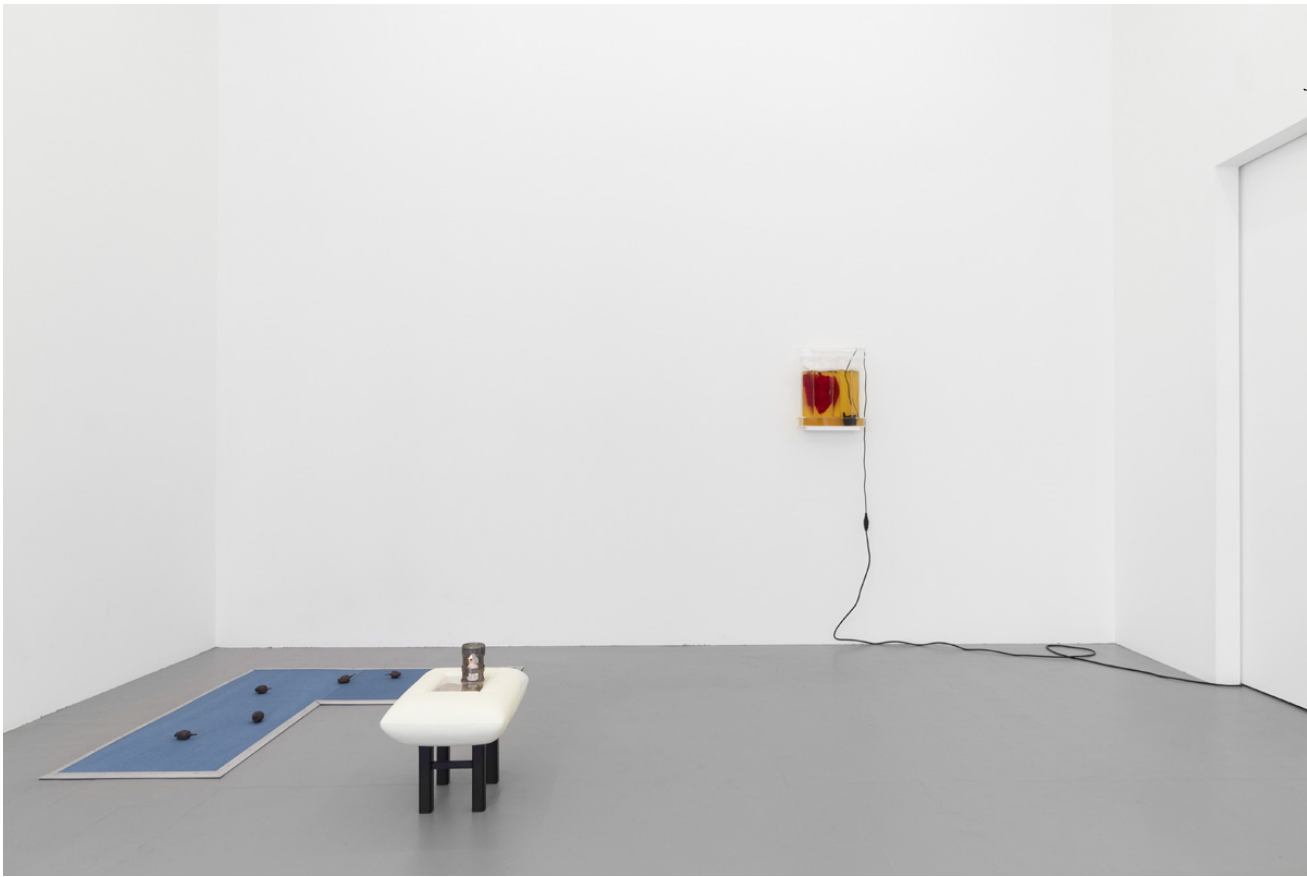
Fragrance (blood, clear fluid, mucus), 2022
plexiglass, tea, plastic bag, dye, submersible water pump



Installation view



Heavier than rocks, 2022
patinated bronze



Installation view



The cat in my brain is walking, 2022

flexible polyurethane foam, cat doll, wood, plexiglass, steel can, and glazed porcelain



The cat in my brain is walking, 2022

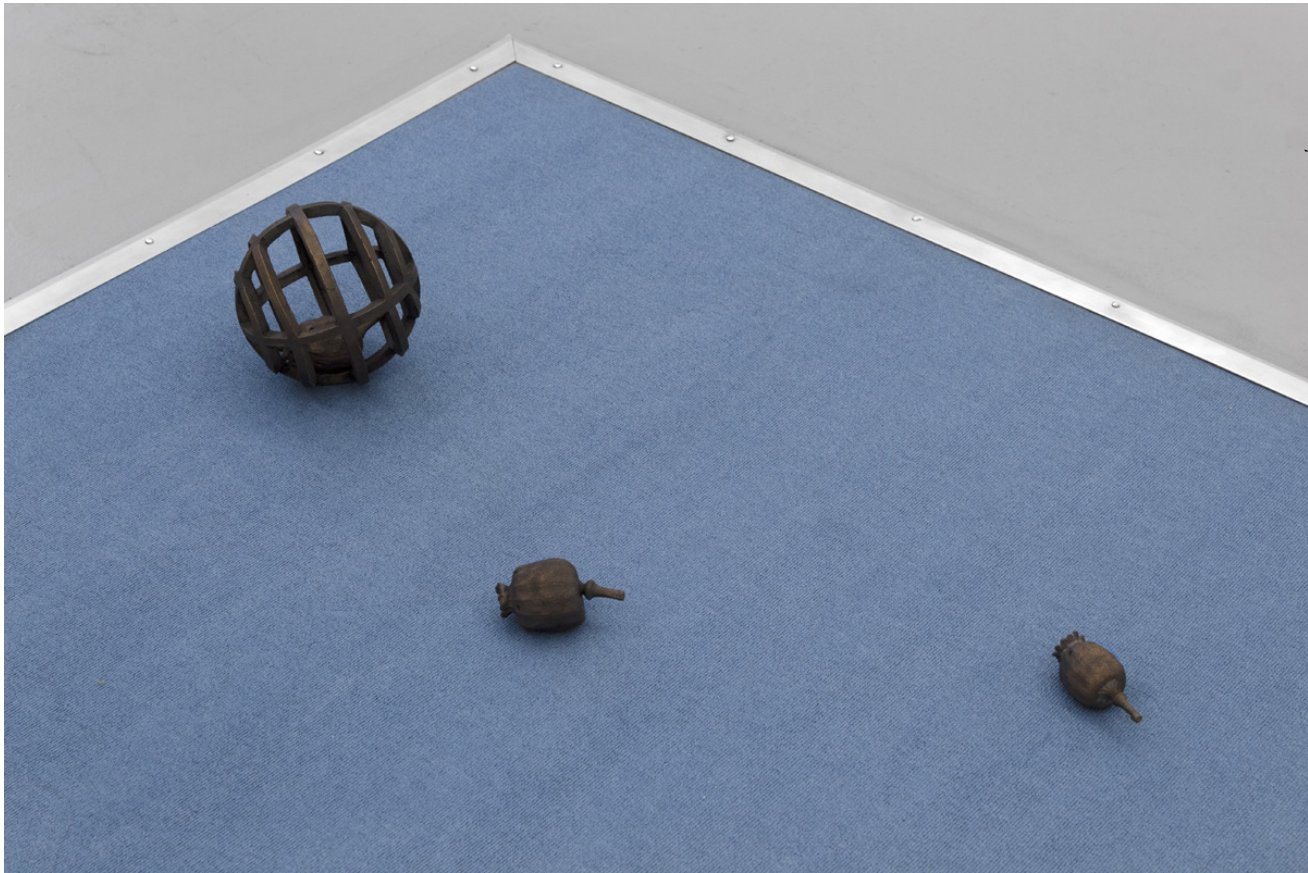
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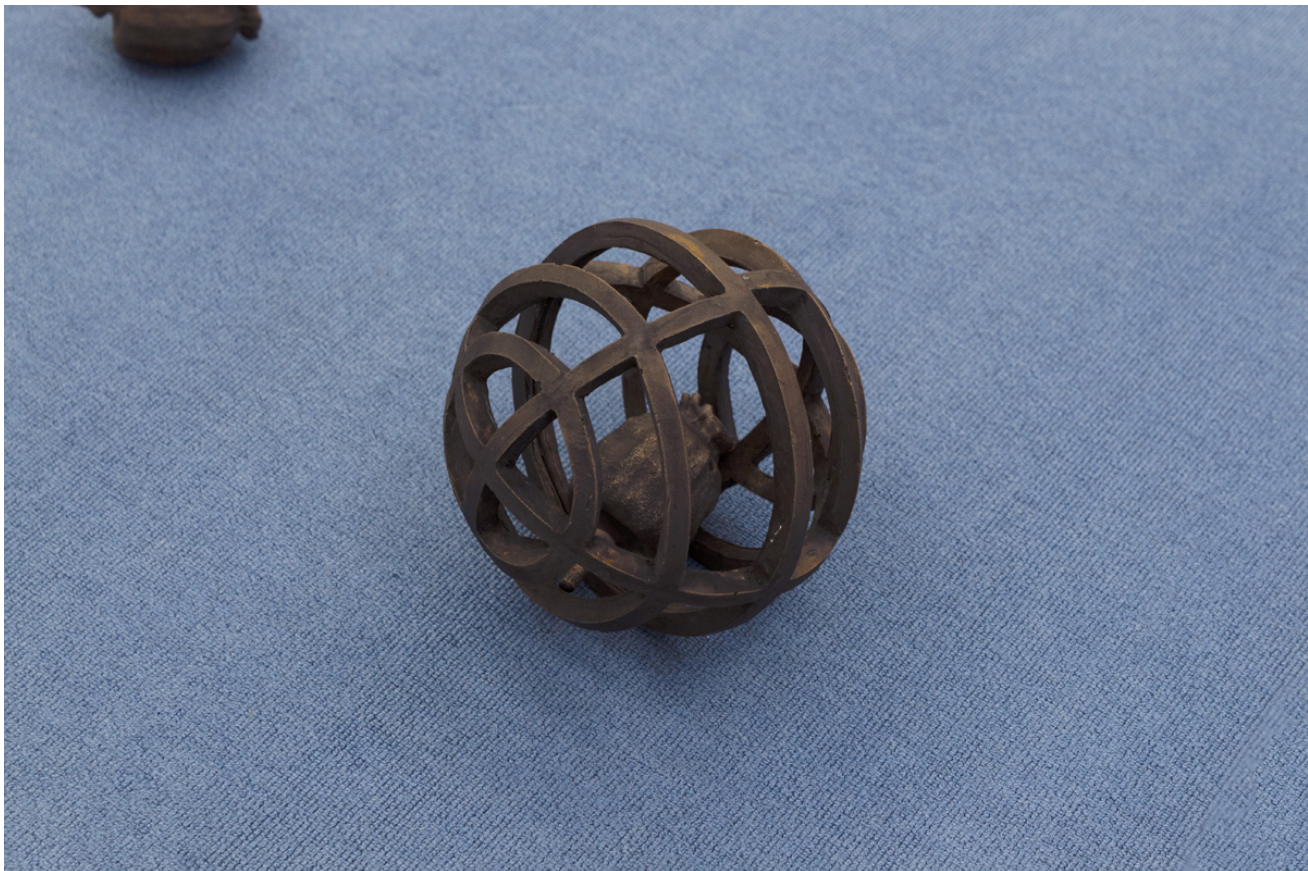
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Installation view



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Invitation to travel, 2022

cardboard, styrofoam, preserved plants, steel, gravel, dirt, plexiglass, wood, chalk, acrylic paint, aluminum can, and glazed porcelain



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Peggy Chiang (b. 1989, San Francisco, CA) is a New Jersey-based artist who approaches representations of marginal histories through a lens of surrealism and object fetishism. She received her BFA in 2011 from the Maryland Institute College of Art, and is currently completing her MFA in Visual Arts at Rutgers University.