

Julia Chiang
Secret Smile
The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane
24th January – 5th March 2025
Preview: Thursday 23rd January 2025, 6-8pm

Julia Chiang's working method is meditative and considered, with each work reflecting a period of introspection. Her paintings appear caught in a state of transformation, tracing momentary interactions between different forces, represented by pools of colour, dots and multiple petal-like cells. The latter recall tangible corporeal effects, a sweat tinged brow or the rainbow purple-yellow of a bruised limb, for example, but could equally be related to celestial or microbial bodies. And while Chiang's focus is bodily or organic, the works remain open. Each one has its own unique weather: *Linger Longer*, 2024, recalls a lakeside or body of water; *Secret Smile*, 2024, resembles the red and blue gas clouds of a nebula; and the yellow form in *Swallowing Blues*, 2024, could be mistaken for a rising sun. The patterning of petal forms and dots evokes contour lines, diagrams illustrating energy flows, or osmosis between watery zones.

Chiang has spoken about employing thin washes, pouring paint and layering up sections of colour in her compositions, understanding this as an analogy for layers of skin, what it hides or reveals. In this way, these new works elegantly draw together seemingly dialectic ideas – the near and far, terrestrial and celestial, mind and body – speaking to the emotions, feelings and tensions we hold in the body. They are simultaneously tactile and metaphorical, evoking moments of elevated experience – anger, laughter or wonder. The interacting forms in the paintings lends them to erotic, playful and perhaps combative interpretation, and the titles emphasise this quality: *Hold the Pressure*, *Breathe In and Count*, *Twist Tighter*. Together, they present a broad range of our dynamic and charged interactions with the world.

Julia Chiang (Chinese American, b. 1978, Atlantic City, New Jersey) lives and works in Brooklyn, and studied Studio Art and Art History at New York University. Chiang has produced a unique and engaging body of work across painting and ceramic, the subject of a recent solo exhibition at Parrish Art Museum, New York (2024). Chiang has also produced solo exhibitions at Nanzuka Underground, Tokyo, (2023) and Nicola Vassell Gallery, New York (2023) and The Journal Gallery, New York (2020). In 2024, she created a mural with RxART for the new SUNY Upstate Nappi Wellness Institute in Syracuse. And in 2022, Chiang was commissioned by Rockaway Hotel and Spa for the "Rockaway Mural" in Queens, NY. Recent selected group exhibitions include: 'Nanzuka Drawing Show', Nanzuka 2G, Tokyo (2024); 'The Selves', Nicola Vassell Gallery, New York (2024); 'Space Forgets You', Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh (2022); 'Grouper', Broadway Gallery, New York (2021).