

CHAPTER NY

For immediate release

Nova Jiang

Recorded Syllable

June 27–August 8, 2025

Chapter NY is pleased to present *Recorded Syllable*, Nova Jiang's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition features a new series of intimate, symbol-laden paintings that reflect Jiang's ongoing exploration of memory, time, and disappearance—both personal and collective.

Taking its title from Macbeth's haunting phrase, "to the last syllable of recorded time," the exhibition considers the traces we leave behind. Throughout the exhibition, books reappear as enduring metaphors for the passage of time, the accumulation of memory, and a life lived. She draws inspiration from artists like Philip Guston, whose own use of the book as a symbolic object resonates with her interest in the book as a vessel of personal and historical meaning.

In *Trilogy*, three figures—a child, an adult, and a skeleton—share a cyclical narrative embodied by a single book, its surface marked by the tracks of insects. In *Words*, a book composed of identically crumpled pages becomes a haunting gesture toward the unread books lost to the past, poetically suggesting how some words fail to speak to us across time.

Themes of dislocation and legacy surface in *Exile*, where camellias—native to China and Japan and common in the artist's Los Angeles neighborhood—appear beside the spectral image of a fractured vase, evoking the fragility of home, memory, and belonging. Her neighborhood was once home to many Japanese Americans after WWII, and in light of the current political climate, Jiang reflects on the ongoing vulnerability of displaced populations. In *Silhouette*, a skull nestles into the void carved from a book's interior, surrounded by line drawings of Jiang's own face. The image suggests a form that is missing and serves as a kind of self-portrait.

In *Animator*, a golden toad automaton perches atop the pages of a flip book. Rather than illustrations, the book is composed of cut-outs that flip over the automaton as it moves, collectively animating the act of the toad swallowing a moth. Jiang is drawn to toads—which appear throughout her oeuvre—in part due to their sensitivity to climate change and their symbolic resonance in Chinese art history. She reminds viewers that while a toad may be reimagined through human artifice, an extinct species is lost forever.

Jiang's practice is steeped in art historical dialogue, from Hans Baldung to Pieter Claesz, and suffused with references to natural systems, literature, and grief. In *Recorded Syllable*, she considers what it means to record, to mark, and to remember—even as language, species, and selves begin to vanish.

Nova Jiang (b. 1985, Dalian, China) lives and works in Los Angeles. She received her BFA from the University of Auckland, Elam School of Fine Arts in 2006 and her MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2009. She has had recent solo exhibitions at Union Pacific, London and Simone Subal, New York. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at Union Pacific, London; Am Schwarzenbergplatz with KOW and LambdaLambdaLambda, Vienna; Simone Subal, New York; Honor Fraser, Los Angeles; and the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles; among others.