

Adams and Ollman

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Peggy Chiang: *barn burner*
September 13–October 25, 2025
Opening: Saturday, September 13, 3–5pm

Adams and Ollman is pleased to announce *barn burner*, Brooklyn-based artist Peggy Chiang's first solo show on the West Coast of the United States. The exhibition is comprised of discrete objects that explore a distinctly American narrative. Using oil, wire hangers, bandsaw blades, shirt collars, roll-up gates and bone, the artist suggests a violence that is omnipresent in American identity and engenders a resonance that echoes out from the four walls of the gallery into the architecture, structures and systems that make up modern life. The exhibition opens with a reception with the artist on Saturday, September 13 and will be on view through October 25, 2025.

Chiang's *mise-en-scène* installations agitate or provoke emotions that escape language or easy explanation. Investigating the powerful interrelationship of objects sited together and frequently animated by sound, smell, or touch, Chiang creates the conditions for a viewer to experience the work intuitively, inferring a multifarious and layered meaning.

For the exhibition, Chiang begins with an image—here, a saddle—and engineers it into an uncanny likeness of the real-life object. Crafted from steel, “Throttle” is suspended from the ceiling, tethered and inanimate, defying the speed and power implicit in its title. Whether from horses, humans or engines, power is an economic term—incessant, unforgiving, efficient and productive, all conditions that define our 24/7 economy. A series of cast shirt collars on star-shaped clothing hangers will also be on view. Here, collars, often used linguistically to distinguish work and class, or colloquially as a capture or arrest, are detached from the body to form a constellation of spectral necks. In a trio of related sculptural “black boxes” that include light, mirror and photographs, the artist expertly investigates the conceptual framework for understanding a system based solely on its inputs and outputs,



without knowledge of its internal processes. The viewer, who labors to clearly see what is inside, is reflected in the mirror surface of the sculptures and becomes implicated by their own voyeurism and violation of security glass and barriers.

“Souvenir (Dammam No.7)” and “Rolled-over” are also sculptures suspended from the ceiling, strung on old cast iron scales and hanging in precarious balance. “Souvenir (Dammam No.7)” contains various elements that are refined from crude oil—a wax candle, motor oil and bitumen, a thick, black substance used in asphalt for paving roads—and refers to the first well in Saudi Arabia where oil reserves were discovered in 1938.

Chiang's sculptures leverage a Western iconography of power, masculinity, expansion, and freedom. The works suggest another superficial myth-making, one that is familiar and even central in American national identity. In this way, Chiang's work destabilizes the narrative both literally and figuratively. Things float, balance, tip and disappear and content and meaning remain slippery and beyond clear view.

Peggy Chiang (b. 1989, San Francisco, CA; lives and works in Brooklyn, NY) received an MFA in Visual Arts from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, and a BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD. She is an Assistant Professor of Art at the City College of New York CUNY. Her work is in the collection of the National Museum of Norway, Oslo, Norway. In 2024, Chiang was awarded a Joan Mitchell Fellowship.

Above: detail, Peggy Chiang, “Hard to imagine”, 2025, patinated steel, tempered glass, automotive window tint, inkjet print, aluminum, plywood, LED light, 24 x 14 x 5 inches.