

MUSEUMS

WASHINGTON AND LEE

PRESS RELEASE

The Museums at Washington and Lee Present *Stephanie Shih: LONG TIME NO SEE (好久不見)*

Stephanie Shih's innovative installation mines the Reeves Collection of Chinese Export Porcelain to explore diaspora and identity through ceramics.

Exhibition: *Stephanie Shih: LONG TIME NO SEE (好久不見)*

Location: Reeves Museum of Ceramics, 124 Letcher Ave, Lexington, VA

Dates: August 28, 2024 - June 7, 2025

Reception: September 26, 2024, 5:30 – 7:30 PM

(LEXINGTON, VA, May 1, 2024)–The Museums at Washington and Lee University (Museums at W&L) present *STEPHANIE SHIH: LONG TIME NO SEE (好久不見)*, an original collection of 15 life-size photography and video-based still life installations that surface unacknowledged histories in the Museums' renowned Chinese export collection. Each multimedia artwork was created on site by the Museums' inaugural artist-in-residence Stephanie Shih, a photographer and visual artist whose work simultaneously pays tribute to still life traditions and reclaims them to pave new ground for contemporary representations of Asian American narratives.

Mining the Museums' prodigious historic collection of Asian export porcelain, Shih unearths insights on commerce, labor, imperialism, race, migration, identity, and belonging, and places the ceramics in dialogue with food, flowers, personal items, and found objects of significance to Asian American histories and communities. In these exquisite arrangements, Shih recontextualizes the ceramics and transforms their status as luxury objects of possession into diasporic objects that reflect the histories and contexts of the people who crafted them. Each tableau reckons with tensions between past and present, belonging and alienation, presence and absence.

Shih's artwork installations pair altered still life photographs with corresponding objects from the Reeves Collection of Ceramics. Each altered photograph features a hand-carved void where the ceramics would otherwise appear in the image. Presented alongside the physical museum object in the installation, this pairing creates a deliberate interplay between the physical and the photographic. Ultimately, Shih's work invites viewers to consider unsurfaced narratives and voices in the Reeves Collection of Chinese Export Porcelain: whose histories are reflected in – or absent from – these coveted objects of luxury? How did cultural, social, and political forces cultivate a simultaneous desire for these objects and animus towards their makers and places of origin? Shih's thoughtful, provocative, and immersive still lifes amplify the Museums as a site for reflection on identity, immigration, and cultural belonging in the United States.

"We are thrilled to present Stephanie Shih's remarkably profound project, a concentric exploration of our ceramics collection that elevates our Museums as a site for reflection and critical inquiry," said Isra El-beshir, Director of the Museums at W&L. *LONG TIME NO SEE* is designed to foster historical empathy, presenting an innovative and nuanced interpretation of the past that resonates with the present."

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The exhibition is organized by Isra El-beshir (Director of the Museums at W&L), Nalleli Guillen (Associate Director of Curatorial Affairs), and Elizabeth Spear (Curator of Academic Engagement), in collaboration with curatorial consultants Jacqueline Chao (Cecil and Ida Green Curator of Asian Art at the Dallas Museum of Art), Rachel Du (Chinese Art Specialist at Bonhams), and Kelly Fu (Ph.D. candidate at Stanford University).

The Museums at W&L are open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 AM - 5 PM. This exhibit is free and open to the public, with a scheduled **artist talk and reception in the Reeves Museum of Ceramics on Thursday, September 26, from 5:30 - 7:30 PM.**

For more information and programming details, visit museums.wlu.edu/shih

About the Artist

Stephanie Shih (史欣雲) is a second generation Taiwanese-Chinese American still life artist, photographer, and professor of Linguistics at the University of Southern California. Her work has been exhibited in solo and group shows at venues including Hashimoto Contemporary (Los Angeles), Griffin Museum of Photography (Boston), USC Pacific Asia Museum (Pasadena), and The Royal Photographic Society (UK). Shih's photography has been featured in outlets including *Bon Appetit*, *Lenscratch*, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *Gastronomica*, *Buzzfeed News*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *High Country News*. Her residencies include Oak Spring Garden Foundation (2024), the Museums at Washington & Lee (2023), and Joshua Tree Highlands Artist Residency (2022).

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美(國)人(The Rose Piece), 2023, Stephanie Shih, archival pigment print on bamboo paper, mirrored vinyl, and ceramics drawn from the Reeves Collection of Chinese Export Porcelain, 84 x 48 in. Museums Purchase. Image © Stephanie Shih