

Claremont Colleges

Scholarship @ Claremont

CGU MFA Theses

CGU Student Scholarship

Spring 3-19-2024

As I Wander

Michelle Lum

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgu_mfatheses



Part of the [Art Practice Commons](#), [Fine Arts Commons](#), [Interdisciplinary Arts and Media Commons](#), and the [Sculpture Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lum, Michelle, "As I Wander" (2024). *CGU MFA Theses*. 191.
https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgu_mfatheses/191

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the CGU Student Scholarship at Scholarship @ Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in CGU MFA Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship @ Claremont. For more information, please contact scholarship@claremont.edu.

Michelle Lum: As I Wander

I happened upon a branch that a tree had dropped; it was so beautifully formed I thought it could be a sculpture in its own right. It was astounding to me that people must work hard to create something as aesthetically pleasing as a branch that a tree decided it no longer needed. I came across bark fragments shed by another tree. From afar they simply looked like thin pieces of wood, but upon closer examination I could see a subtle pattern in all of them. I walked by several leaves strewn about the ground, and it was not until I picked them up that I could see their delicate veins and gentle curves formed from slowly decomposing. This body of work comes from the wonder I discovered in my “wanderings” while outside my studio in Claremont. Branches, bark, and leaves are all discarded by trees, and yet they still hold so much potency in them. The installations in this exhibition are a result of what developed from these initial moments of wonder.

In my life, I have found wonder not so much in things that are rich and showy, but rather in unassuming spaces and ordinary objects. What seems mundane often has much more to it if one takes the time to look. In my work I highlight ordinary objects to emphasize the extraordinary qualities inherent in them. This particular series consists of objects covered in metal leaf. Imitation gold leaf fascinates me as a material that is paradoxical. In covering the object, it reveals more of that which is underneath. As a reflective material it both draws attention to itself and directs attention to its immediate surrounding. I use it here to heighten the presence of these objects.

Even the simplest of objects have their own complexities and reveal more about the world we live in. I like to think that my artwork allows these objects to speak for themselves. Through increasing the amount and size, and curating the space and lighting, these materials are given a platform for viewers to engage with on a deeper level. Viewers can glimpse their potential and imagine what else these objects might share with us.

My work highlights moments of wonder from my everyday life to give a more holistic view of reality. To me, experiences of wonder are spaces where a person feels God's presence, where the spiritual reality of our world becomes visible. Sacraments in the Christian tradition are visible signs of a divine reality. I think of my work as sacramental: heightening moments where the visible gives way to the invisible—not by denying their physical characteristics but through them. That is the heart of my work: finding the intersection between that which is deeply ordinary and that which is deeply extraordinary.

As I Wander

Michelle Lum

MFA Thesis Exhibition

March 18-22, 2024

Gallery Hours: 10am-4pm

Opening Reception:

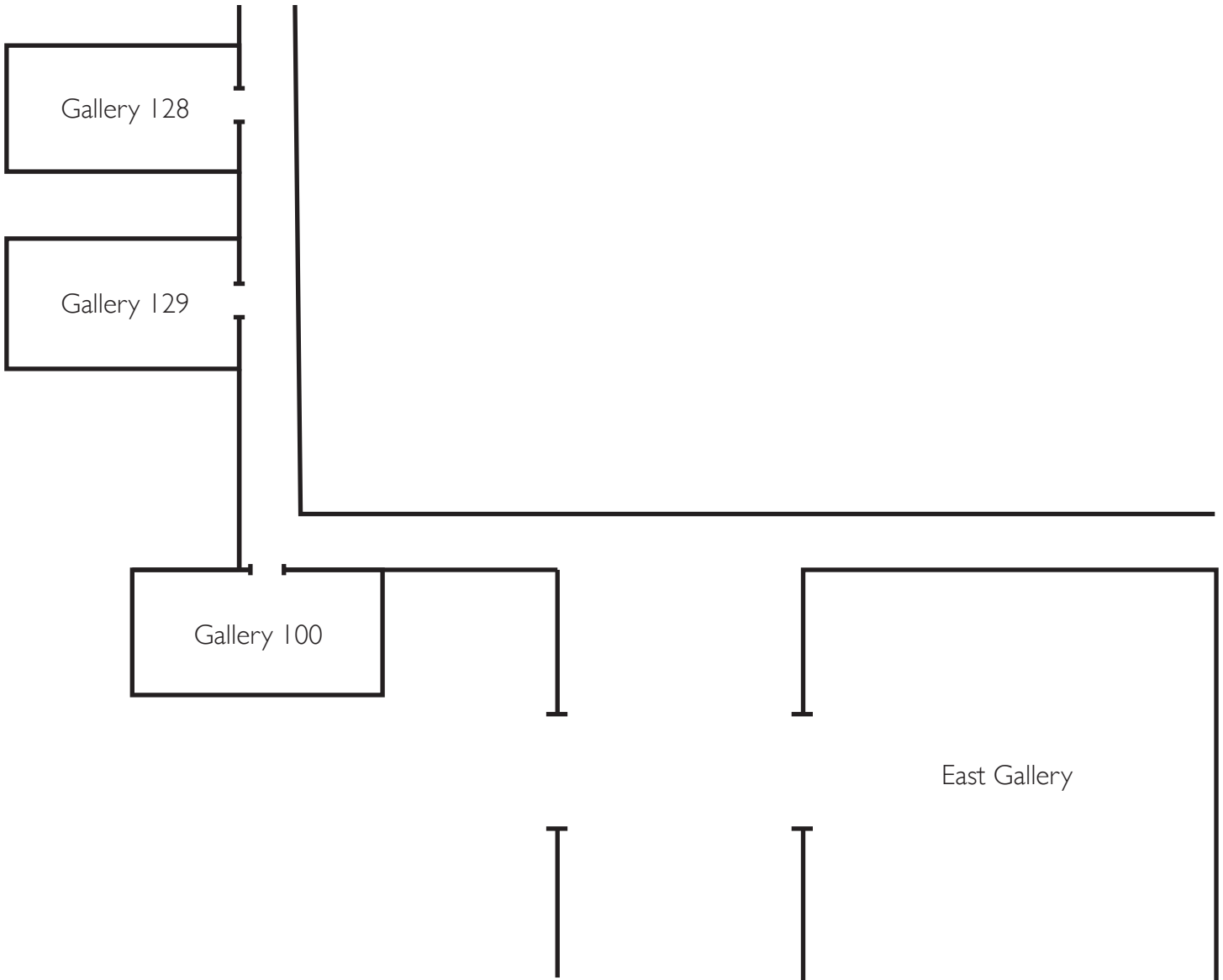
March 19, 5-7pm



Claremont Graduate University
East Gallery, Galleries 100, 128 & 129
251 East 10th Street, Claremont, CA

As I Wander

Michelle Lum



East Gallery:
Leviathan, 2024
Branches, imitation gold leaf
10' x 15' x 22'4"

Gallery 100:
Refuse, 2024
Paper, imitation gold leaf, wire, wood
8" x 5'4" x 16'2"

Gallery 129:
Boundaries, 2023-2024
Bark, imitation gold leaf, monofilament
12' x 11'8" x 12'3"

Gallery 128:
Gather, 2024
Leaves, imitation gold leaf, monofilament
12' x 4'6" x 4'6"









