

Online Exhibition

Opal Mae Ong

THE CONDITIONAL

Oct 28 – Nov 27, 2021



Opal Mae Ong, *A Daily Reckoning*, 2021, acrylic and gouache on canvas 60h x 48w in

Arsenal Contemporary Art New York is pleased to present *The Conditional*, an online solo exhibition by **Opal Mae Ong**, held in conjunction with Hunter College's MFA Thesis exhibition, *It Lives**. Comprised of six new paintings and an audio recording by the New York based artist, *The Conditional* weaves together memories, dreams, and moments from Ong's past, and renders them into reality. While Ong's practice is decidedly not a cathartic gesture, she touches on topics of grief, longing, and trauma, using these subjects as a departure point for exploration.

As memories and dreams are intrinsically subjective, Ong works intuitively, recalling haunting memories as a starting point for her compositions. Through a painting practice that channels a constructive memory process, she explores these experiences and pieces them together into visual representations. Interrogating the notion that memory is intangible, the paintings in *The Conditional* seek to reconstruct incomplete recollections, as they arrive in the present, allowing instances of revival, constructive encoding, and evaluation to organically unfurl over time.

Recurring imagery is scattered throughout Ong's paintings, alluding to an acutely developed visual language. Ghostly hands and obstructed faces are motifs across this body of work, creating a dreamlike *deja vu* for the viewer that is akin to surrealism. Ong's depicted characters do not confront the viewer or themselves either facing away or shielding their face. The viewer becomes a voyeur, peering into these intimate moments that have been derived from Ong's personal experiences, forming a tension between the private nature of memory and the audience's natural inclination to decipher.

Opal Mae Ong (B. 1994 Los Angeles, CA) Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She holds an MFA from Hunter College (New York) and a BFA from School of Visual Arts (New York). Recent exhibitions include The Spite Haus (Philadelphia), Plastic Murs Gallery (Valencia, Spain), and Three Four Three Four Gallery (Brooklyn).

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