

CRITICS' PICKS
MINNEAPOLIS

Candice Lin

WALKER ART CENTER
725 Vineland Place
August 5, 2021–January 2, 2022



View of "Candice Lin: Sleeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping," 2021–22.

Candice Lin has installed something like a posthuman wellness clinic for her exhibition "Sleeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping." The centerpiece is a delicate canvas pavilion on whose surfaces proliferates a menagerie picked out in indigo dye resist; at its corners stand caryatids modeled on Tang-dynasty tomb guardians as well as an "idol of the devil," an Orientalist fantasy figure concocted by the eighteenth-century charlatan George Psalmanazar, the author of a fabricated description of Taiwan (which he never visited). Lin's syncretic iconography is too ecumenical to pin down: Even before I read the wall text, the caryatids already reminded me of the many-breasted Diana of Ephesus and ancient Japanese Haniwa figures.

Visitors are encouraged to enter. Ceramic cats share the interior with anyone who cares to join them. The emphasis on interaction continues in a piece just

outside the tent, *A Journal of the Plague Year (Cat Demon Diary)* (all works 2021), a handmade book of drawings and text that viewers can leaf through. Nearby are *Tactile Theater #1 (After Noguchi)* and *Tactile Theater #2 (After Švankmajer)*, a pair of faux-stone works that resemble tabletop-size skate-parks strewn with rib cages, ears, and other bodily forms that invite exploration by touch rather than sight.

The show's mascot is a lumpy feline creature named White-n-Gray. In a CG video projected on the gallery's rear wall, a "cat demon," as Lin calls it, appears as a simpatico qigong instructor; any soothing effect is undercut by intrusive pop-ups that ask internet-creepy questions like "What's your sign?" or "Are you a bot?" If Lin is cynical toward the online self-care industry, however, she is anything but when it comes to real collective healing. The artist's previous work has been marked by a research-heavy focus on the malevolent itineraries of colonial goods, among them porcelain and tobacco. Here, such issues take a back seat to an insistence on being-together in real space that's moving, compensatory, and, in 2021, rather perverse. When I was at the show, visitors seemed unwilling to take up the installation's participatory prompts. It still felt nice to get the invitation. Lin's is a generosity that our plague-damaged society can only disappoint.