

Augustina Wang Heavy Sky, Brittle Wings

Harper's Chelsea 534
March 6 – April 5, 2025

Harper's is pleased to announce *Heavy Sky, Brittle Wings*, New York-based artist Augustina Wang's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The presentation features new paintings by Wang and opens Thursday, March 6, 6–8pm, with a reception attended by the artist.

Throughout *Heavy Sky, Brittle Wings*, Wang explores manifestations of post-humanity across otherworldly portraits of chimeras. The artist derives inspiration from the multitude of creatures—angels, harpies, and sphinxes—of Greek mythology. She refers to these hybridized figures as siblings who loosely resemble the artist herself and speak broadly to the Asian female experience. These feminized beings often boast feathered wings that puff up in flight, or, in scenes of respite such as *Mound*, *Angel*, *Vulture*, plumage acts as a vital protective barrier to shroud the protagonist. Wang repeatedly troubles conceptions of monstrosity and gender across the works that comprise *Heavy Sky, Brittle Wings*, declaring that femininity is a beast that cannot be tamed.

In paintings like *Harpy Undesirable*, for example, two female bodies blur the boundary between the grotesque and the sensual. The figures, saturated in balmy green and golden hues, appear at once angelic and unsettling—their winged forms are fluid and uninhibited by earthly constraints. On the left, Wang renders a serene, almost doll-like disposition on her subject, but her outstretched arms and exposed torso evoke uncanny vulnerability. With a glowering gaze and parted lips, the figure on the right is more contentious, seemingly poised for attack as she flexes her claws, ready to confront her prey.

In works like *Waxed Moon as Sphinx*, Wang examines the maternal facets of feminine expression. In this scene, a saintly creature cradles a hooved being with bespeckled feathers as a foreboding aircraft looms above. Like mother and child, the caressed figure weeps in the arms of her caretaker, gently rubbing her downturned eyes with her brown paws. Through this tender moment, Wang conveys the universal nature of affection: the artist evocatively illustrates that care is a necessary element of life, regardless of the species.

Repeatedly, across *Heavy Sky, Brittle Wings*, Wang affirms that femininity is not a singular condition. Across these impressionistic works, the artist presents a limitless, ever-evolving subjectivity—mercurial, untamed, and imbued with agency. Her hybrid figures, suspended between human and the divine, embody paradoxes that distinguish the feminine: gentle yet unyielding, exposed yet indomitable. In their multiplicity, they resist confinement, rejecting narrow definitions in favor of shape-shifting presences. Ultimately, Wang urges the viewer to see femininity not as constraint but as an immense, sovereign terrain through these mythic beings—creatures that confidently swell, fracture, and reconstitute themselves on their own terms and timelines.

Augustina Wang (b. 1999, New York, NY) received a BFA from Rhode Island School of Design in 2022; in 2023, she was an artist-in-residence at Moosey Art, Norwich, UK. Recently, Wang has participated in exhibitions at Harper's, New York (2024); The Hole, New York (2024); PM/AM Gallery, London (2024); Steve Turner, Los Angeles (2024); and Sow & Tailor, Hong Kong, Los Angeles and New York (2023 and 2022). Reviews and interviews with the artist have appeared in *It's Nice That*, *DISPATCHES*, and *New American Paintings*, among other publications. Wang lives and works in Queens.