



Open Source Gallery, Inc - 501(c)(3) organization  
306 17th street, Brooklyn, NY 11215, [opensourcegallery.org](http://opensourcegallery.org) 646 279 3969  
Open Hours: Thurs + Fri: 4-6pm, Sat + Sun: 2-6pm  
For press inquiries, please contact us at [contact@opensourcegallery.org](mailto:contact@opensourcegallery.org)

## GWENYTH CHAO: *compos(t)ing spaces*

**October 28th – November 30th, 2023**

**Opening Reception: October 28, 7-9pm**

**Opening Hours: Thurs + Fri: 4-6pm, Sat + Sun: 2-6pm**

Open Source Gallery presents *compos(t)ing spaces*, a project by Gwenyth Chao.

*compos(t)ing spaces* is an invitation into Chao's transdisciplinary making process and material experiments. For the exhibition, Chao presents an installation of her lab-kitchen-studio including sculptural bodies in regeneration, a collection of organic waste, a biomaterial repository, retrofitted tools and biomaterial recipes. In her work, Chao transplants making techniques and thinking processes from gastronomy cooking, ceramic coil building, 3D printing, food science, pastry cake decorating, and polymer chemistry among others. *compos(t)ing spaces* subverts the structures within knowledge systems that privilege dominant ways of knowing. Chao's practice offers alternatives to how taxonomy imposes precise nomenclature for recording knowledge, specialized tools for making and specific design expectations for physical spaces. As an installation, *compos(t)ing spaces* destabilizes the design of spaces – from kitchen workstations to science labs – that often designant specific outputs.

Chao's practice invokes composting as a metaphor-process-material to reimagine bodies that may emerge in potential futures. The ingestibility of her work gestures to her way of sense-making with a convalescing body in this time of ecological crises. For Chao, bodies are interstitial processes, sites, and systems - organized clumps of matter. In compost piles, these porous boundaries become more palpable as bodies emerge and decay, break down and regenerate. For example, the biomaterial sculptures in her *symbionts of capitalist ruin* series, which are part of this installation, are bodies in processes of becoming. Half-devoured by their ecologies, these bodies symbiotically entangle with what is within reach and bodies that are microworlds for other bodies.

To reach beyond the confines of a body is to also grapple with the porosity of other human made perimeters. Chao likens these constructed disciplinary boundaries to the green plastic wall of our compost bins, a box designed to make the messy breakdown of decaying matter orderly. Yet perhaps our damaged planet is more like the unvetted composting piles in many ecosystems. Here Chao asks: what (bodies) could emerge from porous transdisciplinary spaces?

Gwenyth Chao (b. Toronto/ Tkaronto, Canada) Her research praxis asks: how can art be a portal to potential futures that offer alternate ways of knowing through material engagements? How would such reworlding destabilize systems of how knowledge is constructed, valued, and transmitted? Driven by an awareness of experimental possibility, Chao's recent projects explore how material reconstitution can be informed by an ecological awareness and how transdisciplinary processes can generate new ways of knowing. Chao was a contributing artist in the Leaning Out of Windows art & physics interdisciplinary project and an Artist-Researcher at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Her research-creation praxis is funded by the Ontario Arts Council, British Columbia Art Council, Canada Arts Council as well as the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council.

For press inquiries, please contact us at [contact@opensourcegallery.org](mailto:contact@opensourcegallery.org)

This program is supported, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts, the Joseph Robert Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.



Gwenyth Chao. *Eubrachyuroidea echinopsida*, ingestible biomaterial made from garlic peels, purple cabbage stem, tea leaves, gelatin, xanthan gum, & methylcellulose, 2023. Image courtesy of the artist.



Council on  
the Arts

NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
ARTS



NYC Cultural  
Affairs



Canada Council  
for the Arts  
Conseil des arts  
du Canada