



**CLAIRE OLIVER GALLERY PRESENTS *OUR FAMILY PORTRAIT*,
FIRST SOLO GALLERY EXHIBITION BY ARTIST SAMI TSANG IN THE U.S.**

MAY 24 - JULY 26, 2025



May 2025, New York, NY – Claire Oliver Gallery announces *Our Family Portrait*, the first U.S. solo exhibition by Chinese-Canadian artist Sami Tsang. The exhibition features new large-scale, richly layered figurative and allegorical works in ceramic sculpture, painting, and installation. Tsang’s studio practice delves into the complexities of mythology, identity, cultural inheritance, family dynamics, and personal liberation. *Our Family Portrait* will be on view May 24 - July 26, 2025, at Claire Oliver Gallery in Harlem.

Tsang’s ceramic figures exist in a liminal space between tradition and rebellion, bearing the weight of cultural history while simultaneously breaking free from its constraints. “My work and my studio practices are very empowering. I use my work as a way to have difficult conversations with myself,” Tsang says. “My studio practice often explores feeling silenced or confined; by making the work and putting these feelings and memories into forms, I can assert a voice that wasn’t always accessible to me.”

Our Family Portrait expands her exploration of the domestic sphere as both a site of comfort and constraint. Using humor and symbolism, her sculptural works reflect the psychological complexities of family life, evoking themes of transformation, resilience, and adaptation. Drawing from childhood memories, Chinese proverbs, and cultural symbols, Tsang challenges traditional roles and societal expectations, creating a deeply personal yet universally resonant narrative.

Raised in a traditional Chinese household as the youngest female child, Tsang navigates the tension between obedience, duty, and the pursuit of individuality, revealing the unspoken struggles of a bicultural identity. Her large-scale figures—bold, exaggerated, and emotionally charged—capture moments of repression, rebellion, and transformation. Through humor, distortion, and fantasy, her figures embody the negotiation between traditional Chinese values—rooted in filial piety, modesty, and family honor—and the desire for autonomy and self-expression.



Sami Tsang's work has gained international recognition, establishing her as a significant voice in contemporary ceramics and sculpture. She has participated in prestigious residencies, including the 7th

International Artist Retreat and Residency in Anhui, China, and the Harbourfront Centre Residency in Toronto. Her work has been exhibited at leading art fairs such as Art Toronto and EXPO Chicago, reinforcing her presence in both North American and global art markets.

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IMAGE CREDITS (L-R, top to bottom)

Sami Tsang, *Nourishing On Pain*, 2025. Stoneware, glaze, glass, acrylic, resin, faux fur, micro-beads embellishment, 60 x 21 x 31 in.

Sami Tsang, *When Heroes Were Real*, 2025. Stoneware, glass, acrylic, resin, micro-beads embellishment, wire.

Sami Tsang, *Dark Waters, Luminescent Dreams*, 2025. Stoneware, glaze, glass, lace, micro-beads embellishment, acrylic, light bulb, socket, chain, thread, resin, and faux fur. 78 x 32 x 31 in.

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ABOUT SAMI TSANG

Sami Tsang is a Toronto-based ceramic artist whose work explores domestic encounters and private narratives born out of the flux amidst two cultures – Chinese and Western. Mediated through materials and self-reflection, Tsang's work is a raw, truthful, and spontaneous response to the artist's feelings in a given moment. Chinese proverbs from childhood memories inspire the artist's initial sketches. As the piece evolves, the artist draws from the different stages of her childhood and adolescence, where she often felt repressed and silenced. Tsang's large-scale works point to the importance of representation and taking up space in connection with others. Her figurative sculptures are created from ceramics, rice paper, and textiles, creating characters that weave together domestic and psychological narratives related to the conservatism of her youth. She often references Chinese proverbs while using humor, distortion, and whimsy. Her work is a complex fusion of autobiography as a first-generation Chinese Canadian woman and symbolic markers of a common experience of the trap of domesticity and subjugation of individuality in contrast with liberation and exaltation of self-expression.

Tsang studied traditional Chinese painting for seven years in Hong Kong, which profoundly affected her pursuit of an art career. She earned her BA in Craft & Design from Sheridan College (2019) and her MFA in Ceramic Art from Alfred University, NY (2021).

ABOUT CLAIRE OLIVER GALLERY

Claire Oliver Gallery is located in Central Harlem in a four-story brownstone. For nearly 25 years, Claire Oliver Gallery has showcased and celebrated artwork, with a focus on work by women and people of color, which transcends and challenges the traditional art historical canon. The gallery's forward-thinking

program and exclusive commitment to the primary market allows for an intensive focus that has nurtured and grown the careers of our artists. Many of the gallery's artists have been included in The Venice Biennale, The Whitney Biennial, and biennales in Sydney, Pittsburgh, and Lyon and have exhibited works in major international museums including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, Centre Georges Pompidou, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, and The Los Angeles County Museum of Art amongst others. Claire Oliver Gallery artists are included in the permanent collections of many important museums worldwide including The Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Tate Britain, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The State Hermitage Museum, MoMA, and the Museum of Arts and Design amongst many others. Claire Oliver Gallery held the first American exhibition for the Russian collaborative AES+F, whose work went on to twice represent Russia in the Russian pavilion of the Venice Biennale. Gallery artists have received prestigious fellowships including Fulbright, Guggenheim, USArtist and National Endowment for the Arts.

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