

Karen Lue

安詳 (or, when i die
i want to die peacefully)

About the Artist

Karen Lue is a Chinese American artist based in Pittsburgh, PA, whose photographs explore aspects of identity in relation to concepts of grief, loss, isolation, and displacement. Chronicling her own construction of identity beginning with the search for “home,” she looks for objects, people, and scenes that objectify feelings of irrelevance in environments that are supposed to function as spaces of shelter and refuge. She also examines her identity through self-portraiture and the body as it is shaped by her race, ethnicity, chronic illness, and mental well-being.

She was an inaugural Visual Arts Coalition for Equity Fellow in 2021 and has exhibited at the Pittsburgh Center for Arts & Media, CDCP Project Space, and SPACE Gallery. Karen will be featured in Plain Silk, Uncarved Wood at Associated Artists of Pittsburgh opening in September 2022.

This exhibition is part of Silver Eye's Pittsburgh Presents series, a year-round project to highlight the work of extraordinary artists and image-makers working in our community.

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After the passing of my paternal grandmother, my father and his siblings gathered in his hometown of Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province in April 2018 in order to settle their parents' estate. With property values skyrocketing in China, their main goal was to sell my grandparents' apartment that still contained most of their belongings.

In an attempt to process through my grandmother's death, my relationship with my father, and my family history, I wanted to record the apartment and its contents before we no longer owned it. These images relay how the apartment looked in its final days and document myself and my family before and after visiting my grandparents' tomb.





I produced a zine of these images, paired with excerpts from my personal journal entries that give further insight into what I was thinking and feeling at the time. The title of the series comes from a Mandarin term 安詳 (ānxiáng), which translates to "serene," "peaceful," or "composed." It can be used to describe how people die or how one's expression appears on their dead body.

I am still grappling with how to reconcile the ocean-wide separation of my family, never having the opportunity to really know them, and how my family history and this separation has affected my father and ultimately me.

—Karen Lue





	Karen Lue	爸爸 <i>in the hotel bed</i>	2018 Archival pigment print 20 x 16 Artist proof	\$425
	Karen Lue	<i>offerings</i>	2018 Archival pigment print 20 x 16 Artist proof	\$425
	Karen Lue	<i>self-portrait in 爺爺奶奶's bedroom</i>	2018 Archival pigment print 20 x 16 Artist proof	\$425
	Karen Lue	<i>self-portrait in 爺爺奶奶's kitchen</i>	2018 Archival pigment print 20 x 16 Artist proof	\$425

Silver Eye Center for Photography
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