

February 23, 2026

*For Immediate Release: Siyan Wong, a first-generation Chinese immigrant and self-taught artist, will be presenting her first solo exhibition of paintings, titled “Mother Warriors,” at Equity Gallery, 245 Broome St. NYC, from 3/12/26 – 4/11/26.*

Siyan Wong: Mother Warriors  
3/12/26 - 4/11/26

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 12th, 6 - 8pm  
Artist Talk: Saturday, March 21st, 3 - 5 pm



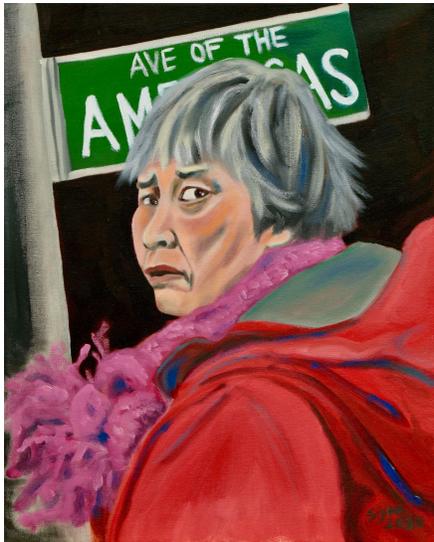
Siyan Wong, *Big Kitchen*, 2026, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 in.

Siyan Wong’s paintings depict immigrant Chinese women working in garment factories, restaurants, homecare, and as street vendors. Inspired by the immigrant dreams of a better life and the reality of survival in a dehumanizing economy, Wong notes that her paintings “make the lives of Chinese women, and the working poor, visible while directing the viewer’s gaze to their body and soul as they toil.” A self-taught artist, Wong’s outsider painting style, replete with decorative patterning, shallow pictorial space, and panning compositions, offers a closely observed, unfiltered, cinematic view of the unrelenting struggles, yet earnest fortitude, of her subjects.

In keeping with Wong's commitment to including and giving back to community voices, Wong has chosen to devote the latter two sections of the gallery to group exhibitions that feature other artists. The

center gallery is introduced by Wong's painting *Familiar Stranger*, depicting an elderly Asian woman she saw collecting cans and bottles in the Lower East Side to exchange for five cents a piece at the collection center. Her particular facial expression, of someone surviving precariously, synthesizes Wong's concerns about immigrant and migrant labor.

"Familiar Stranger" thus forms the title and basis of the group exhibition featuring work by contemporary artists who expand the dialogue on human life made abject during their assimilation to the US: Luisa Henao, Ying Hung, Sharon Cheuk Wun Lee, Elim Mak, and Mary Ting.



Siyan Wong, *Familiar Stranger*, 2020, oil on canvas, 20 x 16 in.

Demonstrating an aptitude for artmaking at an early age, Ms. Wong briefly attended Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, which ultimately constituted her sole formal art training. From an immigrant working-class family striving for a better life, Ms. Wong was persuaded to set her sights on a professional career. She transferred to Stuyvesant High School, studied history and economics in college, and subsequently completed a law degree. Not losing sight of her roots, she obtained employment as a workers' rights lawyer.

"I never stopped making art... I just began teaching myself by studying the works of painters I admired. I loved Paul Cézanne's colors, the confidence of Alice Neel's lines, and the powerful stories Jacob Lawrence told with simplified figures and forms." She adds, "I soon discovered Isidre Nonell and was taken by his passionate portrayal of the socially ostracized. As a workers' rights lawyer, I was in daily contact with everyday working people, and conversations about power, money, and the human spirit became central to my work. Like Nonell, I needed to paint those that are 'invisible'."

In 2025, Ms. Wong was able to retire from her lawyer post, focus full-time on painting, and work toward realizing her exhibition vision. In the back gallery of "Mother Warriors" is work by local high school students whose work Wong solicited to explore the immigrant experience. By inviting students to participate in her exhibition, Wong hopes to ignite a wider communal reflection on the joys and challenges of being an immigrant in America with artworks that, she adds, "offer a shared vision and speak where words cannot."

Siyan Wong's projects are fiscally sponsored by New York Foundation for the Arts and are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature; and in part with funds from Creative Engagement, a regrant program supported by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and administered by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Her work is also supported by the Asian Women Giving Circle.

For further information about the exhibition, the artist, or Equity Gallery, contact Michael Gormley, Executive Director at [michael@nyartistsequity.org](mailto:michael@nyartistsequity.org)



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