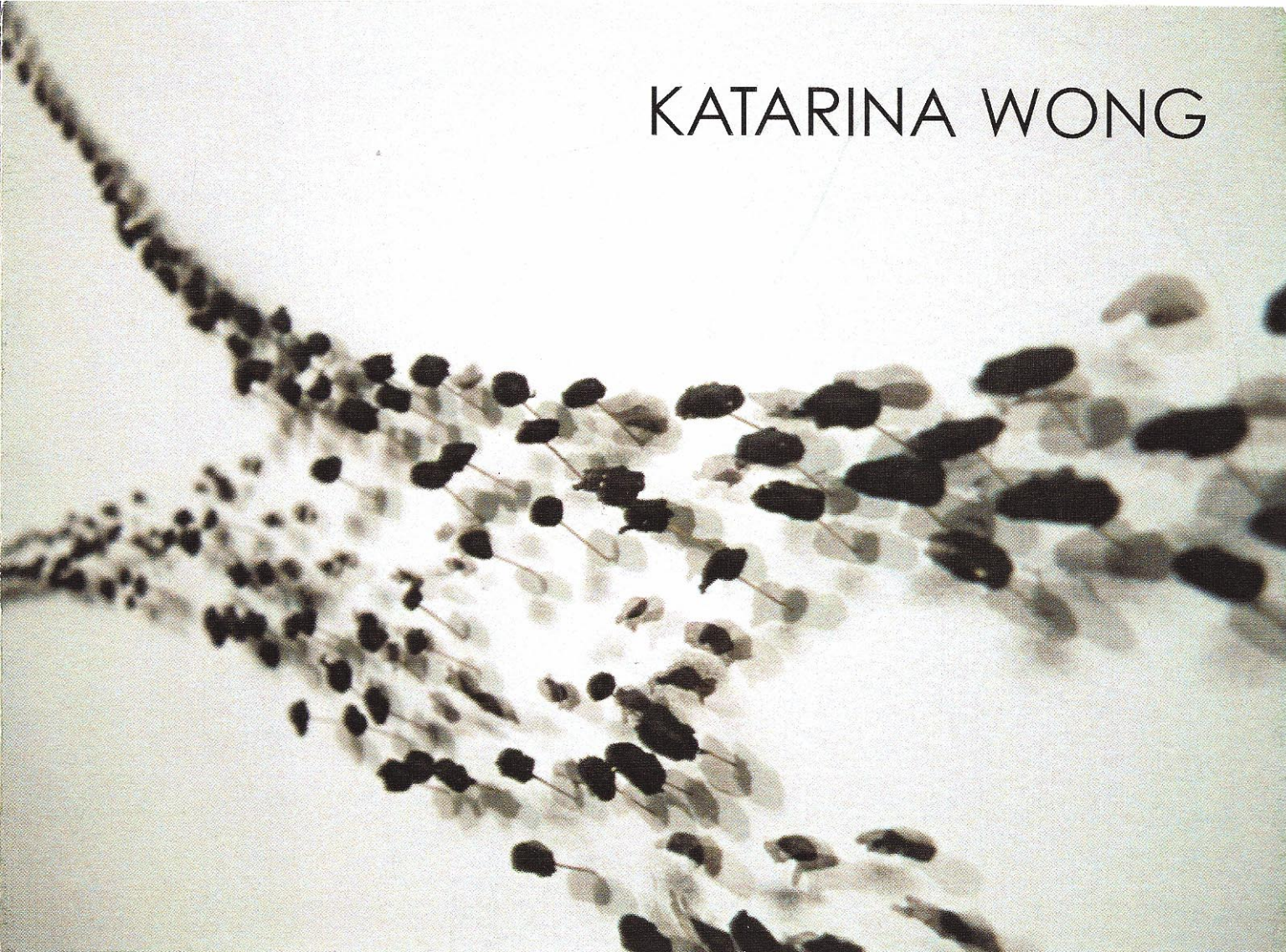
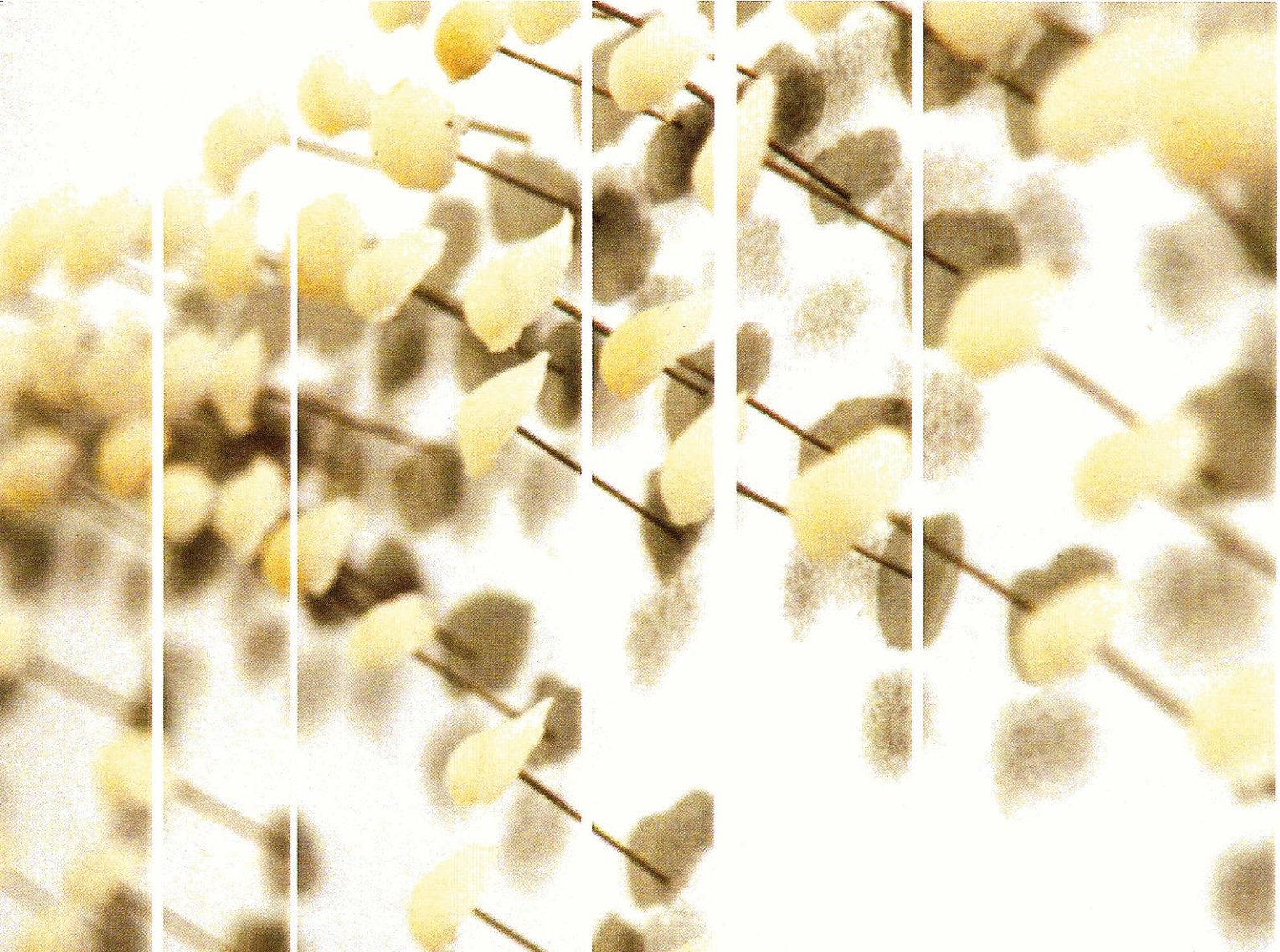
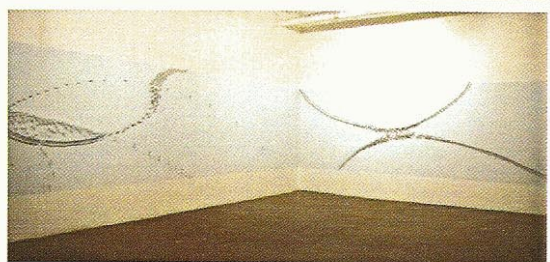
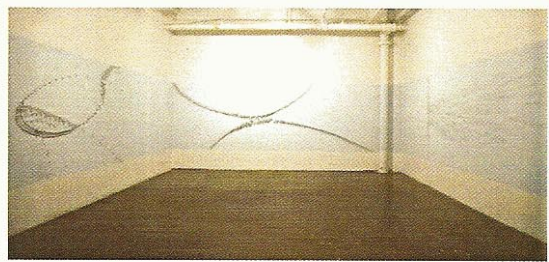
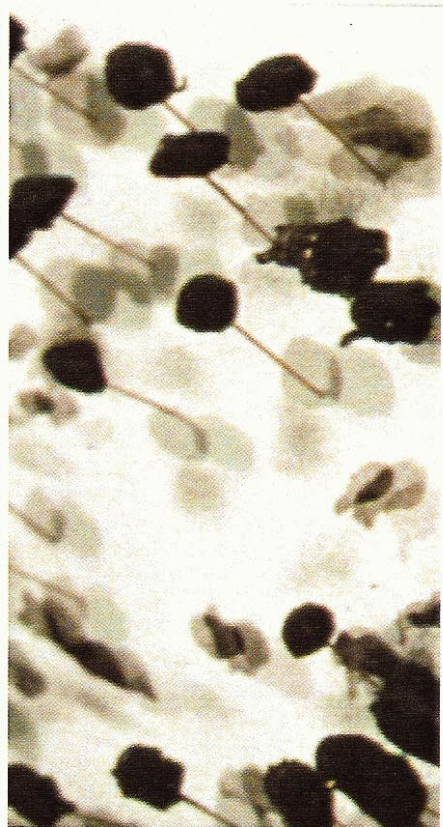
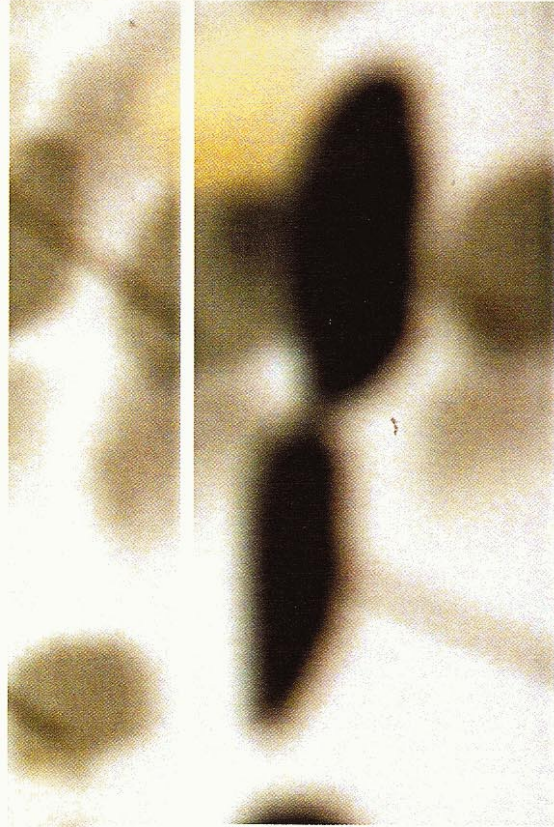
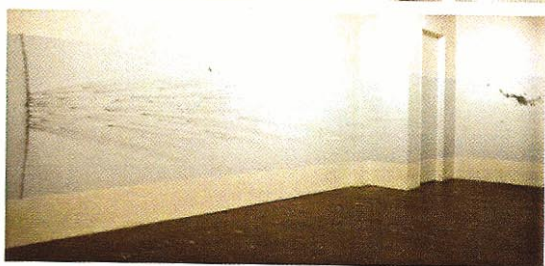
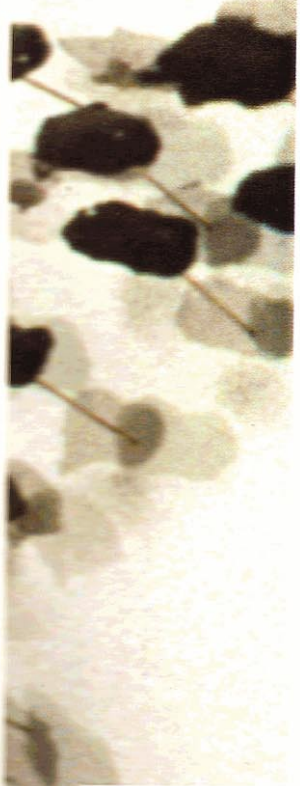


KATARINA WONG









Comprised of hundreds of individual elements, Katarina Wong's installation *The Laws of Intersection and Union* operates as a single broad metaphor. It sweeps around the circumference of the gallery upon a wide swath of pale blue, an ambiguous cosmos upon which certain forms arrange themselves. Through a configuration that is intentional and specific, the configuration of these forms speaks ultimately about the difficulty of confirming location, the imprecision of defining one's personal space among a universe of like-things.

The prevalent formal element of Wong's work is the singular component form of a cast wax fingerprint. The prevalent conceptual element of the work is the Buddhist concept of interdependent reality—the assertion that reality is not objective in nature but is instead a co-creative act dependent upon everyone's constant participation. With this in mind, Wong began collecting wax castings of friends' fingerprints over the last few years and arranging them in configurations that mimicked varying migratory patterns—a flock of birds, a swarm of insects, a herd of animals.


Wong's interest in natural patterns of migration has a personal texture, stemming from her own history as the child of Cuban and Chinese parents, raised in a third, dominant culture here in the United States. Her use of this literal allusion—the migratory pattern—brings forth other queries, beyond suggesting that these formations are natural and share commonalities across species. The most prominent question is how to determine individual location amid the horde. Subsumed within a broader field of patterns, what happens to the single component?

According to the fluctuating presence of Wong's installation, the answer remains ambiguous. From a distance, certain portions of the installed work appear to be two-dimensional renderings, wall drawings depicting these migratory themes. Only on closer view do we recognize the subtle optical shift. It is a combination of the tone and texture of the wax castings and the fact—not immediately apparent—that Wong has selectively added painted shadows to the actual shadows cast by the work.

The result is a soft reverberation between forms and shadows, between two and three dimensions. Too subtle to be a typical optical allusion, it is powerful enough to accentuate certain ambiguities. It reiterates the ultimate difficulty of defining a fixed condition within these sets of fluid variables. While each component of Wong's piece is, literally, a fixed point on the space of the wall, its cumulative effect is to emphasize the opposite condition, to impart the sensation that both the individual components and their collected totality are in constant flux.

Within this ambiguity of form and appearance, we are tempted to ask a question in reference to the title of the work, namely *what are the laws of intersection and union?* The law appears to be that things pull apart and things draw together, merging into hybrid groups. It is a maneuver of interdependent reality that creates form and pattern, but there is no final, fixed form to the equation. It is more about continuous motion—an everchanging present—than it is about definable positions.

In the final wall of her installation, Wong illustrates no pattern whatsoever, as though in a gesture to dissolve the hand of the artist. There is only a gentle and ambiguous gathering of forms, giving the impression that they have found their own points of rest.



Katarina Wong is an installation artist based in New York City. She has exhibited her work nationally, and has attended residencies both in the US and internationally. Her MFA in sculpture is from the University of Maryland at College Park, and she also holds a Masters in Theological Studies in Buddhism from Harvard Divinity School.

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photography: Jessica Kourkounis design: Shoko Asano



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