San Francisco, December 26, 2018 - Creativity Explored, the premier nonprofit visual art gallery and studio for artists with developmental disabilities, is proud to announce *Marilyn Wong: Catching Spirit*, the first solo exhibition of work by Marilyn Wong.

In her over 30 year career, Marilyn Wong (b. 1949) has developed an exceptional artistic vision. The exhibition highlights the range and depth of Wong’s artistic practice with a focus on recent works on paper, from 2010 to the present. The exhibition will consist of over a dozen paintings as well as a new installation that will be produced by the artist throughout the duration of the exhibition in the gallery space.
Wong translates an enduring captivation with pop culture, from icons like Elvis to Prince to popular cinema, including 60’s Beach Party and martial arts films, into densely layered compositions, built with complex linework pulsing with vibrant color.

Wong has established her own visual vocabulary with elaborate systems of construction that are as intricate as they are enigmatic. With her compelling, singular style, Wong has developed an impressive body of work. When working in the studio, Wong’s momentum is unwavering. When the spirit moves her, she is a force to be reckoned with.

Of her work, she has stated that she is, “painting her mind.” Wong takes an introspective approach to illustrate her subjects, often producing works that interplay light and form with grids of circles and shapes that render the subject within various planes of perspectives. After a short time away from the studio, recently Wong stated, “My spirit is back.”
Creativity Explored will host the opening reception for *Marilyn Wong: Catching Spirit* on Thursday, January 10, 2019 from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the Creativity Explored gallery. A VIP Donor Preview will take place from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM before the public reception.

![Untitled](image)

*Untitled* by Marilyn Wong, 2013, mixed media on paper, 20.75 x 26.5 inches

**About Marilyn Wong**

Wong grew up in Allentown, PA and was raised by her parents, who immigrated from China as children. Her paternal relatives encouraged the Wongs to move to San Francisco to be closer to the family and Chinese community, and access culturally relevant educational services. After moving to San Francisco, Wong enrolled in a Chinese school and began learning her read and write her native language. Mandarin characters often appear in her paintings as both descriptive and artistic elements.

As a child, Wong’s parents would give her comic books, such as the Archie series, that complemented her literacy and allowed her to access popular culture. Wong still enjoys comic books to this day and occasionally uses characters from her favorite comics as
subjects for her painterly abstractions.

Wong has long been fascinated by TV music specials, featuring the likes of some her favorite artists like The Beatles, Michael Jackson, and Prince. Wong often features these musical icons in her characteristic style of abstraction, rendering the subject unrecognizable yet capturing the essence and energy of these celebrities.

Marilyn Wong joined the CE studio in 1985. Initially, Wong would wander away from the studio throughout the day. Over time, she became more comfortable at CE and began engrossing herself in her painting and working with a variety of instructors. After working with Visual Arts Instructor Eric Larson, Wong’s work began to evolve, becoming more consistent, layered, and detailed.

In her early days at the studios, Wong often drew from medical and anatomical figures, incorporating cellular and biological forms into her abstractions. She would also draw from bird’s eye view photographs and topographical maps, occasionally featuring her
hometown of Allentown, PA. Wong’s *The Woman A Model* features her characteristic style of dissecting and reconstructing limbs and parts into an expansive layout of lines and shapes, reminiscent of aerial photography. While typically formal in subject matter, Wong’s cartographic elements and style of depiction merge the subject with an unseen and expansive environment that unfolds over time.

Wong continues to push herself to the limits to create her work, excelling in large formats that allow her abstractions to take up space and swell with energy and form. Once she begins on a new piece she wants to work until it’s finished. Her artmaking brings her a sense of calm and solace. She has established a meditative mark-making practice where she can work out her anxieties and ideas on paper.

Wong’s artwork has been widely exhibited in a number of group exhibitions around the world, including *Art and Advocacy: To Be Developmentally Disabled* at the California Museum (Sacramento, 2017), *Resonating Resonance* at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art (Japan, 2016), and *Bay Area Now 7* at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (San Francisco, 2014). In 2018 Wong’s work was featured in *Mind Place*, a
group exhibition at the CE gallery, and most recently in *6 Women: Female Voices from Creativity Explored* at the Marriott Stanton Hotel in South Beach, Florida.

*Untitled* by Marilyn Wong, 2013, mixed media on paper, 20.75 x 26.5 inches

**About Creativity Explored**

For the past 36 years, Creativity Explored has given artists with developmental disabilities the means to create and share their work with the community, celebrating the power of art to change lives. Located in the vibrant cultural and dining corridor that crosses San Francisco’s Mission District, Creativity Explored provides a supportive studio environment, including individualized instruction from mentoring artists, quality supplies, and professional opportunities to exhibit and sell their art. The organization establishes these artists’ work as an emerging and increasingly important contribution to the contemporary art world.

Founded by Florence and Elias Katz in 1983, Creativity Explored has expanded to two locations: the main gallery and studio on 16th Street in San Francisco’s Mission District, and a second studio in nearby Potrero Hill. Gallery programming now includes five
exhibitions per year, with more than 10,000 people visiting the gallery and studio annually.

Over the years, the organization’s innovative and respected programs, structure and culture have been recognized as a model worldwide in the field of art and disability. In addition to the studios, exhibitions and gallery sales, Creativity Explored has developed a licensing division, working with the likes of affordable modern furnishing company CB2, Google, and fashion house COMMES de GARÇONS; and providing art services for several properties, including BRIDGE Housing (affordable housing), Mercy Housing (affordable housing), Chinatown Community Development Center, and Avalon Mission Bay (upscale apartment community).

All images © Creativity Explored, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

Images for Marilyn Wong: Catching Spirit may be downloaded from the Press Room at the Creativity Explored website:


For more information: 415-863-2108; www.creativityexplored.org

Media Contacts:
Michael Korcek, 415-863-2108; michaelkorcek@creativityexplored.org
Jaime Wong, 415-863-2108; jaimewong@creativityexplored.org