

Art Market

5 Asian American–Led Galleries Building Inclusive Art Communities

Jenny Wu

May 21, 2024 8:51PM

Since the term “Asian American” was coined by activists in 1968 to foster a sense of community among a diverse population, those identifying as Asian American or Pacific Islanders (AAPI) have found ways to embrace, challenge, and organize around this expansive social category.

The AAPI gallerists featured here offer insights from New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago into their efforts to cultivate inclusive and impactful communities around their programs. Their approaches include working directly with nearby AAPI-owned businesses, taking risks on previously marginalized voices and perspectives, supporting artists’ projects that treat exhibition spaces as social laboratories, and actively pushing back against the model minority myth and other harmful stereotypes in their day-to-day interactions.

Here, we speak to the names behind five AAPI-owned galleries about how they are creating inclusive communities around their programs.

Cecilia Zhang Jalboukh

[Yi Gallery](#), New York





Portrait of Cecilia Zhang Jalboukh. Photo by Flaneurshan.studio. Courtesy of Yi Gallery.

[Annesta Le](#)
Fluid Forms I, 2023
Yi Gallery

“I’ve always asked myself: What does an art gallery do?” said Cecilia Jalboux, the founder of [Yi Gallery](#). For Jalboux, who established her program in Brooklyn and online in 2018 with an eye for both conceptualism and craft, the main purpose of her space was to expose visitors to art in a creative and site-sensitive way.

Jalboux is drawn to artists who work with difficult materials. The first artist Jalboux chose to show was [Annesta Le](#), who creates minimalist sculptures from neon tubes. Such sculptures demand an intense production process involving technicians and complicated transportation logistics. Although neon is not often the first material a gallerist chooses to handle, it prepared Jalboux for the hands-on research required of the job. “It’s since been an ongoing learning experience,” she said.

ART SY



ART SY



[Sun Young Kang](#)
Memories, Veiled II, 2024
Yi Gallery
Sold

[Li Xia \(绿李 Lilou Oh Yeah\)](#)
Lait concentré 1 (condensed milk), 2022
Yi Gallery

Yi Gallery is situated in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, a neighborhood that is home to a diverse array of middle-class immigrants. “We have amazing small businesses in Sunset Park,” Jalboukh told Artsy. The proximity of these businesses has been beneficial to the gallery. For example, to realize an immersive installation for artist [Sun Young Kang](#)’s first solo exhibition, the gallery needed metal frames made, so Jalboukh took one of Kang’s drawings and walked through the neighborhood knocking on the door of every metal shop she came upon. She eventually connected with a Chinese fabricator who took on the unconventional project. According to Jalboukh, her gallery’s success is in part “thanks to the Asian community in Brooklyn.”

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-5-asian-american-led-galleries-building-inclusive-art-communities>