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HUFF POST ARTS

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Angel Chen: Return to the Shadowlands | Dauntingly tall canvases set out to harness the energy of the natural world using the once-worn and now-discarded as 'raw materials.' Chen describes her work as "inspired by nature and all its fragile and harsh beauty; painting represents the sensuous over the intellectual, process over concept, the act over the idea." With these works, Chen creates a new personal reality based on ancient forms. The conceptual realm of philosophy and the materialism of high fashion are blended into these violent interior landscapes, merging into a whole.

Elemental forces are articulated onto rough wood canvases through remnants of suede, silk chiffon, fur, and gauze. The duality evokes the eternal oppositions of masculine and feminine, visible and invisible, and life and death. The pale alchemy of aged grays, blacks, and whites (snow rushing down a steep slope in "Avalanche;" the opaque gray air in "Tornado;" the dissolving curve of "Big Wave") conjures an existential reverence for a wilderness suffused with a hidden spiritual gravity. Leaned and not hung, these works defy the planar surface of the canvas and occupy space as both painting and sculptural object. Ultimately they reveal hidden geometries and metaphysical forces within the subtext of the beautiful and sublime.

Angel Chen: Return to the Shadowlands opens March 20 at Here is Elsewhere