



Artist Ponnappa Prakkamakul's artwork, *Year of the Dragon*, in Chin Park. Photo credit: Lee-Daniel Tran.

## **The Greenway Conservancy Announces New Public Art Celebrating Year of the Dragon**

*Installations by Ponnappa Prakkamakul and Zhidong Zhang come to Auntie Kay and Uncle Frank Chin Park on The Greenway*

**February 22, 2024 - Boston, MA** - [The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy](https://www.rosekennedygreenway.org/) is excited to announce collaborations with artists Ponnappa Prakkamakul and Zhidong Zhang on public art installations as part of their annual Chinese Zodiac series. The Conservancy installed Prakkamakul's *Year of the Dragon* on February 15, 2024 and will install Zhang's *Far Away, From Home* in mid-March 2024. Both artworks will be sited in Auntie Kay and Uncle Frank Chin Park.

About the two works, Adam Torres, the Conservancy's Public Art Project Manager, says, "Ceremony, community, and tradition are everything in times of fear and uncertainty. For the first time in The Greenway's Public Art Program, we have commissioned two separate sculptures for the Chinese Zodiac and Lunar New Year. In the spirit of the abundant and rejuvenating dragon, Prakkamakul and Zhang's pieces center love, community, and identity at the heart of Chin Park. Each piece dovetails into the other along the park's Serpentine Path. At the northern end of the path, Zhang's multimedia installation invites an intimate and introspective experience to the viewer while at the southern end, Prakkamakul's colorful sculpture celebrates community, playfulness, and joy. We at the Conservancy are beyond excited to welcome these pieces to the park and to help facilitate their meaningful exchange."



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### **Ponnapa Prakkamakul: Year of the Dragon**

[Photos available here](#). Photo credits: Lee-Daniel Tran (@leedanieltranphoto).

Prakkamakul's *Year of the Dragon* draws on Chinese mythology, in which dragons are associated with rain, wind, and bodies of water. They are seen as both creators and protectors of these landscapes. Within the 12 animals of the Chinese Zodiac, dragons are the only imaginary animal and are said to be imbued with magical qualities. Inspired by these ideas, Prakkamakul saw Chin Park's serpentine-like form as a magical dragon that protects and brings joy to neighborhoods along Boston's waterfront.

Prakkamakul's installation is a twenty-foot long interactive dragon, playfully named Ju Long Ju Long (巨龙, 聚龙), which means *Giant Dragon, Gathering Dragon*. Formed out of brightly colored plywood, it stands seven feet tall, four feet wide, and is engraved with quotes from members of Boston's Chinatown community gathered during co-creation workshops. It also features two hands-on play elements for children: a large spinning kaleidoscope and a hand drum. In June 2024, Prakkamakul will install the dragon's "tail", a vinyl ground mural that was collaboratively created with A-VOYCE youth (Asian Voice of Organized Youth for Community Empowerment) that will stretch 60 feet throughout Chin Park.

"I believe that joy is a shared experience that can pass on from one person to another," says Prakkamakul. "This collective experience brings people together and strengthens our sense of community, especially in a community experiencing transformation from gentrification. The installation aims to foster playful moments that spark joy and bring people together."

The Conservancy held an opening celebration for *Year of the Dragon* on February 18, 2024 in Chin Park. Later this year on **June 10, 2024**, the Conservancy will also host a Dragon Boat Festival to celebrate Prakkamakul's work.

*Year of the Dragon* is on display through January 2025.



*One of the photographs that will be on display in Far Away, From Home. Photo Credit: Zhidong Zhang*

**Zhidong Zhang: Far Away, From Home**

[See photography selections for this project here](#). Final images of the installation will be released at a later date. Photo credits: Zhidong Zhang.

Zhang's *Far Away, From Home*, an image-based sculpture, is part of the artist's ongoing inquiry into the complexities of home, immigration, identity politics, diaspora, and queerness in visual cultures. The installation takes inspiration from the essay *Far Away, From Home: The Comma Between* by filmmaker and writer Trinh T. Minh-ha, engaging with Trinh's musings on otherness as both "a site of return" and "a site of change." Zhang's sculpture re-interprets the form of a familiar domestic shelving unit from their childhood home. This curio cabinet, standing at more than eight feet tall and over six feet wide, serves as a display case for their photographic work.

Through an idiosyncratic assembling of materials (latex balloons, tattoo sheets, cut paper, light, and domestic furniture) and the interplay of mediums (photography, sculpture, assemblage, and installation), *Far Away, From Home* invokes a narrative of resistance and resilience amidst fractured social and cultural strata, and expands the possibilities of individual and collective agency that is interwoven with care, vulnerability, joy, and openness.

"What's the role of art in times of crisis?" asks Zhang. "How do we stretch and deepen our understanding of art as radical acts of care? This installation brings care and joy to the fore, as well as troubling our practices of navigating the binary systems that limit who we can be and what we can build together."



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The Conservancy will hold an opening reception for *Far Away, From Home* on **March 21st in Chin Park** with a rain date of March 28th.

*Far Away, From Home* will be on display from March 2024 through March 2025.

### **About Ponnappa Prakkamakul**

Ponnappa Prakkamakul (she/her) is a multidisciplinary artist and landscape architect based in Massachusetts. Her work explores the relationship between humans and our environment, focusing on how we create belonging amidst cultural displacement. Prakkamakul has worked extensively with Boston's Chinatown community and the Leather District, creating past community-engaged projects that include *Joyful Stitch* (2023) supported by Now+There, *Together Everywhere* (2022) supported by Pao Arts Center, and *Where We Belong* (2021) in partnership with the Asian Community Development Corporation. Prakkamakul earned her Master's degree in Landscape Architecture from the Rhode Island School of Design and currently is a landscape architect at Sasaki Design Firm.

### **About Zhidong Zhang**

Zhidong Zhang (he/they) is an artist, educator, and plant lover. Their practice explores social, political, cultural, and sexual relationships among the institution, the body, and modes of embodiment. Working primarily with photography, text, and installation, their work negotiates and creates narratives where image-making becomes a form of history-making. Zhang's practice and process invite alternative, autonomous modes of identity construction through/by/via metabolizing bodies that are often overlooked, eroticized, or politicized.

Zhang's work has appeared in *i-D Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and *Boston Art Review*, among others. Recent awards include the 2023 Creator Labs Photo Fund, the Collective Futures Fund 2023, and a Massachusetts Cultural Council Fellowship in 2021. They were a participant at the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture and an artist-in-residence at MASS MoCA, Center for Photography at Woodstock, and Boston Center for the Arts. Zhang currently lives and works in Boston, MA.

### **Thanks to Our Supporters**

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*Year of the Dragon* and *Far Away, From Home* were made possible with additional support from TD Charitable Foundation.

We are especially grateful to the *Year of the Dragon* open call jury members – Leslie Condon, Andy Li, LeEr Li, Angela Soo Hoo, Quyen Vo, Cheryl Wing-Zi Wong, Daphne Xu – as well as to



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previous Greenway Associate Curator, Sheila Novak, for her facilitation of the 2023 open call process.

### **About The Greenway and the Greenway Conservancy ([rosekennedygreenway.org](https://rosekennedygreenway.org))**

The Greenway is a contemporary public park in the heart of Boston. The Greenway welcomes millions of visitors annually to gather, play, unwind, and explore. The Greenway Conservancy is the non-profit responsible for the management and care of The Greenway. The majority of the public park's annual budget is generously provided by private sources.

The Greenway Conservancy Public Art Program brings innovative and contemporary art to Boston through free, seasonal exhibitions that engage people in meaningful experiences, interactions, and dialogue with art, each other, and the most pressing issues of our time. Past Greenway exhibitions can be viewed on the [Conservancy's website](https://rosekennedygreenway.org).