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# GARDENS AS COSMIC TERRAINS

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An installation by  
**Heidi Lau**

The Catacombs • May 7th–July 3rd  
Open Saturdays and Sundays, 11am–5pm

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*Gardens as Cosmic Terrains* is the culmination of Heidi Lau's year-long exploration of Green-Wood in 2021 as the Cemetery's first-ever artist in residence. She often took long solitary walks through the grounds with the Taoist concept of 游 (yóu/jau4) in mind. It signifies the convergence of wandering, play, and introspection, which together invite a reawakening of self-knowledge.

This installation was inspired by those walks, which evoked memories for Lau of her late grandfather's garden in Macau. The meticulous arrangement of plantings, ponds, and pathways in traditional Chinese gardens are a metaphor for time, space, and our place in the cosmos. The intention, as historians David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames have noted, is to create a non-hierarchical relationship between the built environment and the natural world, where "one best passes through a garden by matching one's rhythms to the rhythms of passing time."\* Similarly, visitors to

Green-Wood become attuned to how both the landscape and the static monuments endure change and transformation with each passing season. There is an inherent interplay between the forces we can control, at least temporarily, and those beyond our control.

Created to be displayed in the womb-like interior of the Catacombs, this installation maps its own cosmos. Just as the interspersed moments of contemplation in Chinese gardens serve as touchpoints for memory, Lau's sculptures are evocative of ritualistic funerary objects, such as urns, spirit vessels, and bells. Their highly textured surfaces fuse together a range of seemingly opposing sources: the ancient and the post-human future, injury and agency, the sacred and the profane, and the architectural and the corporeal. As a result, there is a sense of continuous movement as these varying elements morph into one another. A restlessness in the otherwise quiet repose of the Catacombs.

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\* David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, "The cosmological setting of Chinese gardens" 1998.

Green-Wood's Artist-in-Residence program is generously supported by Bevin Cline, Carla Shen and Chris Schott, and Scott Rofey and Olivia Song. To learn more about the program and the 2022 artist in residence, Rowan Renee, visit: [green-wood.com/artist-in-residence](https://green-wood.com/artist-in-residence)

This installation is curated by Harry Weil, Green-Wood's director of public programs.

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