



# Rainbow Chan

## Notations: Red Scale

### 音譜: 鱗動

**16 Sep 2025 - 20 Feb 2026**

### Exhibition Details

**Date:** 16 September 2025 to 20 February 2026

**Venue:** Institute for Australian and Asian Arts and Culture, Building EA, Parramatta South Campus, Western Sydney University

171 Victoria Road, Rydalmere

**Gallery Opening Hours:** Monday – Friday (9:30am – 5:00pm)

**Contact:** [lindsay.liu@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:lindsay.liu@westernsydney.edu.au)

### Exhibition Opening

**Date and Time:** 16 September 2025 4:30pm for 5:00pm start

**Venue:** Institute for Australian and Asian Arts and Culture, Building EA, Parramatta South Campus, Western Sydney University

171 Victoria Road, Rydalmere

**Opening Speaker:** Dr Natalie Seiz (AGNSW)

**Live Performance:** Rainbow Chan

**Music (guzheng):** Chenmeng Jiang (WSU)

**Closing Remarks:** Professor Saba Bebawi (WSU)

Please [RSVP HERE](#).

The Institute for Australian and Asian Arts and Culture (IAC) at Western Sydney University is proud to present the exhibition of the year, *Notations: Red Scale* 音譜：鱗動, by Rainbow Chan (陳雋然), a pioneering interdisciplinary artist whose innovative practice seamlessly integrates contemporary visual art, experimental pop music, and performance. Her work delves into themes of cultural representation, (mis)translation, matrilineal histories and diasporic heritage, drawing upon the endangered bridal laments of the Weitou people—Hong Kong’s first settlers and her matrilineal ancestors. These songs, traditionally performed by young women before their arranged marriages, are acts of protest and mourning in the face of change. The ritual begins with the song “Opening the Mouth”, which likens the sunrise to red fish scales cracking open the eastern sky. The exhibition features works of silk painting, calligraphy on *xuan* paper and sculptural wall works. They are visually stunning, emotionally evocative, and deeply creative.

This exhibition marks the artist’s first institutional solo show.

Rainbow Chan is a highly accomplished visual artist, vocalist, and performer. She has performed and exhibited widely both in Australia and internationally, including Sydney Opera House, Carriageworks, Melbourne Music Week, Iceland Airwaves, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Tai Kwun Contemporary, M+ in Hong Kong, SXSW, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Art Gallery of NSW, Cement Fondu, Blindside, Queensland University Art Museum, Australian National University, and I-Project Space in Beijing.

Rainbow Chan was named among the 2022 “40 Under 40 Most Influential Asian Australians” for her contributions to arts and culture. In 2024, she was honoured with commissions to showcase her work at the Yokohama Triennale (Japan) and *Primavera 2024: Young Australian Artists* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Her critically acclaimed one-woman performance *The Bridal Lament* has been presented at Liveworks, OzAsia, Arts House, and Riverside Theatres with Sydney Festival. Chan’s interdisciplinary approach continues to position her as a leading figure in the Australian and international art scenes.

Rainbow Chan is a proud recipient of the IAC Chey Fellowship for this exhibition. The fellowship is to strengthen the artist's practice and support the arts by fostering collaborations between the artist and IAC.

## About the Artist

Chun Yin Rainbow Chan (陳雋然) is a celebrated interdisciplinary artist, vocalist, music producer, and art educator based in Naarm/Melbourne. Working fluidly across contemporary visual art and popular music, her practice examines themes of cultural representation, (mis)translation, matrilineal inheritance, feminist expression, and diasporic identity. Grounded in her ancestral ties to the Weitou people — Hong Kong's first settlers — Chan's work revitalises endangered women's folk traditions, most notably bridal laments, reinterpreting them through immersive installations, silk painting, traditional weaving, sound, and performance, for contemporary audiences.



Photo by Abdela Igmieren

Chan holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Sydney and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of NSW. As a highly acclaimed visual artist and musician, she has exhibited and performed widely across Australia and internationally at art institutions and festivals, including the Sydney Opera House, Phoenix Central Park, Carriageworks, Melbourne Music Week, Iceland Airwaves, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Tai Kwun Contemporary, M+ in Hong Kong, SXSW, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Firstdraft, Art Gallery of NSW, Cement Fondu, Blindside, Queensland University Art Museum, Australian National University, and I-Project Space in Beijing.

Chan's work has garnered significant recognition through major commissions and presentations. In 2024 she was commissioned by both the Yokohama Triennale (Japan) and the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia for Primavera: Young Australian Artists. Her music is celebrated for its innovative fusion of experimental pop, electronic production, and traditional Cantonese influences, positioning her as one of Australia's most distinctive voices in contemporary sound. Her genre-defying releases, including *Spacings* (2016), *Pillar* (2019), and *Stanley* (2021), have earned critical praise from outlets such as *The Guardian*, *Rolling Stone Australia*, and ABC. Her documentary *Songs from a Walled Village* (ABC Radio National, 2021), was a finalist in the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union Prizes. Chan won "Artist of the Year" at the 2022 FBi Radio SMAC Awards and was named among the "40 Under 40: Most Influential Asian Australians" for her contributions to arts and culture.

Her one-woman performance *The Bridal Lament*—a reimagining of Weitou wedding rituals through song, textiles, and installation—has been presented at Arts House, OzAsia, Liveworks, and Riverside Theatres as part of Sydney Festival. The work has been co-commissioned by Performance Space as part of Liveworks Festival 2023 and OzAsia Festival 2023, with commissioning support from Carriageworks and the City of Melbourne through Arts House.

Through her interdisciplinary practice, Chan continues to illuminate the voices of Weitou women, preserving and reinterpreting their stories while exploring broader questions of identity, language, and cultural inheritance.

## Artist's Statement

*Notations: Red Scale* draws upon the endangered bridal laments of the Weitou people—Hong Kong's first settlers and my matrilineal ancestors. These songs, traditionally performed by young women before their arranged marriages, are acts of protest and mourning in the face of change. The ritual begins with the song *Opening the Mouth*, which likens the sunrise to red fish scales cracking open the eastern sky.

Through silk painting, calligraphy on xuan paper and sculptural wall works, I explore the mouth as a vessel—a site of inheritance, rupture and abundance. Lament lyrics are inscribed onto these surfaces with traces of incense and soot. As these songs were passed down orally, I imagine transcription not as writing, but notation. My process becomes a kind of performative calligraphy that evokes ritual and embodiment. The words ignite, breathe and smoulder.

The red scale is both a visual and conceptual motif. It gestures toward a quasi-musical notation system and echoes the fish imagery found in the laments. It holds tension between beauty and rupture, presence and absence. I'm drawn to how fragile materials—silk, ash, smoke, xuan paper—can carry emotional and cultural weight. Burning the words onto these surfaces is an act of inscription and erasure. There is a careful balance between transcribing the lyric with flame and extinguishing the fire before it consumes the word. The process is wild yet controlled, teetering on the edge of destruction—much like how laments structure and contain unruly grief.

*Notations: Red Scale* reimagines Weitou laments through a diasporic lens, offering them not as relics, but as living forms. "Opening the mouth" becomes more than a vocal tradition—it is a gesture of remembrance. These works are not translations, but resonances: a way of listening to what is nearly lost.