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Post-American Fine Arts Presents Cindy Chinn

Asia debut at Tokyo Jazz Club 2026, 1–8 November, Kanda-Nishikicho, Tokyo

For almost twenty years, Cindy Chinn's job was to hold people's attention. As an art director for some of the largest gaming companies in Reno and Las Vegas, she designed the lights, sounds and moving images of slot machines, built to keep people in their seats for as long as possible. She was lead animator on *The Lion King* video game. She produced light and sound shows for the Fremont Street Experience, at the time the largest video screen in the world.

Then she left. In 2006 Chinn (b. 1962, San Francisco Bay Area) bought a 1907 schoolhouse in Chester, Nebraska, a town of a few hundred people, and turned its 33,000 square feet into a studio. There's a welding room, a glass room and a painting room. And there is a quiet room with a microscope, where she makes the work she is now best known for: sculptures carved directly into the graphite of a pencil.

The subjects are big. Steam trains crossing trestles. A herd of bison. A circus big top. A Chinese locomotive on a pencil branded Great Wall. All of it is carved at a scale where a single breath can end weeks of work. The pencil is the cheapest tool on any desk, the thing used to sign contracts, draft invoices and run the office. Chinn turns it into something it was never meant to be: a monument.

It's easy to call this miniature art. It's more accurate to call it the opposite of everything she did in Las Vegas. Those machines shouted for attention. These pencils make you lean in, slow down and look harder than you meant to.

Chinn is the only artist in the history of the Nebraska State Fair to win Best of Show in all three categories in a single year. Her work has been shown in Tucson, Kansas City, Los Angeles and twice in Doha, Qatar, and at Joslyn Castle in Omaha. In June 2026 Post-American Fine Arts presented her pencil carvings for the first time in Europe, at Basel Social Club. Her work has since entered private collections in Europe and Australia.

Tokyo is her first presentation in Asia.

"[Director quote. "Some artists wait for the world to notice. Cindy just kept working. Twenty years in a schoolhouse in Nebraska, carving pencils under a microscope. When we finally showed up, she said, 'What took you so long?'" Bobby Jesus
Director, Post-American Fine Arts

Some artists make work to be seen. Cindy makes work because she can't not. You have to look very closely at her pencils, slowly, quietly, until your eyes adjust, and then a whole world appears. That's what meeting her was like for me. It doesn't happen often. I feel very lucky that it happened to us. Ting Feng, Director of Post-American Fine Arts

Chinn is shown within *Intimate Structures*, PAFA's presentation with Brochevski (Amai Rawls Jr.), Jason Meadows, Eric Wesley, Ellie Tessa Godworth, Geraldine Belmont and Victor Payares.

WORKS

[Title, year: graphite, carpenter's pencil. Dimensions]

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DETAILS

Tokyo Jazz Club 2026

3-11-15 Kanda-Nishikicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0054

Press and invited preview: Friday 30 October 2026

Public dates: 1–8 November 2026

Sun 1 Nov: 2–11 PM

Mon 2 Nov: 5–11 PM

Tue 3 Nov: 2–11 PM

Wed 4 to Fri 6 Nov: 5–11 PM

Sat 7 Nov: 2–11 PM

Sun 8 Nov: 2–6 PM

ABOUT CINDY CHINN

Cindy Chinn (b. 1962, San Francisco Bay Area) lives and works in Chester, Nebraska. After a career in animation, design and large-scale entertainment production in Las Vegas, she established a full-time studio practice in a 1907 schoolhouse, working across sculpture, painting, glass and pencil carving. Her work has been exhibited in the United States, Qatar, Switzerland and Japan. Her pencil carvings are represented exclusively by Post-American Fine Arts.

ABOUT POST-AMERICAN FINE ARTS

Post-American Fine Arts is a contemporary gallery operating between Los Angeles, Sydney, Basel and Asia. Post-American Fine Arts represents artists whose work sits outside the usual centres of the art market, from Nebraska to Louisville to Basel, and runs programs in places the art world rarely goes.

PRESS

info@postamericanfinearts.com

+1 (213) 562-8699 (WhatsApp)

+61 481 193 491 (WhatsApp)

www.postamericanfinearts.com
Images and full CV on request.
