

## Tactile Choreographies

ZIAN Gallery

March 1 - April 1, 2025

20 - 2 Chekengwu, Yuhang District, Hangzhou, China

Guo Tiantian

Robert Sandler

Abstraction, in its essence, gestures toward a form of equality - where pure form is liberated from conceptual, narrative, and hierarchical constraints. It dissolves fixed contexts, transforming into an ephemeral yet persistent moment in time. Pauline Oliveros describes "deep listening" as a physical practice that fosters heightened awareness and perceptual attunement. This resonance transcends mere auditory experience, engaging all the senses in an intricate, tacit multidimensional interplay - vivid yet elusive, fluid yet deeply grounded. John Cage redefined silence in his work 4'33" as a space for listening rather than an absence of sound. Its presence shifts the act of listening from passive reception to an active encounter with the surrounding environment. Within this framework, a synthetic tapestry emerges — one that navigates the thresholds between sensation and cognition, representation and transcendence. Through rhythmic cadences and material interplay, abstraction acquires a haptic and sonic dimension. Robert Sandler's ostrich feathers destabilize such boundaries, animating and re-animating themselves and the cadaver of painting onto which they are grafted. Meanwhile, Guo Tiantian reconstructs historical temporality through lacquer, a medium that itself embodies time's viscosity and stratification. In both bodies of work, feathers, wire, linen, motorised motion, and lacquer converge, dissecting space in undulating rhythms, transforming the pictorial surface into a site of kinetic instability - a painting that does not merely exist but continuously unfolds.

In this exhibition, Robert Sandler's mechanical plumages perform an inexhaustible routine, which might also be called an ordeal. They bend to the whims of their digital code, flapping and fluttering, quivering and wavering. Sudden bursts echo the pounding of a heartbeat, or mirror the dilation of blood vessels and the opening of pores. Rhythmic agitations run into erratic sweeps, as if these objects are caught in an involuntary spasm of nervous tension. Pageantry and flamboyance aplenty, they shift robotically between a catalogue of moods and motions and poses. In this unpredictable choreography, the domain of the viewer is compromised, the air unsettled, and the architecture tenderised. Alone, they strike a quiet, percussive march; together, they form an unruly concerto, each vying for the solo.

Guo Tiantian constructs an immersive scenario where lacquer, leather, and metal converge through the interplay of abstract painting and experimental sound. Made from the sap that exudes from a wounded tree, the glossy and resilient liquid of lacquer flows like a lifeblood, embodying a temporal process of coagulation and resilience. Its organic memory standing in contrast to the unyielding rigidity of metal, which asserts its presence through structure and weight. Across this material interplay, colours sweep and stagger through space, forming a silent choreography in which substance and sensation dissolve into one another, evoking a phenomenological inquiry into touch, memory, and material metamorphosis. In *Crevice of Time*, leather extends beyond its tactile presence, fostering a sense of intimacy, while raw lacquer embodies an organic vitality. Mineral

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pigments, mottled and variegated, bear the imperfections of the handmade, evoking a scene where dappled shadows cast through the fissures of fallen leaves - where time lingers in fleeting glimmers.



As viewers navigate their own paths through these works, their gaze retraces an emotional landscape, ultimately returning to a silent musicality - culminating in a meditation on emptiness.

## About Artists

Guo Tiantian (b.1988, Yiyang, China)

Guo Tiantian's practice explores the transformative nature of lacquer, delving into its materiality, temporality, and sensory potential. Her work investigates the intersection of abstraction and intuitive experience, incorporating chromatic resonance, auditory textures, and layered historical consciousness. Through experimental processes, she reinterprets materiality and affect, expanding the boundaries of abstract painting and sculptural exploration. By integrating lacquer, leather, and metal, Guo creates immersive works that bridge the visual, tactile, and auditory, engaging in a dynamic dialogue with time, memory, and material metamorphosis.

Guo's work has been exhibited in prestigious museums and institutions, including Tianmuli Museum, Hangzhou, China (2024); the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong (2024); Guardian Art Center, Beijing, China (2023); Hubei Museum of Art, Wuhan, China (2023); East Lake Cedar Art Museum, Wuhan, China (2019); Art Museum of Nanjing University of the Arts, Nanjing, China (2019); Tsinghua University Art Museum, Beijing, China (2017); the National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China (2014); and the China Academy of Art Museum, Hangzhou, China (2013).

Robert Sandler (b.1991, Baltimore, US)

Robert Sandler holds an MFA in painting from the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Recent solo exhibitions include Novelty Automation, a. SQUIRE, London (2023); and Symphony for a Good Boy and Ha! Ah! at Kai Matsumiya, New York (2023 and 2021 respectively). He has participated in two-person and group exhibitions at 15 Orient, New York; Blum & Poe, Los Angeles; Kai Matsumiya, New York; Hesse Flatow, New York; and Institute for New Connotative Action, Seattle. With Pujan Karambeigi, he is the publisher of Downtown Critic.ber 2025. Her works are part public collections, including the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, the FRAC Nouvelle-Aquitaine MECA in Bordeaux, the FRAC Bourgogne in Dijon and the Center National des Arts Plastiques in Paris.

## Press

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