



Xiaochi Dong & Feiyi Wen
The Garden and The Gaze

3 December, 2025 – 31 January, 2026

Albion Jeune is pleased to present Feiyi Wen (b. 1990, Beijing) and Xiaochi Dong (b. 1993, Shanghai) in *The Garden and The Gaze*. This exhibition is a dialogue between two artists whose practices use established Chinese materials, approaches, and ideas to navigate the intersections of nature, perception, and cultural tradition. Wen's work translates the approach of East Asian landscape painting and early 20th-century mechanised aesthetics into photography, evoking a quiet, painterly softness that bridges analogue and digital realms. Similarly, Dong's richly layered paintings and mixed media works draw on classical Chinese techniques and ecological practices to immerse viewers in evolving, tactile natural worlds. Together, their work unfolds as an exploration of the organic and the constructed, inviting reflection on the fluid boundaries between cosmic order and the ecosystems that sustain us.

Wen, through repeated scanning and reprinting of her original image, discards photographic precision to acquire a painterly softness—a texture echoing the ink-wash paintings of her birthplace. Wen seeks resonance over realism. Her photographs, human-less and hushed, offer a space for reflection, where nature breathes without spectacle. Here, a flower's fleeting bloom becomes a memento mori, a symbol of the beauty that only impermanence affords. Like Taoist Qi, the life force that animates the world, Wen's work reminds us that energy flows even through stillness—that what appears static is always becoming. Wen's compositions often unfold with exaggerated flatness, resisting Western one-point perspective in favour of a non-linear spatiality that encourages open interpretation over fixed meaning. The result is a visual field that feels expansive, yet introspective.

Working primarily in painting and mixed media, Dong uses ecological materials such as Akadama soil mixed with gesso as a base layer, grounding his practice in both material and conceptual concerns. Dong's methodology reflects a deep attention to materials and ecological systems. The daily care of terrariums, amphibians, and reptiles inform his tactile engagement with natural elements such as fungal beds and moss. In this new body of work, scale and measurement have become increasingly central, with each painting's dimensions drawn from the Waterlily House at Kew Gardens and the window dimensions of Derek Jarman's Prospect Cottage. These works carry the layered experience of moving in and out of the space, a double vision shaped by breathing inside and outside, compressing perception into painterly form. These precise formats deepen the sense of immersion and function as portals—recalling both Chinese landscape scrolls and natural history museum dioramas—while the imagery emerges from his own visual and bodily impressions of light, humidity, and organic overgrowth. The notion of symbiosis is central to Dong's practice, exploring the relationships between species, materials, and cultural frameworks that serve to inform the relational logic of his visual language. Dong's works invite us into complex and interdependent systems, offering a contemporary image of nature shaped by both ecological reality and poetic composition.

Dong's fascination with traditional Chinese gardens extends into a deeper meditation on the relationship between nature, artifice, and cultural memory, continuing a longstanding artistic engagement with Asian horticulture. Influenced by Song dynasty landscape painting, Dong uses traditional brush methods such as *cun* (texturing strokes) and *dian* (dotting) to echo natural forms and growth patterns. In his works, Dong overlays ink brushwork on grounds

made from soils, establishing a mutual recognition between himself and nature. Despite rooting his practice in tradition, he introduces precise systems of scale that gesture towards the exact dimensions of contemporary architecture, creating a dialogue between inherited approaches and present-day preconceptions. Wen's practice, though shaped through different means, arrives at a comparable synthesis. Her layered prints on rice paper draw on the Chinese literary concept *Qing Jing Jiao Rong* 情景交融 (the fusion of scene and emotion), a framework that has informed broad strands of Eastern aesthetic thought and resonates with Nishida Kitarō's philosophy of Basho (place), where human life and the natural world intersect. By presenting nature stripped of human presence and by collapsing perspectival depth into flattened, non-linear space, Wen adapts the visual principles of Chinese painting to her own modern printing processes.

Together, Wen and Dong invite viewers into a shared space where time, memory, and nature converge—challenging conventional perspectives and encouraging a deeper awareness of the subtle energies that underlie our human experience. Their works resonate as meditations on impermanence, transformation, and coexistence, offering a subtle yet profound reflection on how we relate to the natural environment and to each other. Emulating a greenhouse, the gallery space can be gazed into from the street, with Wen's prints unfolding like taxonomies of species along a greenhouse shelf, while Dong's works anchor the show displayed perpendicular to Wen's.

Feiyi Wen (b. 1990, Beijing) lives and works in London. She holds a Masters degree in Photography from The Royal College of Art and a practice-led PhD in Fine Art from the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL. Wen's practice is a meditation on duality—East and West, human and machine, analogue and digital. Rooted in the traditions of East Asian landscape painting and the mechanised aesthetics of early 20th-century Japan and China, her work bridges historical disciplines in a contemporary space. Much like Franz Gertsch, Wen's photography strives for a rightness among all represented elements.

Wen's work has been exhibited at Chanel Nexus Hall, Tokyo (2024); Serchia Gallery, Bristol (2023); Cairn Gallery, Scotland (2021); the Academy of Visual Art, Hong Kong (2019); Aperture Gallery, New York (2019); ONCA Gallery and Outdoor Hub, Brighton (2018); Three Shadows Photography Art Centre, Beijing (2018); Cosmos Arles Book, Arles (2018); and The Slade School of Fine Art, London (2018). Earlier presentations include Fabbrica, Brighton (2017); Photo Oxford, Oxford (2017); Roaming ROOM, London (2017); Industria Superstudios, Brooklyn, New York (2016); SPACE 22 Gallery, Seoul (2016); Exeter Phoenix, Exeter (2016); CAFA Library, Beijing (2015); OBJECTIFS, Singapore (2015); Photo Shanghai, Shanghai (2015); Gucang Contemporary Photo Gallery, Lanzhou (2015); and Tate Britain, London (2014).

Xiaochi Dong (b. 1993, Shanghai) is an artist based between London and Shanghai whose practice bridges classical Chinese painting and Western contemporary art. A graduate of the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts and the Royal College of Art, Dong draws from a wide range of references including traditional Chinese gardens, the greenhouses in Kew Gardens, and Derek Jarman's Prospect Cottage. Through these physical spaces, he explores the simulation, compression, and transformation of nature, drawing connections between real and artificial landscapes. His work reflects a deep engagement with the aesthetics, and often specific dimensions of constructed ecosystems and how these echo classical Chinese landscape painting.

Dong's work has been presented at Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2025); Altman Siegel, San Francisco (2025); William Hine, London (2025); Tank Shanghai, Shanghai (2024); The 24 Windows, The Swatch Art Peace Hotel, Shanghai (2024); Lychee One, London (2024); and THE SHOPHOUSE, Hong Kong (2024). In 2023 his work featured at Nan Ke Gallery, Shanghai; at ART021 Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair with both Hive Center for Contemporary Art and Nan Ke Gallery, Shanghai; Sherbet Green, London; Studio West, London; Pearl Art Museum (PAM), Shanghai; the RA Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London; and Split Gallery, London.

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