Doris Guo

Press

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Atmospheric Pressure, Metal

Hee Jin Je

Doris Guo, “Still Human”

15 Orient

May 8–June 13, 2026

Doris Guo’s solo exhibition at 15 Orient, “Still Human,” comprised five new bodies of work, installed across five rooms. It was the artist’s largest exhibition to date. More importantly, the show revealed a central logic underlying Guo’s practice.

Critical articulations of Guo’s work thus far have lagged behind the complexity and momentum of her practice, relying on surface descriptions laden with atmospheric adjectives. The word "enigmatic" recurs across the discourse around Guo's work, alongside "delicate," "subtle," and "discreet." These words sketch an outline of the restraint present in her work but shy away from further interrogating it. The dogged recurrence of this vocabulary indicates something true about Guo’s practice without realizing it, for the work consistently produces a surface complete enough to reward a competent reading without demanding that the mechanism underneath be perceived, let alone understood. The labeling of these sculptures as simply “enigmatic” creates a shallow critical discourse with little to go on. Stopping at the surface means mistaking restraint for an absence of force. But restraint is itself an active force, a physical counter-pressure that must be strong enough to keep the opposing force in check.

Stepping into “Still Human,” one first encounters two opaque-projector sculptures facing the left and right walls of the entry room, each housed in a fragment of a built environment. Spanning the room behind them is a vast projected work. A warm, insistent mechanical hum fills the space. The opaque-projector sculptures have become the body of work for which Guo is best known, first shown in “Back” at Empty Gallery in Hong Kong in 2023 and later central to her 2024 installation at Artists Space, New York, and her 2025 institutional solo at Kunstverein Braunschweig. Opaque projectors, or episcopes, are instruments designed to convert an object into an image of itself, evoking the No-Input mixing boards created by Toshimaru Nakamura.

Facing the left wall is *Pigeons*, in which an episcope is partially encased in a textured, rectangular, pale gray volume that looks as if it could be a chunk of concrete extracted from the sidewalk. The projected image is intended to look like a feather under water, an effect produced through the reflections and ripples formed by manipulated plastic wrap. On the right side of the block, a frosted window glows with warm ambient light from the episcope’s lamp, in the position a window would occupy on a small house. Embedded neatly into the top side is a grate, plain enough to look as if it must be there for a reason. Up close, it becomes clear that the hum filling the entryway is coming from this sculpture. The setup references Max Neuhaus's *Times Square*, the continuous drone that has emanated from an anonymous sidewalk grate on Broadway and 45th Street since 1977.

Guo’s grate was deliberately added to the top of the object; the back exposes a second grate, the episcope’s actual exhaust outlet and the source of the drone. The added grate produces nothing and performs no mechanical function. Instead, the real job of this fake grate is to catch the

viewer's wrong questions like runoff, the way a sidewalk drain catches water and diverts it underground, and to provide an answer that is both utterly convincing and utterly wrong. When this answer fails verification, one has nowhere left to go but back to the work itself. This is the rhetoric Dieter Schwarz found in Marcel Broodthaers, an "implosive absence," one that "deprive[s] us of our certainty of being able to verify a statement's truth."[1]

Facing the right wall is *Attic*, its episcope contained in a wooden enclosure from which protrudes the projector's long focusing lens, casting an image depicting concentric layers that spiral outwards, inspired by wasps' nests. The enclosure has a familiar, house-like form, with walls carefully outfitted with siding and a roof covered in shingles hand-cut by the artist. The exaggerated size of the roof indicates an attic that has been extended to a point where the house is mostly attic. The images cast by the episcopes are dim. In daylight hours you strain to make them out and even once your eyes adjust, they never reach the level of contrast you expect. The aspect of these works that we're conditioned to privilege as signal turns out to be no more (or less) the work than the fake grate or the noise of the machine. The whole arrangement is what matters here—including the squinting, the uncertainty, the refusal to resolve.

Karen Barad's agential realism would call this arrangement an apparatus, a boundary-making practice in which a material configuration enacts an agential cut, rendering viewer and viewed simultaneously determinate.[2] Guo treats that differentiation as her material throughout the exhibition. The episcope sculptures are the clearest examples of this recurring premise, for in them, the image and the means of access to it are co-produced in a single act.

In the second room, a set of three cast foam pieces titled *Draft 1*, *2*, and *3* sit on the floor in a loose semicircle. Guo envisioned them as supports for a spaceship. The material, a polyurethane foam, is used by boatbuilders in smaller crafts as a source of buoyancy in the event of flooding. It is poured into hidden empty spaces within the structure and expands to fill them. Its space-filling presence prevents water from entering. The actual use of the material and the fictional use of the sculptures are each a kind of support without its vessel.

The cast foam series continues in the fourth room, where the larger, ramp-like *Draft* sculptures (numbered *4* through *6*) stretch across the floor while three *Mt. Tacoma* photographs, giclée on rag, punctuate the walls. The barest description is that these are photographs of a famous mountain, a description that might lead one to expect something in the genre of nature photography with its grandiose fantasy of optical conquest. The prints are small, at a scale reminiscent of saint cards, asking the viewer to draw close to resolve them. Once near, the mountain is no less distant. It appears in precisely the same way it does from afar in real life, diffuse and often barely visible, if at all. The mountain refuses the promise sold by the ever-pricier zoom lens, that getting closer means getting *more*.

Stillness, the projection visible from the entry threshold, looms at a cinematic scale at the heart of the exhibition. Perceptually, it functions as an anchor. The piece is difficult to place cleanly into a genre, a dissonance that the artist acknowledges outright. The checklist cites only time itself, the total runtime, in the place where the medium is typically listed. In truth, it is neither video, nor slideshow, nor animation, and is perhaps best described as a time-based hybrid. The duration is twenty-eight minutes, during which twenty-four photographs serve as the material upon which a

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[1] Dieter Schwarz, "'Look! Books in Plaster!': On the First Phase of the Work of Marcel Broodthaers," *October* 42 (Autumn 1978): 66.

[2] Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," *Signs* 28, no. 3 (Spring 2003): 815-16, 821.

black-hole-like distortion is applied, a motion graphics effect that seems to pull a circular region of the image in towards its swirling center as it moves laterally across the screen. The effect crosses each image at a fixed rate, taking exactly seventy seconds to go from end to end, picking up in one image where it left off in the previous one. It travels across the horizontal midline of each image, a choice the artist explains as symbolic of the horizon. It is one of several operations across the show that loses information on purpose.

The photographs are of what Guo calls her places (Oslo, Seattle, New York), and they sit somewhere between the interiority of the personal record and the detachment of the strictly documentary, seeming to evince both simultaneously. As the black hole effect scans each image, it creates a local warping, a region of displacement in which what once appeared evidentiary becomes briefly unknowable, and through its unknowability, infinite. The same approach to infinity happens near an event horizon. For the outside observer, an object falling into a black hole seems to fade at an ever-slower rate, an asymptotic approach that is its own kind of infinity, hovering suspended at the edge of crossing.

In the fifth room, two remaining *Mt. Tacoma* photographs hang above a series of imploded metal vessels arranged on low platforms, close to the floor. The material description reads: "Atmospheric pressure, metal." If restraint is a counterforce Guo employs to maintain the structural integrity of her work, the imploded cans and tins are demonstrations of what happens when the counterforce is removed. No additional external force is applied to crush them from the outside in. Guo boils the air out and seals them before plunging them into cold water. The rapid cooling and condensation create a kind of internal vacuum that does something more akin to collapsing them from the inside out.

This is the one place in the show where the force of restraint is exposed, because it is the one place the balance was broken. Everywhere else, force and counterforce are matched, and the apparent absence of strain is actual stillness that a surface reading misconstrues as a system of zero potential.

Stillness, or the appearance of it, is precisely what happens as an object approaches an event horizon.

The show is called "Still Human," a phrase that splits the way the work does, into what shows and what holds. What shows is the perceptible calm at the surface, easily mistaken for the whole of what the work is doing. Underneath is the other sense the word carries: still as in even now, even here, a shape held against everything that would collapse it.

“La Moustache” at Empty Gallery, Hong Kong by Kevin Champoux

Kevin Champoux



“La Moustache” at Empty Gallery, Hong Kong, 2025. Photo: Jack Elliot Edwards

In an excerpt from her book Calamities (2016), which hangs on the wall of Empty Gallery in Hong Kong, the poet Renee Gladman attempts to configure a diagram of poetry for her students—a grid hovering over a “subterranean container where meaning might lie”—before realizing that her schematics are off, that “poetry comes from nothing.” Her subsequent advice may well function as the primary directive of this exhibition, organized by San Francisco–based curator Jordan Stein: “Read the nothing.”

From the outset, La Moustache presents itself as an aporia, given its stated desire to transcend the known tempered by the manifold means of arriving there. If, in our present moment, we are buckling under the weight of too much meaning, the competing impulses of spiritualist withdrawal and nihilist accelerationism both promise non-sense as a way out. Stein shows little interest in the endless scrolls and AI-powered image infinities that purport transcendence through distraction, submission to the Algorithm-as-God. In its stead, he has assembled a group of meditative works anchored around the Bay Area Conceptualists of the 1970s like Paul Kos and Stephen Kaltenbach, alongside Doris Guo, Mary Helena Clark, and other younger artists continuing their legacy of object-as-experience, resisting an analytical approach in favor of something more phenomenological. By resurrecting a uniquely Californian perspective on Minimalism, with its cadre of art-world dropouts and back-to-the-land enthusiasts, Stein is resisting not only a tradition of criticality but also the social apparatuses that sustain it.

The specter of that world looms large in Lutz Bacher’s *Manhatta* (1999), a wall-size projection of a jittery helicopter ride over New York. Kaltenbach and Leo Valledor, also a featured artist, had brief stints in the city before decamping back to the West Coast, a renunciation that, in the context of

the exhibition, posits a kind of artistic Manifest Destiny, a realm of pure feeling unencumbered by the pressures of the market, the academy, or other institutions of meaning-making. Indeed, "read the nothing" feels like a distilled form of *Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees* (1982), the title of a book on fellow Californian Robert Irwin. In Bacher's video, the pulsating wrinkle of a postproduction glitch renders the city unstable—a mirage that, as in a nightmare, seems to be constantly shifting out of reach before your eyes can focus. In an exhibition otherwise defined by dislocation, it is a dying image of referentiality.

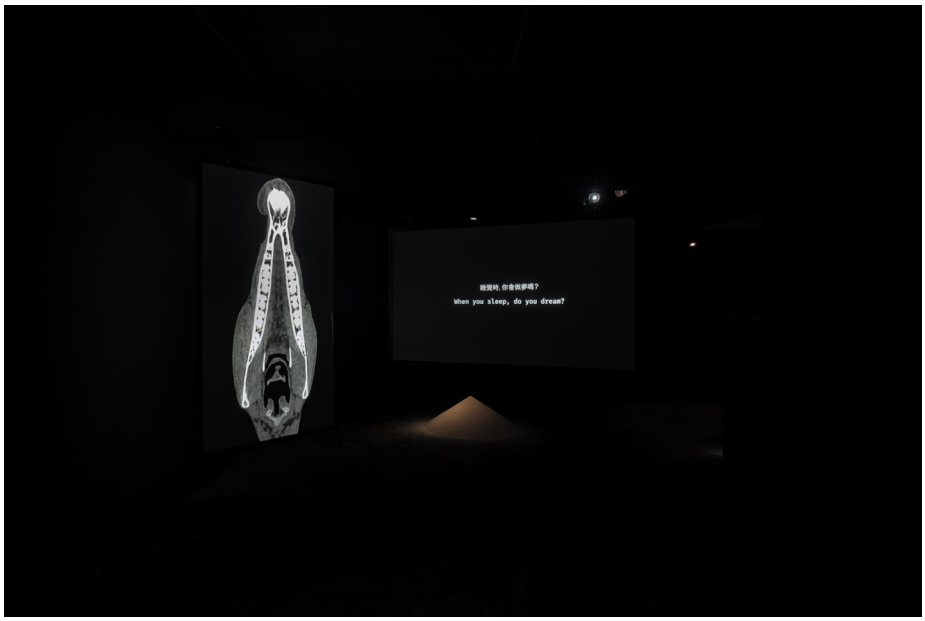
Placelessness abounds within the proprietary darkness of Empty Gallery's labyrinthine space, whose black walls envelop the works and imbue them with heightened drama. The golden duct tape of Jonathan Velazquez's deflated *Tuba* (2023) appears alternately gilded and drab, one side lit by honeyed spotlights, the other by the gallery's sole, diminutive arrow-slit window—a brief intrusion of daylight into this sensory deprivation tank, or haunted house. At the end of a long corridor, William Eggleston's print of a puddle of gasoline (*Untitled* [ca. 1970–73]) projects an unsettling calm, its exaggerated colors—the product of the now-extinct dye transfer process—appearing somewhat artificial to eyes inured to Photoshop and Midjourney AI. Stein's appeal to unknowing can likewise read as an elegy for ways of seeing lost to time, a point underscored by the construction of a literal hourglass in the form of Paul Kos's monumental *Sand Piece* (1971), a one-ton pile of white sand slowly falling to the lower level of the gallery through a small hole drilled into the floor. In an adjacent room, Kaltenbach's *Inverted Observer* (1970–ongoing), a hollow steel cube turned into a pinhole camera, quietly projects images of passersby onto an unseen interior wall, suggesting the inutility of the human spectator when objects are scaled to geologic time.

Any talk of transcendence necessarily invokes the suspension of subjectivity, a psychological lacuna that Stein explicitly references by naming his exhibition after the eponymous 2005 film by Emmanuel Carrère, which explores the violence of the loss of a shared reality. In it, a man shaves his mustache only to find that no one else believes he ever had one. His subsequent psychosis takes the form of a flight to Hong Kong and a day spent ferrying back and forth between the island and the Kowloon peninsula. Bacher's movable city is reconceived here as a non-place of perpetual movement where one is neither resident nor foreigner but passenger, a notion of the self premised on temporality—stretched, in this case, into infinity.



"La Moustache" at Empty Gallery, Hong Kong, 2025. Photo: Jack Elliot Edwards

Stein's *La Moustache* tends toward a more zen-like interpretation of this identity crisis. The inclusion of a group of Xenophoridae, a type of sea snail that attaches rocks and other foreign objects to its shell, represents its most whimsical perspective on nonhuman subjectivity. But in Mary Helena Clark's video *Clever Hans* (2025), indeterminacy becomes abjection, and the dark side of "expanded consciousness" is fully on display. Installed on the lower level of the gallery as a kind of finale, the two-channel video depicts an interview between a psychologist and a horse, who communicates through stamping his hoof in Morse code. As the dialogue progresses, the horse's responses reveal an anguished consciousness, alienated from his body. Over a soundtrack of droning and gurgling noises, he tells his interlocutor "I lose my name," and "I am meat now." It suggests that, should we really learn what lies outside of human perception, we would be horrified.



"La Moustache" at Empty Gallery, Hong Kong, 2025. Photo: Jack Elliot Edwards

This horror bleeds over into the adjacent painting by Maureen Gallace, a pared-down seascape—*Rocky Beach* (Rainbow) (2025)—that absorbs the ambient sound of Clark's video, lending it a menacing tranquility. (Bacher's work has a similar effect on the Eggleston print.) Another of her works, *February Snow (Yellow Door)* (2025), hangs at the precipice of the gallery's lower level and depicts a bucolic country house covered in snow. Simple, bright daubs of oil paint construct dreamlike scenes that occupy a non-space between reference and imagination. They are both too sprightly and too tactilely constructed to figure nearly into the exhibition's esoteric themes, feeling willfully particular.

The indecipherable architecture of Vincent Fecteau's papier-mâché sculpture *Untitled* (2019) melds the compact geometry of adobe houses with sensuous flourishes—soft curves of clay and bits of speckled paint. Doris Guo's *Black Hole* (2025) hints at the metaphysical but grounds itself in the everyday. An overturned shoe bench has been retrofitted to project the titular circle onto a small patch of painted wall. A crumpled-up umbrella and two pieces of glassware rest atop it. As a sculpture, it sits uneasily between readymade and custom-built, while its function as a projector and its variable parts complicate an understanding of the work as a singular object. Compared to Kos's sand pile, it is not really experiential, either. Amid works that elucidate specific processes, or whose auras benefit from a relation to specific art historical contexts, such expansive obstructions prevent too didactic a reading.



“La Moustache” at Empty Gallery, Hong Kong, 2025. Photo: Jack Elliot Edwards

This tension is evident in the two works by Jay DeFeo, which chart the distance between the making (*Untitled*[1972], a black-and-white photograph of a cracked window) and the work itself, a small charcoal and acrylic painting on paper with her more familiar puddle of gestures set against an angular, dark background. That the name of the series this piece belongs to, Reflections of Africa, was bestowed posthumously by DeFeo’s estate only further illustrates the process by which strata of meanings are layered over time, often bending to the historicizing or culturizing needs of the public and the market.

La Moustache must contend with all these organs of legibility, as does any artist seeking an encounter with the twilight of reification that brought the Bay Area Conceptualists to the edge of the Pacific. How to resurrect an earnestness that belies the double or triple ironies that characterize life as it is lived half-online, amid a sea of objects-turned-images, and a climate of political consequence that calls out for specificity, for thick description, for clear-eyed sense?

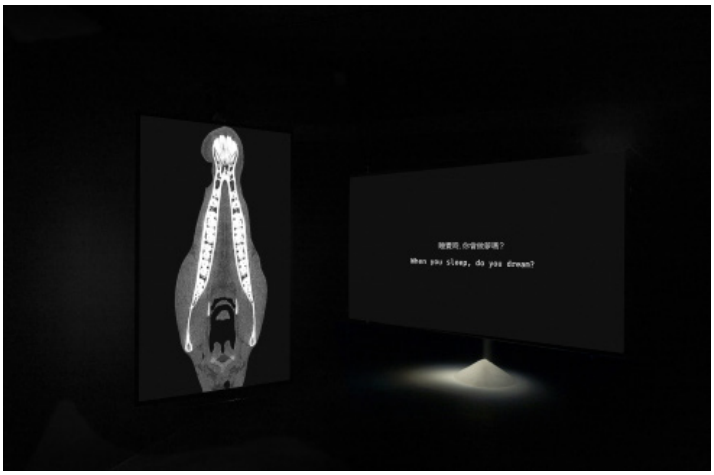
Kevin Champoux is a writer based in New York. His work has appeared in The Paris Review, Frieze, Notebook, Document Journal, Pioneer Works Broadcast, and Art in America.

Read The Nothing
La Moustache at Empty Gallery, December 6, 2025 - February 14, 2026

Jaime Chu



Left to right: works by William Eggleston, Jay DeFeo, Danny McDonald and Kazuna Taguchi.



Above: *Clever Hans*, Mary Helena Clark
Below: *Sand Piece*, Paul Kos

What is the fine line between undiag nosed paranoia and collective psychosis? Emmanuel Carrère's 2005 film La Moustache, adapted from his own 1986 novel of the same name, portrays Marc, a Parisian architect who decides to shave off his mustache before a party one night. To spiraling consequences, it turns out: for neither his friends, nor his coworkers, nor his wife acknowledge the difference, even denying that he ever had a mustache to begin with. When his wife threatens to send him to a psychiatric institution, Marc, in a moment of panic, makes an escape, boarding the next plane out of Paris to Hong Kong.

A reality without consensus, and the destabilizing effect an experience of it might prompt, is the subject of a formally attentive and hermeneutically provocative exhibition curated by Jordan Stein, a longtime fixture of Bay Area arts, at Hong Kong's Empty Gallery. His riff on Carrère begins in a kind of foyer, where a trio of found-object works set the table for a negotiation between the dissemination and containment of uncomfortable knowledge. Ansel Adams's grayscale photograph Mount Williamson, Sierra Nevada from Manzanar, 1944 is printed as an unofficial poster, its pile of stones underwritten not with a title, but with the title of his publication "EXAMPLES." Together, the cryptic elements seem to displace historical events at Manzanar, California, site of a Japanese-American internment camp during World War II, with an industrially aestheticized view of nature– nothing to see here (Adams did photograph the "War Relocation Center" in 1943–44). Nearby, an installation by Doris Guo (*1992) presents a domestic event that, however illegible, still gestures vaguely towards a world outside: a flipped-over couch, topped by a pair of empty drinking glasses and a crumpled-up umbrella, the scuzzy bottom of a beer can projected on the wall. In a way, her *Black Hole* (2025) is an obverse of Stephen Kaltenbach's (*1940) *Inverted Observer* (1970–), a pinhole camera that projects its exterior into its own steel-cube body, denying its viewers what the artwork sees while framing them in the apparatus of observing the unknowable.

The main body of the show offers a survey of American Conceptual and Minimalist art that, even in miniature, is a rarity in Hong Kong. In its staging of abstraction as psychic suspicion, a paranoid reading might link the works' formal properties to inflection points in the development of post-War American art and its categories of inclusion and exclusion, both abstract and material.
Leo Valledor's (1936–89) geometric composition *A New Slant* (1981), in which plum and purple shapes cut across the canvas like psychedelic windows, appears as a foil to a lesser-known but existentially stunning graph ite drawing by Lee Lozano (1930–99) – notorious for her twin decisions, in 1969, to withdraw from public art engagements and to "boycott women" – of two stacked triangular figures that might extend into infinity. Stein has also drawn from the personal collection of Barry Rosen, co-executor of Lozano's estate, the marine-debris-studded shells of several carrier snails, probing whimsically at the accumulative effects of art's collection and circulation over time.



Inverted Observer, Stephen Kaltenbach



Tuba, Jonathan Velazquez

On the note of time: the breath-taking appearance of Paul Kos's (*1942) *Sand Piece* (1971) should prompt reflection on what is so often taken for granted in the invisible relationship between concept and the material cost of its realization. First created for a show at San Francisco's Reese Palley Gallery – an important venue for Conceptualism housed in the VC Morris Gift Shop, Frank Lloyd Wright's prototype or the Guggenheim Museum – *Sand Piece* has only been exhibited a handful of times. Its installation requires drilling a tiny hole between two floors of a gallery, through which one ton of sand, piled in a volcanic cone, would trickle down in the span of twelve days, turning the gallery into an hourglass. The fine, kiln-dried grain specified by Kos gives the sand a pearly-gray chalkiness that, against Empty Gallery's darkened interior, resembles uncannily black-and-white photos of the original. Seemingly impossible to view and document in its totality, the fractured experience of *Sand Piece* underscores the exhibition's wider sense of breakdown in collective knowing.

It is tempting to read in Carrère's choice of Hong Kong, where we see Marc riding the Star Ferry back and forth across the harbor in increasing discombobulation, an obvious allegory of the city's own tragic search for post-colonial democratic identity, trapped in that existential cliché between East and West. But in Stein's formally driven transposition of Bay Area and post-1960s American art, the kinetic relationship between center and periphery – whether geopolitically, in considering California as the land's end of Manifest Destiny, the traversing of the Pacific as a site of proxy imaginations, and the role of Hong Kong at the periphery of Cold War imperialisms; or individually, as we shift uncomfortably between hegemonic and marginalized truths as the observer and the observed – would suggest a radical containment of all possible, even schizophrenic perspectives as one basis of a collective reality. If knowledge might lead to action, the discomfort of art is always available as plausible deniability.

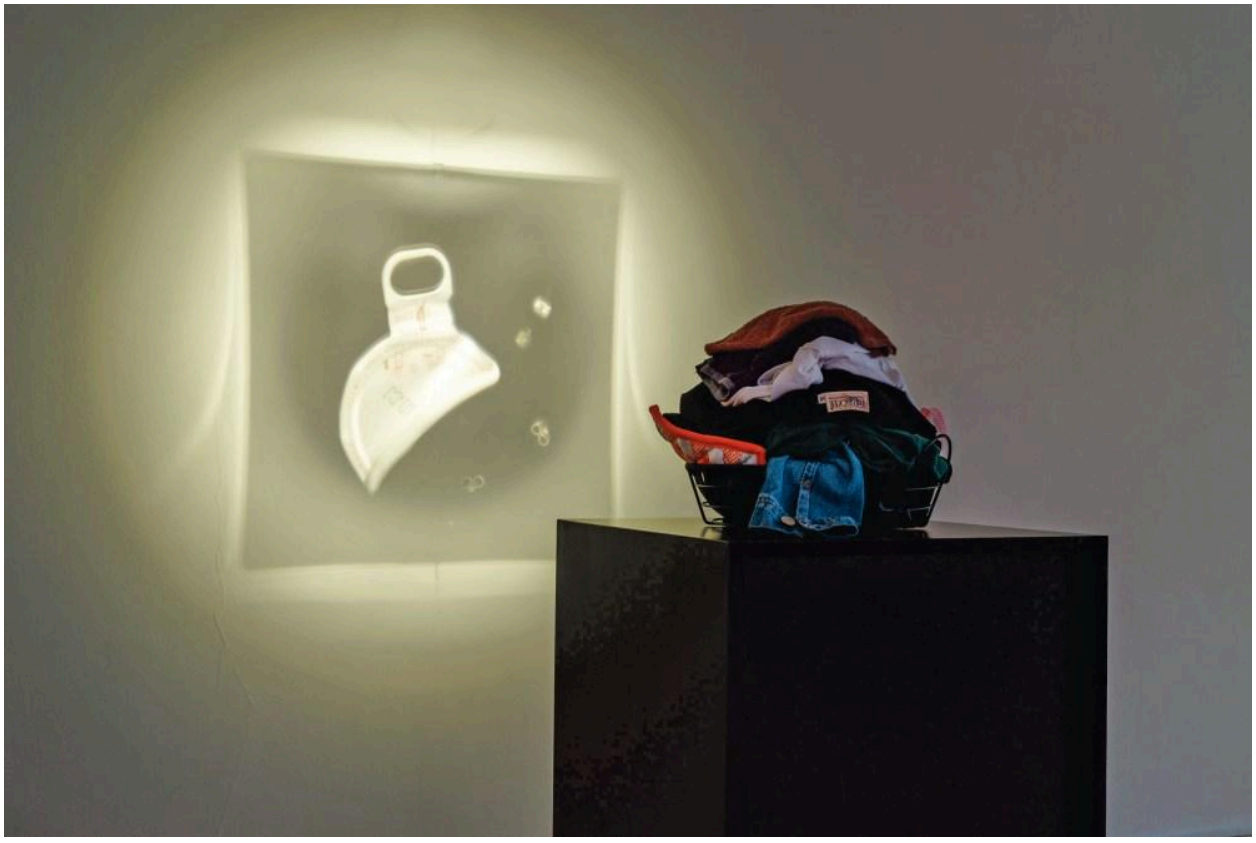
ARTFORUM

September, 2025

Doris Guo

Kunstverein Braunschweig

By Jens Asthof



Doris Guo, Growing, piling, 2025, opaque projector, metal, various fabrics, adhesive, paint, plastic cap, 14 × 11 3⁄8 × 15 3⁄8". Photo: Frank Sperling.

For her first institutional solo exhibition, “Bent at the Window,” Doris Guo presented three bodies of work, with many of the works conceived specifically for Kunstverein Braunschweig, which occupies an early Neoclassical villa with sumptuous interiors. Subjecting everyday objects to sculptural modifications and mise-en-scènes, Guo breaks up the stark quiddity of things, initiating almost imperceptible transitions toward the imaginary. This operation is, by turns, oneirically immersive, or, as in Who can be served by bridges to nowhere? (all works cited, 2025), an installation of deformed household appliances, trenchantly Minimalist. This work consists of assorted small metal containers for home use: lunch and sugar boxes, film-reel canisters, gleaming screw-top vessels for cooking oil, tins, a rotund metal hot-water bottle, and

the like. Some of Guo's materials, sourced from flea markets and home-improvement stores as well as online, were new, others decades old. Having gathered all these objects, she then made them implode: She set up an outdoor workshop in the Kunstverein's garden, where she filled them with a little water, sealed them, heated them, and then plunged them into ice water. Within seconds, they contracted, resulting in unpredictable new shapes. Individualized and newly dysfunctional, the objects took on a striking formal autonomy and—gathered in a loose arrangement on the hardwood floor without pedestals, some nonchalantly leaning against a door or wall—even an anthropomorphic quality.

In the darkened downstairs galleries, Guo presented four of her signature projection sculptures. These employ opaque projectors, each embedded in a sculpture resembling a house or piece of furniture and set on a pedestal. The maquette-like constructions are richly detailed and connected to the real world in ways that are not readily apparent: 3 Sided Die, for instance, owes its formal idiom and palette to cupboard elements in a furnished hallway the artist happened to see in Oslo. Viewers could not and did not need to know any of this in detail, but it caused a subliminally perceptible, borrowed similarity that revealed an interweaving of real and imaginary spaces that is typical of Guo. Each work, moreover, projects an image of a specific composition of objects—not a photograph, not a film, but a physical object, often of the artist's own making, that rests on the projector's glass plate. Typologically speaking, many of them are again household articles: Shed, for instance, features two plastic sheets tied with rubber bands; in Growing, piling, the tab top of a can printed with cryptic instructions bulged into view. The enlarged projection turns these things into still lifes of the imaginary—interior spaces that give shelter to what's vulnerable and allow new forms of narration-by-object to emerge.

A narrow vestibule—an erstwhile boudoir—stimulated the artist to make Primary Contact: Two open doors flanked a passageway, tightly held in position by a taut blue rope strung between the handles, leaving the back part of the room inaccessible. A laconic site-specific intervention, you might have thought. Yet Guo once again played appearances off against realities: The historic doors had long been gathering dust in the attic, and the jambs and hinges, too, had been removed during earlier renovations. The artist had these doors cleaned; then she installed them in their original location, but firmly bolted to the wall just next to the doorframe. They would have been impossible to close, and so the same clearly visible rope that seemed to be fixing them in place effectively and paradoxically simulated their original function. Guo's play with the imagination exerts a charm that—and this is a defining quality of her art—is not dispelled by seeing through it.

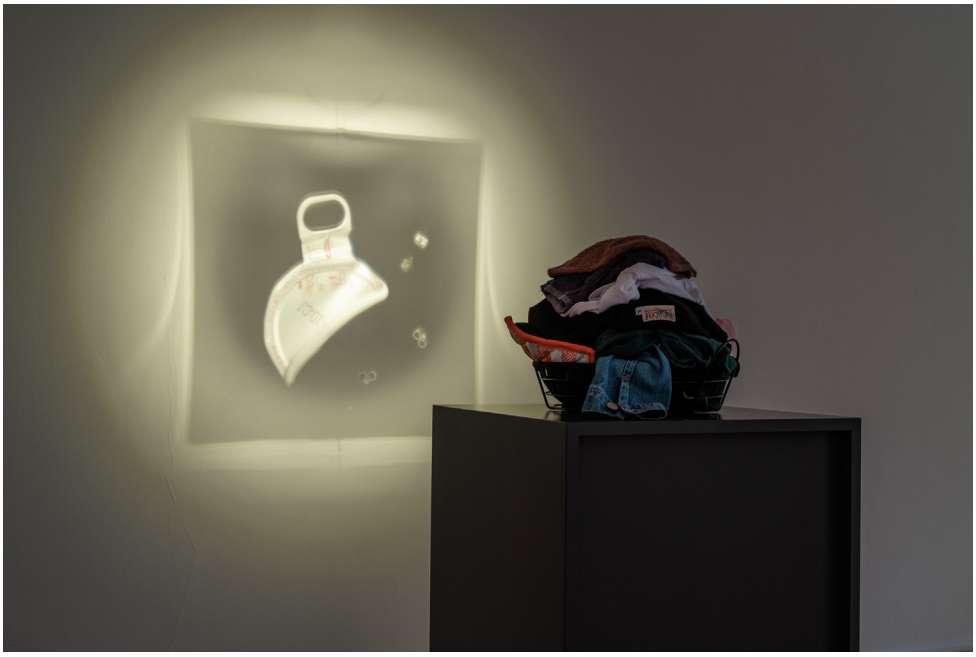
Translated from German by Gerrit Jackson.

émergent magazine

April 22, 2025

Bent at the Window
Doris Guo at the Kunstverein Braunschweig

George MacBeth



Doris Guo, Bent at the Window, exhibition view, Kunstverein Braunschweig, 2025, Courtesy the artist, Kunstverein Braunschweig, Photo: Frank Sperling

As a teenager, dying of boredom in the classroom, I was fascinated by the ‘overhead projector’ that was still habitually used to enlarge exercises from printed sheets of transparent acetate onto a screen. This pedagogical apparatus, which my teachers fondly nicknamed the ‘OHP,’ had been invented in the late nineteenth century as a ‘viewgraph’ and was then adopted by the US military in the 1950s to train army recruits. A victim of obsolescence, by the early 2000s the OHP was getting phased out, as (post)modernisation brought flashy new digital projectors to the newer wings of my school. As I was perennially on the hunt for classroom distractions (a visible hickey on a teacher’s neck; an audible dressing-down in a nearby classroom; the sound of a lawnmower shearing the school field; a handwritten note being passed from someone to their crush), the OHP and the wobbly images it knocked back off the mirror above its focusing lens were replete with all sorts of strange affordances and ghostly auras: the loop between what Alfred Gell called ‘the enchantment of technology and the technology of enchantment’[1]. The classroom would be plunged into darkness, then a soft penumbra of tungsten light would bleed in a milky fringe around the exercises being projected, as the mirror image itself would quiver tremulously in and out of focus, like when you first wake up and your eyes take a minute to adjust. Sometimes a teacher’s stray hair would even fall onto the flatbed of the projector, or in a moment of absentmindedness they’d forget to invert or adequately focus the image, and I’d relish these anamorphic squiggles looming noirishly across the walls.

The Oslo-based artist Doris Guo has worked with the spectral potential of ‘projection’ for the last few years. A projection (whether from an acetate sheet to a classroom wall or, as in the projective theater of memory, from the past into the present) prospects itself along the faultline between presence and absence, hereness and thereness—dislocating whatever it enlarges or enhances. For her exhibition *XO* at Derosia in 2019, Guo bisected chairs typical of Chinese restaurants in New York and installed them in crevices within the walls, or into tightly-fitting hand-painted boxy frames. Hung low on the wall, these pieces opened up an inquiry into dislocated people and things comporting themselves, fitting in, trying to become unobtrusive. Extending this investigation of dislocation into a more personal register, in Guo’s two-part exhibition series begun at the project-space Veronica in Seattle (2022) and continued via *Back* at Empty Gallery, Hong Kong (2024), she presented a series of diptychs. Paintings and drawings that her mother Weili Wang produced in Shanghai before emigrating to the United States were hung contrapuntally alongside a series of anamorphic pinhole photographs Guo took while sorting through her mother’s archive.



Doris Guo, Bent at the Window, exhibition view, Kunstverein Braunschweig, 2025, Courtesy the artist, Kunstverein Braunschweig, Photo: Frank Sperling

In Hong Kong Guo also presented the first of her projection installations, beginning a series which now constitutes the majority of her first institutional survey in Germany, at the Kunstverein Braunschweig. The projection works in Bent at the Window assemble fragmentary domestic objects and scraps (a bungee cord, a plastic cap, postcards, a painted offcut of MDF, some sheaves of cellophane packaging tied together with elastic bands) into enigmatic still lives that shimmer on the gallery walls. The devices she uses for these are opaque projectors, or episcopes—an older, close relative of the OHP, albeit with a brighter halogen bulb—whose purpose has largely been to assist artists and draughtspersons with tracing complex motifs. Guo encases each of her projectors in bespoke carapace that lie somewhere between dioramas and forms of personal encryption. The show opens with *Shed*, where the projector is contained within a birdhouse structure, while the three subsequent works are then encased in two further architectural dioramas (mimicking the sorts of generic plaster friezes and fencing that could be found anywhere throughout northern Europe) meanwhile, in *Growing, Piling*, the projection emits from a discarded laundry pile.



Doris Guo, Bent at the Window, exhibition view, Kunstverein Braunschweig, 2025, Courtesy the artist, Kunstverein Braunschweig, Photo: Frank Sperling

Here the sometimes grand art historical allusions of the projected images—which are most pronounced between the bound sheaves of plastic in *Shed* and the Chiaroscuro of a Flemish still life like Adriaen Coorte's *Still Life with Asparagus and Red Currants* (1696)—are counterpoised by the concealment of the projector within these elaborate structures, and the manner in which this concealment only serves to further separate the viewer from the objects being projected. In *Growing, Piling* for instance, the items projected include a discarded bottle top, and what appeared to be the screwback bolts for an earring, while other pieces feature novelty egg-cups and a generic postcard of a desert alongside what resembles a scrunched-up christmas cracker toy. These quotidian assemblages, prepared on-site by the artist, undergo a kind of hierophanic transmutation through the beam of the episcope and the anti-spectacular spectacle of the exhibition's display. When installed together, their insularity (which draws attention to what is concealed as much as what they reveal) allows Guo's projection works to form fitting visual analogues for the bricolage of remembrance as an activity, while also resonating with the intergenerational experience of dislocation her earlier work addressed. As Barbara Maria Stafford reminds us in her study *Devices of Wonder*, '"To project" once meant to work an alchemical transmutation by casting the philosopher's stone over base metal in the hope of turning an inferior amalgam into pure gold.'[2] The works in Bent at the Window pursue a similarly alchemical process, yet one whose valorising activity seems far harder to assess. Though there may indeed be, as William Carlos Williams declared in 'Paterson', no ideas but in things—the ideas such things contain can often remain obscure to us, leaving us to deal only with the fog of their projections.

1 Alfred Gell, 'The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology', in Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton (eds.), *Anthropology, Art, and Aesthetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 40–63.

2 Barbara Maria Stafford, 'Revealing Technologies/Magical Domains', in Barbara Maria Stafford and Frances Terpak eds.), *Devices of Wonder: From the World in a Box to Images on a Screen* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research institute, 2001), p. 83.

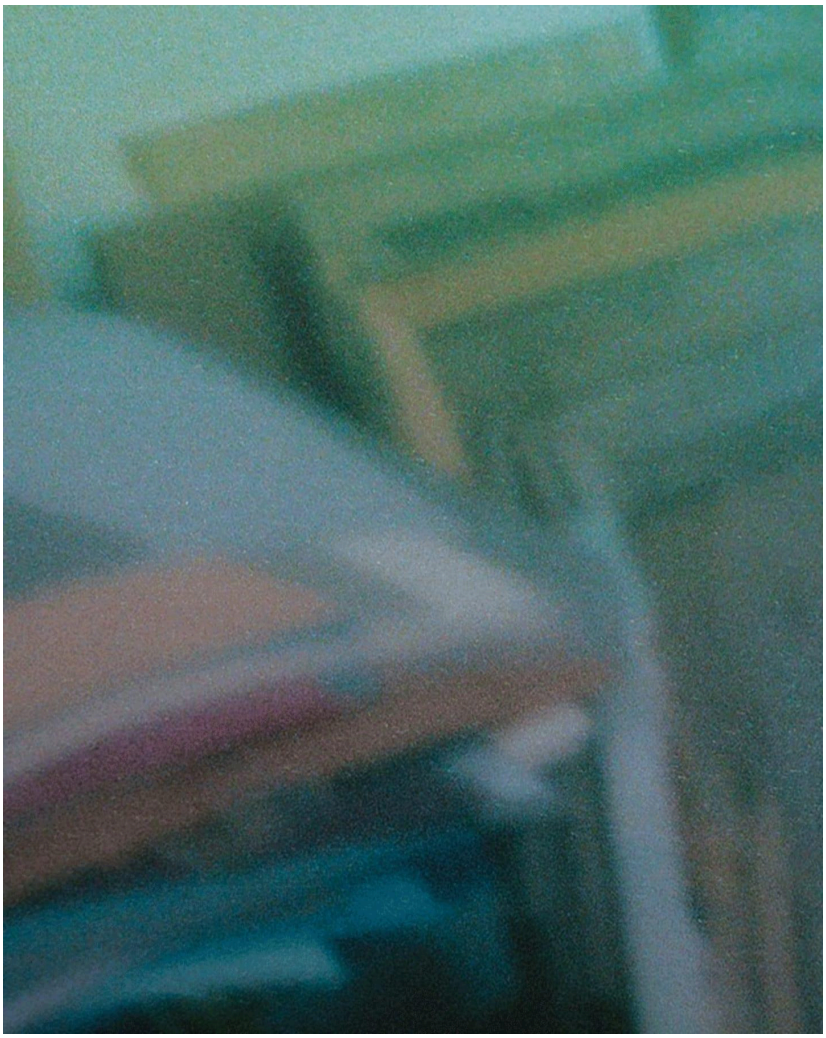
Art Basel

August 28, 2024

Doris Guo’s enigmatic elegance

Through the history of everyday objects, the artist captures the complexities of living between two cultures

By Ingrid Luquet-Gad



Doris Guo and Weili Wang, A Corner of Shanghai (detail), 2022. Installation view of Doris Guo’s exhibition ‘Shanghai San Francisco Richmond Seattle New York Oslo (TRACE)’, Veronica Project Space, Seattle, 2023. Courtesy of the artists.

Doris Guo’s works possess an enigmatic elegance. The Oslo-based artist was born in San Francisco in 1992 of Chinese parents, who were themselves artists, before they had to flee their country during the Cultural Revolution. Such biographical details show that Guo belongs to a generation that perceives the world from multiple perspectives, somewhere between the richness of cultural diversity and the anxiety caused by a lack of reference points. Becoming an artist is one possible response to this disorientation: transforming questions into conceptual, poetic, and quasi-psychoanalytical installations.



Installation view of Doris Guo’s exhibition ‘XO’ at Derosia Gallery, New York, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Derosia Gallery.

https://www.artbasel.com/stories/doris-guo-american-artist-vi-vii-gallery-art-basel-paris?lang=en



Doris Guo, 2024. Photograph by Mariusz Maslanka.



Installation view of Doris Guo's exhibition 'XO' at Derosia Gallery, New York, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Derosia Gallery.

The 'XO' exhibition at Derosia Gallery in New York (2019) was emblematic of the artist's investigations into the symbolic histories of everyday objects. The artist selected seats typical of Chinese restaurants, cut them in half and hung them on the wall in wooden boxes. The installation seemed to be a rereading of Joseph Kosuth's One and Three Chairs (1965), adding a non-Western response to the iconic work of American conceptualism.



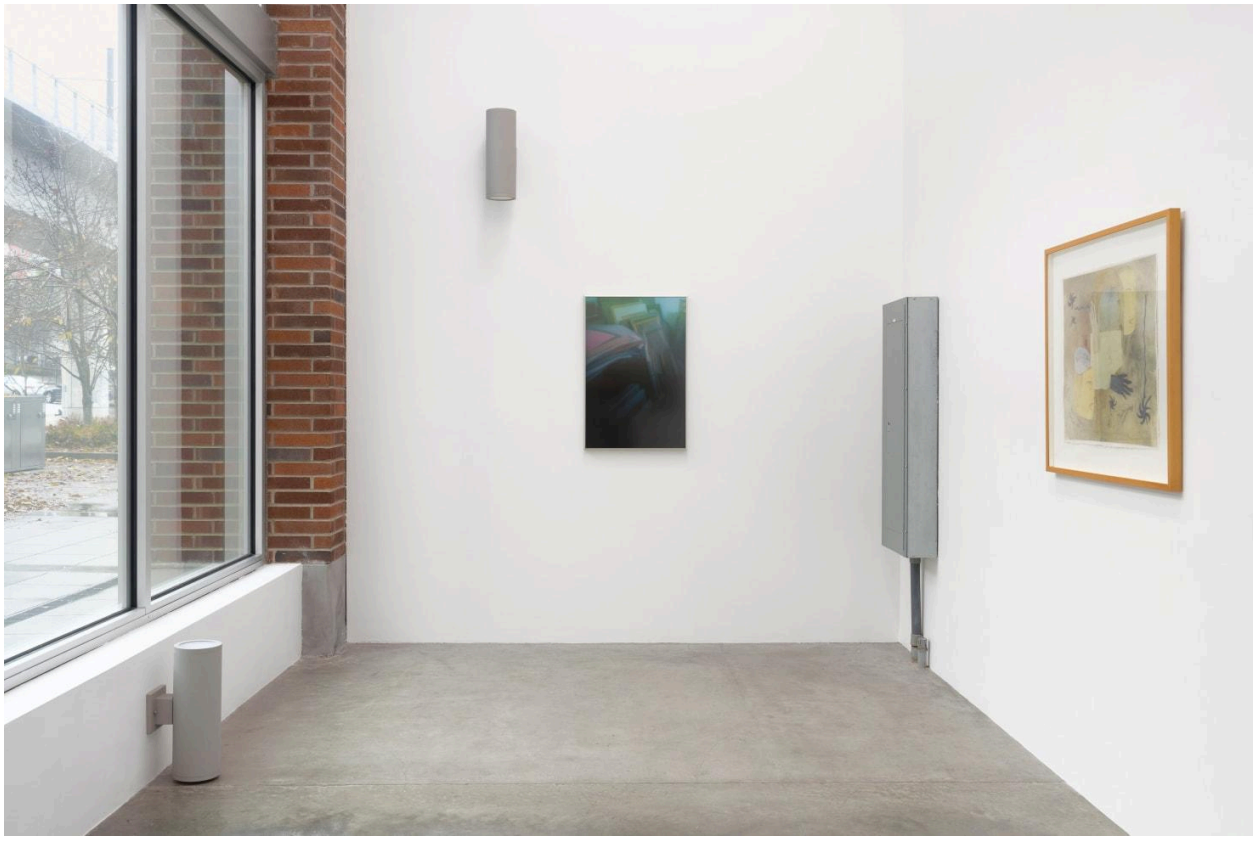
Doris Guo and Weili Wang, Sketch of Characters in a Small Town, 2022. Installation view of Doris Guo's exhibition 'Shanghai San Francisco Richmond Seattle New York Oslo (TRACE)', Veronica Project Space, Seattle, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Veronica Project Space.

https://www.artbasel.com/stories/doris-guo-american-artist-vi-vii-gallery-art-basel-paris?lang=en



Doris Guo and Weili Wang, not yet for words, 2022. Installation view of Doris Guo's exhibition 'Shanghai San Francisco Richmond Seattle New York Oslo (TRACE)', Veronica Project Space, Seattle, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Veronica Project Space.

https://www.artbasel.com/stories/doris-guo-american-artist-vi-vii-gallery-art-basel-paris?lang=en



Installation view of Doris Guo's exhibition 'Shanghai San Francisco Richmond Seattle New York Oslo (TRACE)', Veronica Project Space, Seattle, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Veronica Project Space.

Two years ago, Guo began her most personal project to date. In 'Shanghai San Francisco Richmond Seattle New York Oslo (TRACE)', the artist presented a series of diptychs at Veronica in Seattle in 2022, then under the title 'Back' at Empty Gallery in Hong Kong in 2024, for her first exhibition in Asia. Everything is played out in the margins of a history split across continents and eras, brought together on a wall in an attempt to patch things up.

Guo blurs the lines between the object, its representation, and its reproductions. Children from a migrant background know that there is never only one truth.

Credits and captions
Doris Guo will have a solo presentation with VI, VII in the Emergence sector of Art Basel Paris, from October 18 to 20, 2024. Learn more here.

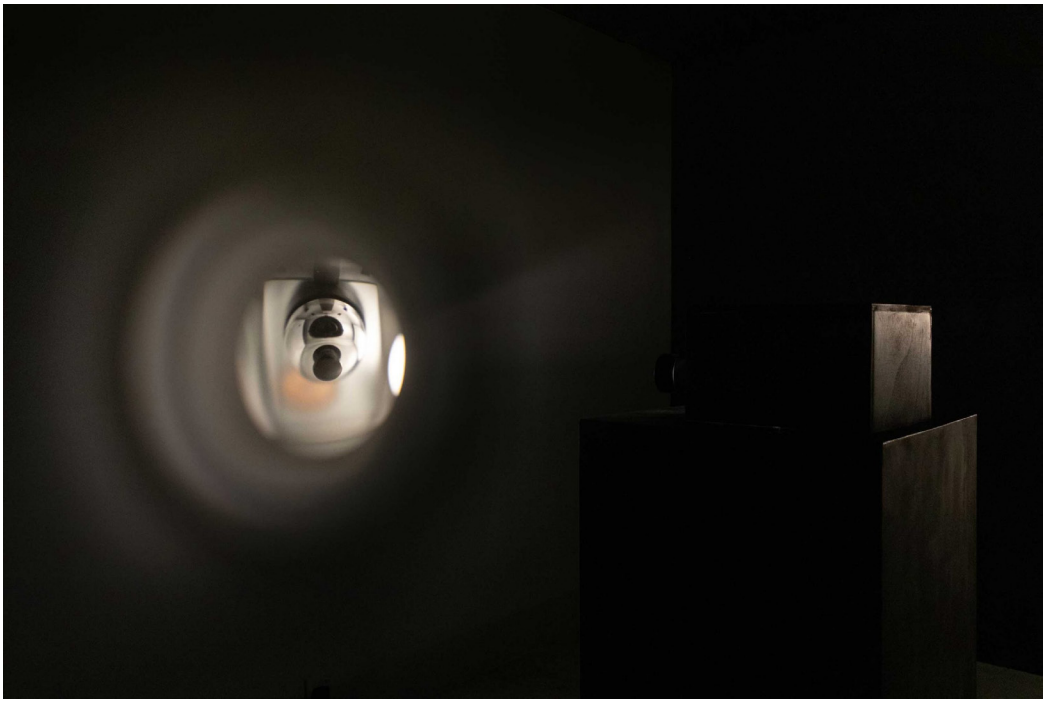
Ingrid Luquet-Gad is an art critic and PhD candidate based in Paris. She teaches art philosophy at the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne.

Caption for top image: Doris Guo and Weili Wang, A Corner of Shanghai (detail), 2022. Installation view of Doris Guo's exhibition 'Shanghai San Francisco Richmond Seattle New York Oslo (TRACE)', Veronica Project Space, Seattle, 2023. Courtesy of the artists.

MOUSSE

Doris Guo 'Back', at Empty Gallery, Hong Kong

Harry Burke



In the early 1990s, artist Weili Wang emigrated from Shanghai to the Pacific Northwest. Although art continued to animate her life in the United States—she and her husband worked as portraitists, started a small art school, and, when the time came, taught their daughter to draw—she left her early artworks with her parents in China. Now also an artist, Wang's daughter Doris Guo has, in the last couple of years, assisted her in moving these to the United States and cataloguing them.

In *Back* at Empty Gallery, Guo's first solo exhibition in Asia, a series of diptychs contemplate this shared endeavor. As they worked, Guo documented her mother's suburban studio with a handmade pinhole camera, creating a series of photographic abstractions of the busy space. In Hong Kong, each print is coupled with one of Wang's paintings or drawings from the 1980s. Guo's *Petrichor* (2023) depicts a stack of drawings, face up, under glassine sheets, surrounded by a throng of brushes, scrunched-up paper, and artworks. The print accompanies one of the sketches pictured in it, 江南小镇 *Small Village in Jiangnan* (1984), a charcoal study of a curving village lane that

Wang made while teaching at an architecture school. The precision of Wang's hand is echoed in the care with which Guo records her mother's studio.

Political themes, by and large, appear indirectly. The enchanting 佛祖空灵 *Buddhist Ethereal* (1989), an oil pastel and ink impression of the Buddhist cave paintings at Dunhuang, brings to mind a tradition of Socialist Realists like Dong Xiwen (1914–1973) copying these murals in their search for a nationalist artistic lineage.[1] Next to it is Guo's *Object Medley* (2023), portraying a cluster of packing materials and frames. In different ways, each image foregrounds the work of preservation, of stewarding history.

But in one pairing, displayed in a small side room, the state's influence is more evident. Though the Communist Party's 1978 embrace of a market-oriented economy would go on to elicit new, rebelliously open forms of expression in Chinese contemporary art, Wang's 秋耕 *Autumn Plowing* (1983) indicates the ongoing legacy of Socialist Realism in the early years of economic reform. Its cadre of farm laborers, smudgy and rounded, displays little heroism. Nonetheless, didactic text praising the autumn harvest hovers around the composition, which memorializes collective work. Hanging beside it is a photograph of a cohort of slanting, lemon-yellow binders. The artworks are charged by the ideological gulfs between China and the United States, and between the 1980s and today. Guo is looking at her mother looking at the world, and finding the caesura between their gazes to be profound.

Parent-child relationships can be fraught, especially when there are cultural differences; with Guo's light touch, though, the diptychs harmonize. If there's tension, it's sublimated. Cocooned in the middle of the gallery are *Discarnate* (2023) and *Fallen Jewelry* (2023), two sculptures in which Guo beams the image of an object, found or picked up in a suburban thrift store, onto the wall, recalling a setup sometimes used by artists when drawing. But because she places the actual object into the projector, rather than a transparent film, the image is hazy. *Fallen Jewelry*, with its hues of lavender, sand, and baby blue, projects something like a cosmic cloud, intersected by thin strips of light from a domestic heating vent. In the late 1940s, the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein developed her concept of "projective identification," an unconscious mechanism in which aspects of the self are split off and attached to an external object.[2] Introjection, a complementary process, is when an external object is internalized by the subject. While maybe heavy-

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1 Liu Ding and Carol Yinghua Lu, "From the Issue of Art to the Issue of Position: The Echoes of Socialist Realism, Part I," e-flux journal 55 (May 2014): https://www.e-flux.com/journal/55/60315/from-the-issue-of-art-to-the-issue-of-position-the-echoes-of-socialist-realism-part-i/.

2 Melanie Klein, "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms," International Journal of Psychoanalysis 27 (1946): 103.

handed, these terms offer a means of reading these works: Guo's sculptures investigate processes of internalization and externalization, albeit impeded, incomplete. Their power lies in their commentary on the antagonisms within us, and on the aspects of ourselves we conceal, perhaps to protect.

We are, by nature, opaque. For this reason, psychoanalysts turn to objects. But, as Guo shows, objects can be equally impenetrable. Why did Wang leave her artworks in China? What meanings did they hold for Wang's parents as they gathered dust in their Shanghai apartment for three decades? How did Guo feel when she first saw them? This tender, shoegazey exhibition offers no answers, for its most pressing inquiries are structural. What objects have we lost or left behind? Is it possible, or desirable, to reunite with them? Such questions might tell us something about why we live our lives at a distance from others.

at Empty Gallery, Hong Kong
until February 17, 2024



SPIKE

Doris Guo at Empty Gallery

Jaime Chu



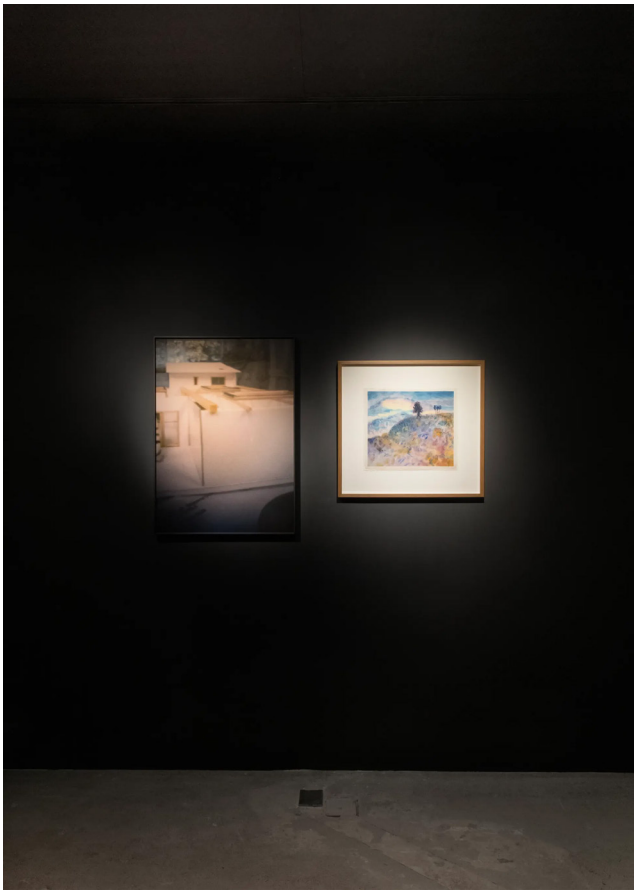
Left: Doris Guo, *Petrichor*, 2023, giclée print on Arches 310 gsm paper; right: Weili Wang, 江南小镇 *Small village in Jiangnan*, 1984, charcoal on paper. All images courtesy: the artists and Empty Gallery, Hong Kong. Photos: Michael Yu

Mounted in Hong Kong in contrapuntal pairs, an exhibition of photographs beside the artist's mother's works finesses the breakages of migration and the limits of familial understanding.

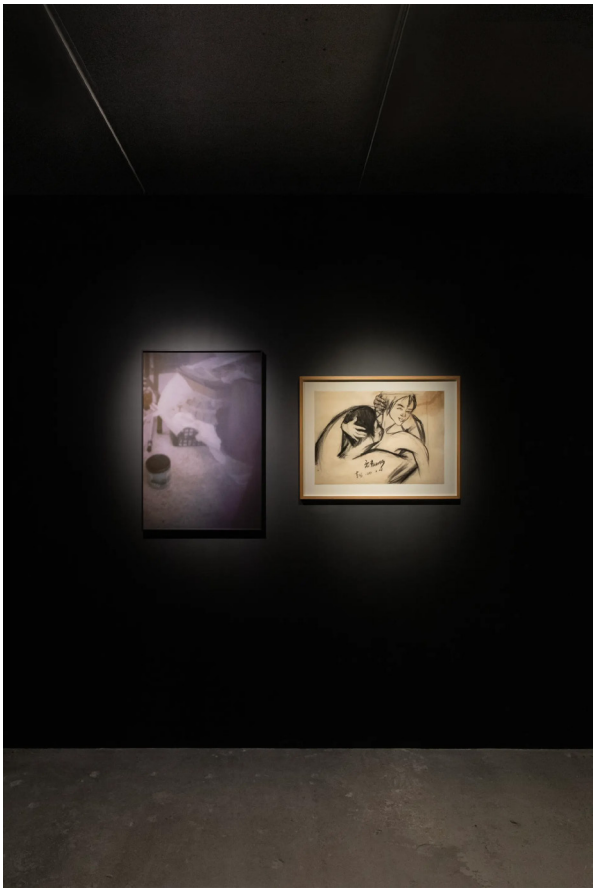
What is a child's duty to a parent's past, and what is the appropriate distance between two lives? During a visit home to Seattle, the artist and erstwhile art handler Doris Guo (*1992) began preparing for storage a haphazard shipment of paintings her mother, Weili Wang (*1956), had made in Shanghai, before emigrating to the US. Guo, who had previously known little of her mother's past life as an artist and art professor, said that materially caring for the paintings, while hesitating to organize them into an archive or to call her own involvement documentation, was the least she could do. After that, "I really don't care what [my mom] does with the paintings," Guo told me.

Her first solo exhibition in Asia, "Back," builds on a series of diptychs begun at the Seattle project space Veronica, which traced a familial migration route from Shanghai to Guo's current residence in Oslo. In Hong Kong, Guo has paired seven of her mother's paintings and works on paper with prints

of pinhole photographs Guo took while sorting through the larger body of works. The selection reflects Wang's wide range of styles, media, and subject matters from throughout the 1980s, from Social Realist depictions of rural life to figurative charcoal drawings and a variety of landscapes of coastal China. Without being mutually representational, the pairings – the two parts constituting one work, following the Chinese literary tradition of *duilian*, or antithetical couplets – reflect family resemblances: Stacks of paper folders slanting from their own weight follow farmers toiling in yellowing fields in *Autumn Plowing* (all works 2023); the boxy pattern in *Storagescape (Sunset)* mirrors the grids on Chinese apartment blocks; and in *Petrichor*, the evocation of first rain in a misty Jiangnan village is counterpointed in an unceremonious array of half-covered prints and painter's tools. In the words of Shanghai-born novelist Liu Yichang, famously appropriated by the opening of Wong Kar Wai's 2004 film *2046*, "All memories are traces of tears."



Left: Doris Guo, *Monroe Studio Model*, 2023, giclée print on Arches 310 gsm paper; right: Weili Wang, 风景 *Landscape*, 1987, watercolor and mineral pigment on rice paper

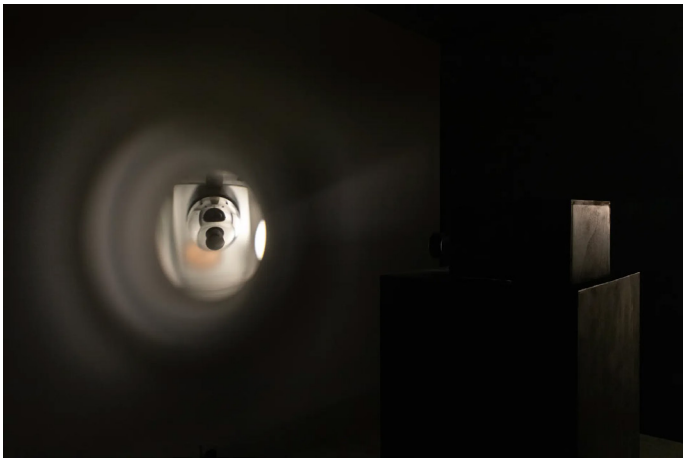


Left: Doris Guo, *Daydream dwelling*, 2023, giclée print on Arches 310 gsm paper; right: Weili Wang, 究竟如何 *How*, 1982, charcoal on paper.

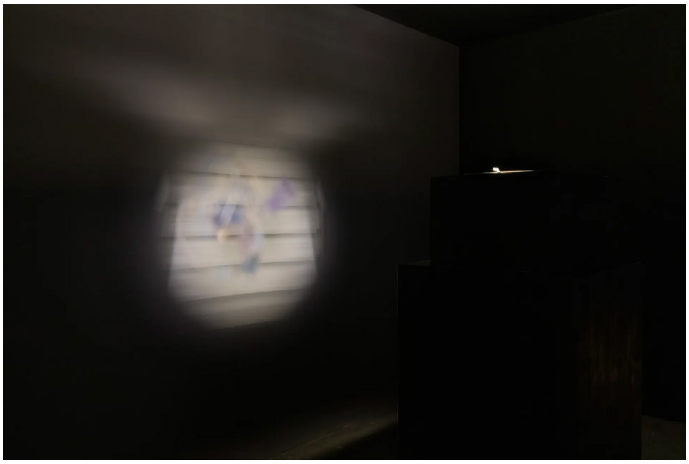
The blackened walls and darkened interior of Empty Gallery characteristically lend its displays a meditative solemnity, here especially pronounced by two custom-built projector-sculptures in the exhibition's anteroom. Static close-ups of the sleek, metallic curvature of a call bell in *Anti Discarnate* and blurry, purple-toned accessories seen through an air vent in *Fallen Jewelry* recast scenes of domestic turmoil as a dry, situational comedy, the way children,

especially immigrant children, distort private jokes to cope with the aporia of living between worlds. The latter image especially summarizes a tragicomic distance: Like memories of the past or unacknowledged family histories, objects seemingly within physical reach can remain emotionally a universe away.

Reading the distance between the vivacity of Wang's self-assured, *en plein air* exercises and Guo's cooler, compositionally erratic, often out-of-focus photographs of messy interiors, unnamed objects, and studio miscellany, the opening of a poem by Ariana Reines sprang to mind: "Trying to see the proportional relation / Of one memory to another / One is so strange, and then / To try and see what looms / And doesn't for the other person." Evading a confrontation with the facts of documentation and the tidiness of an archive, the photos appear rather as portals into a dream state, echoing the sultry impossibility of grasping the reality of the spacetime their referents – her mother's life and work – once occupied.Guo gracefully resolves the incumbent tensions between these multiple identities and their limited perspectives by unburdening their respective artistic languages of the didactics of interpretation. By choosing not to complete Wang's narrative, Guo's formal and material focus deposes her own voice in reckoning with their relationship. Moreover, by maintaining a respectful opacity between her work and her mother's life, Guo asserts an equality of discursive agency in their collaboration as artists.



Doris Guo, *Anti Discarnate*, 2023, call bell, copper drain, opaque projector, painted wood, and hardware



Doris Guo, *Fallen Jewelry*, 2023, jewelry, metal vent, opaque projector, stained wood, and hardware

The discreet humor and formal instincts in "Back" reason that familial decisions at once practical and sentimental need not be saccharine. Nor, for that matter, must viewers always consent to playing the role of psychoanalyst, even when reckonings with filial guilt, generational trauma, and unspoken histories – all common to the Asian-American experience – become artistic subjects. Posing herself in relation to family, and complicated by the multiverse of immigration, Guo proposes an alternative grammar that liberates the viewer and the child-as-artist from the duty of making sense.

We may not always fully understand the choices made in the past, beholden as we are at any given moment to the perspective of any one identity; Guo's clear conceptualization of this limitation shows how the material of the personal can transcend the blind spots of the autobiographical. What if the artist's structuring role is such that two lives may find a common language, in which one is expressly permitted to move as freely as the other? We suffer because we don't know how to lovingly leave each other alone.

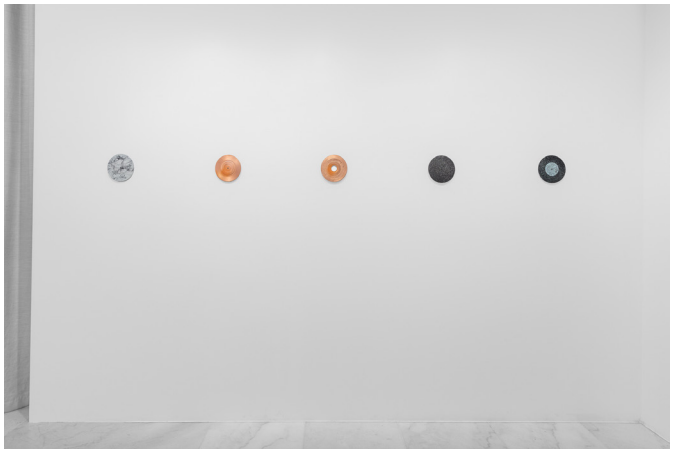


View of "Back," Empty Gallery, Hong Kong, 2023

Doris Guo: traces of people, places, and politics

Victoria Durnak

When you are a child, your parents are a fact, something that is just there. Someone to look up to perhaps, or someone to blame. As you grow, you might start to actually see your parents; they are people, with all their attributions and insecurities. The relationship between parent and child is often tangled, and the stories told by the different parts might not always correspond. Incidents look different from the different points of view.



Doris Guo at VI, VII, Oslo in the show "X Years". Courtesy of VI, VII, Oslo and the artist. Photography: Christian Tunge

This emotional dissonance lays the ground for Doris Guo's untitled project with her mother's artwork. The artist, American born but currently Oslo-based, considers it an ongoing piece, even if it partly unfolded in the Seattle family home where the two family members looked through and cared for the artwork. It also exists as a new work shown in contemporary art contexts, such as in her solo exhibition *Shanghai San Francisco Richmond Seattle New York Oslo (TRACE)* at Veronica in Seattle earlier this year. Here, Guo pairs her mother's artworks with inkjet prints of pinhole photographs of her mother's studio. The works are titled in pairs, and named such as *A corner of Shanghai* (2022 & 1983). The choice of photographic technique underlines how the child's reception of the parent is inevitably constrained – initially as an age-appropriate presentation of the world, but then often reenacted into adulthood, merged into the dynamics of the relationship. A parent can never really let the child into their world. Also, a relationship can never be seen clearly; several truths will always coexist.



Doris Guo, "Shanghai San Francisco Richmond Seattle New York Oslo (TRACE)", Veronica, 2022, installation view. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Jueqian Fang



Doris Guo, "Shanghai San Francisco Richmond Seattle New York Oslo (TRACE)", Veronica, 2022, installation view. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Jueqian Fang

The artwork of Guo's mother, ranging from oil paintings to charcoal drawings, was made when she still lived in China at the time of the cultural revolution. After moving to the US, she abandoned her practice but made a living by drawing portraits at state fairs and similar events. In this light, Guo's new rendering can also be seen as a metaphor for how immigrants inevitably leave some parts of themselves behind. Moving country makes new identities possible – something is found but something is also lost.

Guo mentions how the project was an opportunity to talk with her mother about her artworks, which were but a silent presence during her childhood. Guo's project also becomes an analogy for the parent-child relationship in general, touching upon the idea of unquestioned family facts. The power of the parent in this regard has often struck me in my own life: the responsibility of drawing up a truthful image of the world. The artist's attempt to get closer to her mother speaks of the distance one can feel in a relationship, evoking a certain melancholia.

The theme of being simultaneously near and distant also seems to occur in Guo's wall hung sculptures *Guestbook I & II*, often part of her exhibitions. The cast of either of two different stones, one golden and the other black, hang on the wall. A wall text or the gallery staff encourage the visitors to "sign in" by touching them. The work is partly about the loneliness we can experience even when we are in touch with other people. There is a sense of being almost there, a tingling sensation still left in the palm after shaking someone's hand. Guo's gesture also opens up the work for the viewer, who participates in the sculpture by slowly editing the surface. Over time the bronze erodes, the material changing by human hands, as is also the case with some of the sculptures and tombs in the Ming tombs in Beijing "where certain spots are more popular for visitors to touch for good luck," says Guo.

A vague sense of recognition occurs when I first view Guo's work. When I write her name in the search field



Doris Guo, "Bronze Guestbook II", 2019. Bronze. 8.5 x 5.5 x 1.5 in (21.6 x 14 x 3.8 cm). Courtesy of Derosia, New York and the artist.



Doris Guo, "A bend…", 2019. Pine, hardware, chair. 41 x 36 x 16 in (104.1 x 91.4 x 40.6 cm). Courtesy of Derosia, New York and the artist.



Doris Guo, "XO", installation view at Derosia, New York, 2019. Courtesy of Derosia, New York and the artist.

of my email inbox, I realize I've seen some of it before. I find a 2018 newsletter from Princess, a documentation-based New York gallery, where artworks were placed in a run-down non-space between two buildings and photographed. The exhibitions then existed online through the mentioned newsletter and a webpage. Five years ago I apparently saw images of Guo's show Coffee & Tea there. Only now, the image files are broken, and the memory, alongside the (minimal) text, is what remains. This incident seems to correspond well with the her practice at large, which deals with traces in different forms.

Many of Guo's works are influenced by her Chinese-American background. The autobiographical frame makes possible a representation of Asian lives, bodies, and culture far from the caricatures that circulate today. In her 2019 solo exhibition XO at Derosia, a series of chairs cut in half hung low on the gallery wall inside wooden structures that resemble coffins. Here, a selection of seating props from Chinese restaurants are stripped from their function and given new meaning as a work of art. The slightly edited ready-made object goes in dialogue with art historical figures like Joseph Kosuth and his chair piece, adding a new perspective to the Americentric art canon through its cultural significance. Thinking of how the chairs have served a purpose for the many different New Yorkers suggests an intricate intermingling of cultural contexts.

In spite of all of the stories in Guo's work, there is also a strive for something less outspoken. Her series of unique black mezzotint prints (individually titled, 2022) touch upon the theme of artistic labor, being etched out of copper plates that are painstakingly carved with a rocking tool with a row of small v-shaped teeth. Layering cuts to fill in with ink creates rich prints: black surfaces where one struggles to orientate with no apparent visual grip. The eye searches for meaning, for something concrete to build



Doris Guo, installation view at Inge, New York, 2022. Courtesy of Inge, New York and the artist.



Doris Guo, “Ride with the swirl 1”, 2022. Mezzotint on cotton rag. Courtesy of Inge, New York and the artist.

a narrative around, where you might only find darkness.
At the same time, these prints also speak of a subtle communion of our social and physical surroundings. The darker the surface, the more visible the accumulation of dust. And what is dust, if not traces of our concrete environments – skin particles, fabric, the outdoors with all its natural and man-made components? People, places, and politics. In her works, these lines run parallel and even out, no one more important than the other.

ARTFORUM

Critic's Pick: Doris Guo at Derosia, New York

Hiji Nam



Doris Guo, *Momentary Scare & Inconvenience*, 2019, pine, hardware, chair, 22 x 25 x 11".

Doris Guo's exhibition is solemn, as if one has been summoned to a church or a graveyard for prayer. Here, a funereal series of Chinatown restaurant chairs are nestled within wooden, coffin-like receptacles. Though the chairs appear to be upright, the artist has amputated their back legs, giving us only a truncated front view. (They won't be seating anyone for a happy communion anytime soon.) These innocuous objects are meant to, both literally and symbolically, contribute to the circulation and consumption of Asian food, yes, but also bodies, capital, and a certain kind of aesthetic. They are there to offer a seat at the table, so to speak, at every after-party and gallery dinner hosted in a local eatery—familiar rituals undergirding the lifestyle of the city's culture class.

Momentary Scare & Inconvenience (all works 2019), the most elegant of the four chair sculptures, recalls the feeling of being queued up at a crowded restaurant, anxious that an evening's plans might be derailed, while the vinyl-covered seat of *Cushion Sound* looks like something that would be found at a three-dollar dumpling spot, easily splashed and soiled, but never permanently stained.

Although there's been much discourse in New York about how art businesses are displacing Chinatown's populations, there is no polemic here. Rather, Guo's show feels like a meditation on the ways in which our contradictions, desires, and anxieties can be located in these bits of furniture that underpin vast social systems. *Bronze Guestbook II*, a sculpture cast from a found rock, is the only piece that has not been stripped of function and rendered ornamental. The work is mounted on a wall next to the gallery's reception desk, alluding to how the devout make pilgrimages to holy shrines, sometimes rubbing a special sculpture for good luck. It is meant to be worn down, broken in by communal gatherings and tenderness—in other words, it is an object of faith.

THE NEW YORKER

Doris Guo at Derosia, New York

Johanna Fateman

Dim lighting establishes a quietly theatrical ambience inside this small gallery, evoking the interiors where Guo's materials were once at home. In her new suite, the young sculptor uses sliced sections of chairs, which she has carefully framed with stained wooden boxes and mounted on the wall. One trio of works showcases the front legs and halved seats of three distinctly different styles of mass-produced chair. The effect is unsettling, as if a magician had given up in the midst of a vanishing act. A larger sculpture offers the view in reverse: glossy spindles face out, and a pale cushion ends abruptly at the back of a dark recessed cabinet. Guo's truncated forms have an affinity with Robert Gober's uncanny domestic objects and body parts, but her coffined furniture achieves a formally astute effect all its own.