

2-5 September 2026

DAWN OF DREAMS

Zed Xu 榛子瞬

夢
之
初

Opening night Wednesday 2 September 5:30pm

live performance + gallery premier

Enjoy Contemporary Art Space

Curated by Cai Jieying 蔡杰盈

夢之初 *Dawn of Dreams*

Curated by Cai Jieying 蔡杰盈 for Zed Xu 榛子瞬

The first time I met Zed, they made me a Vogel's toastie with veggies and Chinese sausage and I brought over a whole mango to share. They were entering their filmmaking era and I was experimenting with a lens-based practice at university. Although we didn't collaborate til 2026, we somehow kept in touch, exchanging books we read and artists we shared an interest in.

Dawn of Dreams 夢之初 is a transnational film made across China and New Zealand. The artist doesn't over-explain the cultural difference; instead, they bring together guzheng, performance, mark-making, landscape and cinematic staging. The film traces diasporic selfhood through return, sonic and bodily memory across both places.¹ Zed's body becomes a vessel in which Chineseness is embedded within rather than through a translated spectacle gaze.

A live performance by the same name negotiates space, material encounter and migratory belonging. Performed to the film's original score, the work asks whether a racialised body in a Pākehā-dominated environment can truly belong, or does it remain in constant transit and flux? In mainland China, questions of belonging, age anxiety, and the difficulty of fulfilling filial expectations arise. The artist and textile designer Lin Tianmiao's choice to not express her "Chineseness" through special or iconic symbols shows a quiet confidence to not be translated by Western viewers.² Similarly to Zed, who does not assign to terms that translate or are confined to a fixed identity. The body is instead porous to the environment, where different visibility arises in different geographies.

The Dreamer in *Dawn of Dreams* 夢之初 experiences the push and pull between the artist's dreams and the ancestor's dreams. The Dreamer plays Chinese chess with their own double. Subverting the traditional path paved for them, the Dreamer seeks answers/expression beyond language. Although the artist is bilingual, the film contains no dialogue. Some things are felt with the body rather than spoken.

1 Zed Xu 榛子瞬, conversation with the artist. July 2026.

2 Lin Tianmiao, Wrapped up: an interview with Sun Yunfan, Sept 2012
<https://www.chinafile.com/wrapped-interview-lin-tianmiao>

When I first saw a draft edit, Zed had just wrapped up filming in Aotearoa and China with cinematographer Nick Willoughby. In China, the pair travelled to Nanle, Ürümqi and Hangzhou. These are sites connected to Zed's birthplace and ancestral homes. The making process involved Zed's families and newly built collaborative relationships in China. Back in Aotearoa, Zed worked with Jefferson Chen at Goodspace studio to create an immersive original score that brought new life to the visuals. Zed does not create alone and has been cultivating a collective diasporic identity through working closely with others. The credit scene at the end of the film says it all.

Sonic memory is the undercurrent of this film; symbolic of Zed's migration journey, the guzheng came with them at the age of fourteen. Zed's vocals resonate with the guzheng. The featured song is a farewell song from the artist's childhood, written by a Qing dynasty monk called Hongyi (弘一法師/李叔同). Farewells and reunion surface the migrant body's memory to song; a portal that traverses past and present. Where sonic material collapses time and space tracing the ancestors' dreams as the self journeys forward.

These themes of body, material, and sonic memory also reflect my personal journey of migrating as a young child. Saying goodbye before I knew what reunions were.

My mother tells me during the one child policy,¹ she wasn't able to know my sex until I was born. This was to prevent discrimination against females who are more likely to be aborted. For people born in China during this policy, filial expectations and old age care is a personal experience shaped by societal policy.

In the vastness of Chinese contemporary art where Mao, globalisation, cultural revolution and certain events are favoured globally, the subtle social commentary of artists like Zed that use personal narrative can be easily missed if one is unfamiliar with its cultural and historical context. This curiosity, intuition and reimagination for Zed is just the beginning.

This show was formed through the Massey University Creative Arts Internship and supported by Brooke Pou and Tendai Mutambu at Enjoy Contemporary. We thank those that came before us who have shaped us with knowledge, love and care.

¹ Penny Kane, Ching Y Choi. "China's One Child Family Policy." National Library of Medicine. Oct 1999, doi: 10.1136/bmj.319.7215.992.

《夢之初 Dawn of Dreams》
策展人：蔡杰盈 Cai Jieying
艺术家：Zed Xu 榛子瞬

第一次见到 Zed 时，Zed 用 Vogel's 面包做了夹有蔬菜和中式香肠的烤三明治，我则带来一整颗芒果来分享。那时，Zed 已将创作重心转向影片，而我则在大学里探索以镜头为基础的艺术实践。虽然直到 2026 年我们才正式合作，但这些年来，我们一直通过交流书籍和共同关注的艺术家维持着联系。

《夢之初 Dawn of Dreams》是一件横跨中国与新西兰创作的影片作品。艺术家并未过度解释文化差异，而是将古筝、表演、身体留痕、景观与电影化场面调度交织在一起。作品通过返乡、声音记忆与身体记忆，追索跨越不同地域的离散身份¹。Zed 的身体成为承载“Chineseness”的容器；这里的“Chineseness”内嵌于身体之中，而不是呈现在被翻译和奇观化的凝视中。

本次的同名现场表演围绕空间、材料相遇与迁徙中的归属展开。伴随影片的原创配乐，作品追问：一个被种族化的身体是否能够真正归属，还是始终处于迁徙、流动与变化之中？在 Aotearoa 新西兰，在 Pākehā 文化占主导的环境中，身体被种族化；在中国大陆，浮现的则是归属、年龄焦虑，以及如何回应孝道与家庭期待的问题。

林天苗选择不通过特殊或标志性的符号表达自身的“中国性”，这种姿态体现出一种无需向西方观众解释自身的从容与自信²。Zed 同样不愿被那些便于翻译、却将身份固定下来的术语所界定。身体并非封闭或恒定，而是对周围环境保持开放，在不同地理位置中呈现出不同形式的可见性。

《夢之初 Dawn of Dreams》中的“梦者”经历着艺术家之梦与祖辈之梦之间的拉扯。“梦者”与另一个自己下着象棋，颠覆那条为其设定的人生路径，在语言之外寻找答案。尽管艺术家能够使用两种语言，影片却没有任何对白。有些事无法诉诸言语，只能被感知。

第一次看到影片初剪时，Zed 刚结束在奥克兰和中国的拍摄。Zed 与摄影师兼好友 Nick Willoughby 一同前往南乐、乌鲁木齐和杭州：这些地方都与 Zed 的出生地和祖籍有着联系。影片的创作融入了家人的参与，也促成了艺术家在中国的新合作关系。回到新西兰后，Zed 在 Goodspace 工作室与 Jefferson Chen 合作，共同创作了具有沉浸感的原创配乐，赋予画面新的生命。作品诞生于多重合作关系之中，也让我们对彼此共享的离散经验有了更清晰的认识。影片结尾的特别鸣谢已经说明了一切。

声音记忆如同一股暗流，贯穿整部影片。十四岁移居新西兰时，古筝也随 Zed 一同来到新西兰；此后，它也成为这段迁徙经历的见证。影片中，人声与琴音交织共振，一首来自童年记忆的送别曲随之响起：由弘一法师（李叔同）填词的《送别》。告别与重逢唤起了身体对歌曲的记忆；声音成为穿越时间、将我们带回过去的入口。在这里，声音材料折叠了时间与空间。当艺术家继续走向未来时，祖辈的梦想也在其中留下痕迹。

这些主题也映照出我个人的迁徙经历：年幼时离开故土，在还不懂“重逢”为何物之前，便先学会了告别。

母亲告诉我，在独生子女政策时期¹，为防止基于胎儿性别的选择性流产，产前鉴定胎儿性别受到严格限制，所以，我的性别直到出生时才揭晓。中国当代艺术有着极为丰富的面貌，但在全球艺术语境中，围绕政治符号、全球化、革命叙事与特定历史事件展开的作品，往往更容易被看见。相比之下，像 Zed 这样从自身出发而展开的创作，若不熟悉其文化与历史背景，便很容易被忽略。而这种好奇、直觉与重新想象，对 Zed 来说，也仅仅只是一个开始。

本次展览由梅西大学创意艺术实习项目促成，并得到 Enjoy Contemporary 的 Brooke Pou 和 Tendai Mutambu 支持。我们感谢所有走在我们之前、以知识、爱与关怀塑造我们的人。

1 Zed Xu 榛子瞬，与艺术家的对话，2026 年 7 月

2 林天苗：《缠裹——孙云帆访谈录》，2012 年 9 月，<https://www.chinafile.com/wrapped-in-interview-lin-tianmiao>

1 佩妮·凯恩、蔡清耀 (Kane, Penny, Ching Y Choi)：《中国独生子女家庭政策》，载于《美国国家医学图书馆》，1999 年 10 月，doi: 10.1136/bmj.319.7215.992.



Key film crew credits

Writer and Director: Zed Xu 榛子瞬

Cinematographer: Nick Willoughby

Costume designers: Sophelia Shizune ソフィリア静音, Sophie Mathews

Performer: Zed Xu 榛子瞬, Ziyue Ma 马紫越, Clair Li 李芊慧

Original score: Jefferson Chen (Goodspace)

Opening night crew credits

Curator: Cai Jieying 蔡杰盈

Lighting artist: Issadora Lao

Costume design: Cai Jieying 蔡杰盈

Production assistants: Shiqi Ren 诗琦 / 青淮, Issadora Lao

Videographer: Ethan Morais