

For the third iteration of *spare room*, works by artists Alexandre Khondji and Peng Zuqiang are brought together to form a dialogue around the parameters and limits of image-making.

In the 1970s and 80s, philosopher Vilém Flusser developed a theory of photography centred on what he calls the *technical image*. Unlike traditional images made directly by hand, technical images—photographs, films, videos and digital images—are produced through an *apparatus*: a camera, computer or other technological system governed by a *programme*.

For Flusser, this apparatus functions as a kind of *black box*: its internal processes remain largely hidden, shaping what the image can produce and how we perceive it. This idea feels particularly relevant today, as AI image generators introduce new forms of programmed image-making.

Flusser argues that the artist's freedom is shaped by the possibilities encoded in the apparatus. Their task is therefore not simply to use the apparatus correctly, but to *play against* its programme: testing its limits, exploring unforeseen possibilities, and producing images that escape its predetermined logic. In this sense, artistic creation can become a form of resistance, revealing and potentially disrupting the systems that shape technical images.

It is within this tension between the possibilities offered by an apparatus and the limits imposed by its programme that the works presented in this exhibition can be situated.

Working through different approaches to film, photography and the moving image, Alexandre Khondji and Peng Zuqiang both turn their attention to the conditions of image-making itself, questioning how images are produced, what they are capable of recording, and what happens when the conventions of the apparatus are pushed, disrupted or made visible. Their works thus approach the technical image not simply as a finished representation, but as a material and conceptual process to be tested.

Often taking the form of spatial interventions and site-specific responses, Alexandre Khondji's works are the result of meticulous and contextualised research that he translates into precise yet elusive gestures that bring to the forefront what is mostly hidden, peripheral, and only palpable. At *spare room*, he presents *Inserts*, a new series of images made with an endoscopic camera, extending his ongoing exploration of the technical image. Diverted from its function of inspection and its quasi-medical authority, the endoscope is here played against its own programme. Like a Flusserian toy, it produces nothing but images: hollow, circular forms, spaces that seem to emerge from the very act of insertion. The resulting photographs are strangely mysterious and cosmic, prompting a dizzy oscillation between the microscopic and the immense, where the act of looking dissolves into being looked at.

Working predominantly with film, video and installation, Peng Zuqiang is interested in the histories of media and mediums, attending to their affective resonances and dissenting associations. In *Déjà Vu*, Peng experiments with film as a material and with cameraless image-making. Thirty metres of metal wire are directly exposed onto film negative, evoking the wire's dual potential as a means of entrapment and escape. The ghostly images are accompanied by a soundtrack based on the rhythms of 2022 Chinese protest chants, stripped of their words, which interrupts a narration weaving together memories of accidents, hate crimes and police brutality. The work reflects on the relationship between bodily memory and the possibility of understanding another person's experience. This question extends to a clay replica of a Qing dynasty brush rest, depicting a reclining young male figure whose body, marked by cracks and hollowed openings, carries the tensions between object and subject, ornament and objectification, while echoing the fractured lines of the film and soundtrack.

Alexandre Khondji lives and works in Paris, France. He graduated from Bard College, Hudson, NY and the Royal College of Art, London. Recent exhibitions include, les Bains Douches, Alençon (upcoming); Haus am Waldsee, Berlin; Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; Okayama Art Summit, Japan; CAPC Musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux; Café des Glaces, Tonnerre; Maureen Paley, London; Sweetwater, Berlin and LUMA Arles.

Peng Zuqiang was born in 1992 in Changsha, China and currently lives and works in Paris. He graduated from the Goldsmiths, University of London, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Rijksakademie, Amsterdam. Recent solo and duo exhibitions include Kunsthalle Zurich (upcoming); Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai; The Common Guild, Glasgow; Emalin, London; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Kunstverein Kevin Space, Vienna; E-Flux screening room, New York; Cell Project Space, London.

Alexandre Khondji

Insert, 2026

C-print on glossy paper, museum glass
30 x 36.5 cm (11.8 x 14.37 in)

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Peng Zuqiang

Déjà vu, 2023

16 mm color film projection, with digital sound,
clay, iron oxide, 2 min., 45 sec

Ed. of 3 + 2 AP

Peng Zuqiang

Untitled (two heats) #1, 2026

16mm film transferred to porcelain, framed
40 x 32 cm (15.74 x 12.60 in)

Unique

Peng Zuqiang

Untitled (two heats) #2, 2026

16mm film transferred to porcelain, framed
40 x 32 cm (15.74 x 12.60 in)

Unique