

## Vivien Zhang: *Paths Unseen*

Aranya Art Center North  
May 27 - November 23, 2025

Aranya Art Center North is pleased to present *Paths Unseen*, a solo exhibition by Chinese artist Vivien Zhang, featuring paintings, maquettes, and archival material based on butterfly map projections.

The butterfly is a frequently recurring motif in Zhang's recent work. The shape originates from the butterfly projection method devised by Bernard J.S. Cahill in 1909. Due to its more accurate representation of land area, this octahedral map projection—which unfolds the Earth into the shape of a butterfly—is regarded as a visual solution that is more geopolitically neutral to regional politics and provides us with an alternative logic for understanding the world.

Map projections are often seen as “husks” of the Earth, while the butterfly's skin carries a more profound metaphor: butterflies mimic each other's patterns to evade predators, and some species undertake intergenerational migrations for survival and reproduction. The exhibition title, *Paths Unseen*, alludes to the ways in which migrations and assimilation within an individual's history subtly shape behaviors and interpersonal relationships (the artist moved between multiple countries during her upbringing and is currently based in the United Kingdom). Drawing on the mimicry and migratory mechanisms of butterflies, this exhibition explores how individuals move through, adapt to, and assimilate within social structures, reflecting on contemporary issues such as identity formation, collective consensus, and strategies of survival.

This exhibition is organized by Assistant Curator Gao Liangjiao and Associate Curator Wu Yiyang at the Aranya Art Center.



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[www.aranyaartcenter.com/](http://www.aranyaartcenter.com/)  
10:00 – 18:00, Tuesday to Sunday  
0335 782 5660  
W30, Binhe Commercial Street, Aranya North Coast  
Beidaihe New District, Qinhuangdao, Hebei Province, China

## About the artist

Vivien Zhang

Born in 1990 in Beijing; lives and works in London.

Vivien Zhang received a BA in Fine Art from the Slade School of Fine Art, London in 2012, and an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art, London in 2014. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Flat Earth*, Pilar Corrias, London, UK (2024); *undo undo undo*, Pilar Corrias, London, UK (2022); *Lorem Ipsum*, Long March Space, Beijing, China (2021), etc. Recent group exhibitions include: *Dream Screen*, Leeum Museum of Art, Seoul (2024); *Chaque vie est une histoire*, Palais de la Porte Dorée, Paris (2024); *Abstraction (re)creation – 20 under 40*, Le Consortium, Dijon (2024); *Boundless Reverie: Chinese Savoir-Faire and Contemporary Art*, K11 Foundation, Hong Kong (2024); *Barbe a Papa*, CAPC Musée d'art Contemporain de Bordeaux, Bordeaux (2022); *The Disconnected Generation*, Song Art Museum, Beijing (2022), among many others. Vivien Zhang was the recipient of the Abbey Award 2016-17 at the British School at Rome.

## About Aranya Art Center

Aranya Art Center is a kunsthalle for contemporary art, powered by Aranya, a seaside community in Beidaihe, China. Its architecture is designed by Neri&Hu. Its heavy volume, dark facade and concrete wall tiles with different textures make the exterior of the art center look like a tough rock. The spiral staircases inside the building connect the open-air atrium at the bottom with each exhibition gallery.

Since its opening in May 2019, the Aranya Art Center has presented more than 20 exhibitions, including group exhibitions *Long Day*, *Études*, *How Far*, *How Close*, *Studio Visits*, and *Paint for Life!*, as well as comprehensive museum exhibitions of Anselm Reyle, Sylvie Fleury, Tao Hui, Gabriel Kuri, Jiang Zhi, Yuko Mohri, and Trevor Yeung.

Aranya Art Center's first branch, Aranya Art Center North, opened on September 22, 2024.



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