

VACANCY

Press Text

Exhibition Title: *Mirrors Within Mirrors*

Artists: CFGNY, Alice GONG Xiaowen, GU Xingzi, HAN Xinyu, Michael HO, Fu NAGASAWA, Sun Woo, and Sydney SHEN.

Duration: May 14–June 13, 2026

Venue: 197 Grand St, 2W, New York, NY 10013

Gallery Vacancy is pleased to present *Mirrors Within Mirrors*, a group exhibition hosted by Derosia that carries a loose connotation of reflection and exchange, marking the conversation between the two galleries in the spirit of collaboration: one space opening into another, one perspective refracted through the other. Bringing together CFGNY, Alice GONG Xiaowen, GU Xingzi, HAN Xinyu, Michael HO, Fu NAGASAWA, Sun Woo, and Sydney SHEN, the exhibition unfolds through artists whose practices are rooted in, or move across, Asian and diasporic experiences. Resonating loosely with Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy*, where follower and followed, observer and observed, self and double begin to blur, the exhibition approaches identity not as a fixed origin, but as something continually produced through surface, memory, style, and perception. Across porcelain, painting, sculpture, sound installation, and image-making, *Mirrors within Mirrors* looks toward another place beyond the present and the past—a shifting field where each reflection opens onto another, and what appears legible remains quietly in flux. The exhibition is on view from May 14 to June 13, 2026, at 197 Grand St. New York.

In this body of work, **CFGNY** (Concept Foreign Garments New York, founded 2016) arranges cheap, presumably “made in China” goods and captures a mold of the negative space between them. This relational void is then cast in luxurious “fine China porcelain,” reversing the hierarchy associated with these terms. The mold-casting process complicates the distinction between positive and negative space, where presence is brought into being through absence. At the same time, the sculptures appear haunted by the conditions around them: labor, sociality, commodities, industrial manufacture, international trade, and outsourced labor — forces often invisible, yet fundamental to how these objects exist in the world. Their ghostly, weightless appearance speaks to this hidden network of influence, as if shaped as much by what cannot be seen as by what has been physically cast. For this installation at Derosia, the ceramics are displayed on translucent tables dressed in sheer tablecloths, recalling high-society banquet settings where people gather, circulate, and influence one another. Situated between Chinatown and Little Italy, the works further resonate with histories of immigration, exchange, and Asian diasporic identity.

Pale Fruiting (2026), the latest work by Korean-Canadian artist **Sun Woo** (b. 1994, KR) stages the female body as a porous site where personal memory, displacement, and historical inheritance converge. A withered tree trunk rises through an interior of mirrors, drawers, pearls, and floral wallpaper, as eggs hang from its branches like impossible fruit in front of an empty mirror. The work reflects on inherited modes of aspiration and self-construction shaped by migration across cultural contexts and Korea's accelerated modernization under the promises of westernized progress. Rather than treating these conditions as fixed historical narratives, it approaches them as atmospheric systems circulating through familial memory, everyday life, and contemporary regimes of visibility and control. Moving beyond realistic inference, Sun Woo transforms the scene into a site of estranged belonging, where folklore, memory, and domestic ornament collapse into one another, and what should signify life instead becomes a fragile clue to rupture, longing, and uncertain kinship.

Alice GONG Xiaowen (b. 1994, CN) presents *Pèng* (2026), a radio installation unfolding across the back room of the gallery, where multiple FM frequency devices transmit the voices of Elizabeth Fraser and Faye Wong. Through songs, covers, translations, duets, and reproductions, the two singers form an unlikely collaboration across distance. As viewers tune a radio in the space, six FM frequencies interject into existing local stations, allowing Wong and Fraser's voices to interrupt, intermingle, and dissolve into the surrounding broadcast landscape. Each time the work is shown or documented, it produces a site-specific collage of cultural voices, shaped by the time and geography of its location. Local broadcasts cut through the signal; songs appear and disappear; one voice seems to become the other. Broadcast simultaneously through left and right stereo speakers, the songs are stripped down to vocals and divided across the spatial audio field. As one language comes into focus, another recedes; at the center, the voices blend into a single ambiguous sound. Tuning becomes a way of searching through mediated fragments, as Wong and Fraser's voices form an uncanny duet of phonetic resemblance — aurally intimate and nearly indistinguishable, even as English, Mandarin, and Cantonese remain only partially decipherable. The work lingers in this gap between speech and song, where language is felt before it is understood, and the undecipherable becomes a form of recognition.

GU Xingzi (b. 1995, CN) stages an encounter suspended between tenderness and estrangement in the work *Untitled (boy with deer)* (2026). A young boy and a small deer face one another in a misty green field, their forms softly blurred as if emerging from memory, dream, or a half-remembered folktale. Their communication unfolds in silence: without language, the animal becomes a mirror through which the self senses another presence, both intimate and unreachable. To the right, the purple rear of a car interrupts the pastoral atmosphere, suggesting movement, departure, and the unsettled condition of being between places. Rendered through thin washes, vaporous color, and gently dissolving contours, the scene resists fixed narrative and lingers instead in a state of emotional perception. Rooted in GU's exploration of migration, belonging, and the fluid boundary between self and other, the work imagines encounters as a moment of mutual recognition — delicate, wordless, and just beyond the

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grasp of the present.

In **Michael HO's** (b. 1991, NL) folding screen installation *Silicate Transmigration* (2026), a familiar form associated with refinement, privacy, and cultivated viewing is rendered through latex, pigment, and jade powder, becoming pale, textured, and hauntingly sensuous. The latex panels are cast from the textures of HO's paintings, where pigments pushed from the back bleed through the surface, leaving residues of penetration that seem to erode the latex into a liminal skin. The screen receives and withholds at once, carrying traces of ornament, concealment, devotion, and projection without settling into any single function. It may be approached as a surface of passage, where landscape is no longer held as a distant view, but felt through touch, concealment and transformation. This sensibility continues in *Song of Clouds* (2026), where landscape is brought so close that it is perceived less as scenery than as a surface of sensation. Leaves and branches bleed forward from the back of the canvas, suspended between emergence and application, growth and imprint, surface and underside. Along the fabric, seeking and seeing seem to move together; the medium does not travel in one direction, but passes through seepage, effort, sensation, and its own wandering autonomy. Between screen and painting, landscape flickers less as a place than as something absorbed, pressed, mirrored, and faintly reanimated — a mirage of memory, material, and melancholy.

At the threshold where memory, poetry, and emotion depart from the present and begin to coalesce into shape, **Han Xinyu** (b. 1998, CN) draws the image toward a place where things are almost named, almost touched, almost seen. In *Bless You* (2026), a face appears near the upper right, belonging to an anonymous figure who seems to approach through a loosened edge of reality. Hair dissolves into traces; lines drift like nerves; patches of mint, rose, and violet lean into one another, merging into a tender yet unsettling stream of crushed petals, engraved by the scraper. What emerges is not a story, but a sensation of arrival: a room bending, a face surfacing, a memory changing temperature. Like a spontaneous jazz improvisation in a dimmed bistro, the painting holds rhythm without sequence, intimacy without explanation. Han captures a moment meant to be felt — a memory hovering above language, perhaps never meant to be told.

Working across ceramics, sculpture, and painting, **Fu NAGASAWA** (b. 1999, JP) often turns to antique and craft objects, translating the tactile memory of materials into unsettled natural forms — ponds, flowers, birds, and animals that appear less observed than half-remembered through touch. In *Bird-and-Flower* (2026), the familiar motif of bird and blossom appears less as a stable image than as a remnant carried through touch. A bird-like figure gathers near the center, softened by washes of pink, grey, brown, and muted green, while petals and floral traces drift around it like impressions left on fabric, ceramic, or memory. The painting does not describe nature directly; it lets nature appear through erosion, bleeding, scraping, and the slow pressure of the hand. Referencing motifs found in folk craft objects, Nagasawa allows inherited forms to loosen into something provisional and alive, where bird, flower, ground, and gesture seem to exchange places. What emerges is a quiet field of transition: ornament becomes movement, matter becomes image, and nature returns as a fragile, unsettled presence.

Milksop Craven (2026) by **Sydney Shen** (b. 1989, US) explores the nuanced tensions between fragility, fear, and idealized forms. The title itself is an archaic, obsolete epithet meaning a “feeble coward.” The artist first encountered this term in the video game *Elden Ring*, where the character Roderika self-deprecatingly uses it to describe her paralysis by fear and her loss of purpose. Within the “Souls-like” aesthetic of the game, the player assumes the role of the “Tarnished”—not a flawless hero, but a survivor navigating a fractured world. This lore-based identity creates a sophisticated pun with the work's physical “tarnished” finish—a rusted, lusterless metallic surface texture. The piece adopts the “classic” silhouette of a flower-shaped earring back, a highly recognizable visual signifier that evokes collective nostalgia for 1990s girlhood icons such as Polly Pocket, Hello Kitty, and Miffy. However, Shen disrupts this pure cuteness through hand-worn surface textures, “faux welds” evocative of industrial ruins, and textural “scars” produced by acid patina. Describing this aesthetic as a “maudlin type of melancholy that is almost cute,” Shen juxtaposes nostalgic symbols of girlhood with the melancholic narratives of Souls-like games. In doing so, she stages a profound dialectic regarding the “perfection of the soul”—caught between idealized forms of cuteness and the harshness of material reality.