

Huaqian Zhang lives and works in Barcelona. Their practice combines their own making with the production of third-party projects. They have been part of the Exòtic Department, MACBA's self-training programme (2017-2018), JAI Institute of Artistic Practices at Tabakalera and Artium (2024). They have taught workshops at Can Felipa Arts Visuals (2021) and Sant Andreu Contemporani (2023). Their work has been shown in collective exhibitions such as *Mapes d'allò que pot venir* at Sala d'Art Jove (Maps of What May Come, 2022), and they have also staged solo exhibitions such as *Tot el mal* at Malpaís (All the Evil, 2023) and *Sobreescalfament* at Dilalica (Overheating, 2024). They have been awarded the Art Jove Creació Award (2022), Barcelona Crea Grant (2023) and Hangar's Production Grant (2025). They are currently an artist-in-residence at Hangar (2021-2026).

from 6:12 pm to 5:48 pm
Exhibition series
curated by
Alejandro Alonso Díaz

Next exhibitions

Michael Kleine
22.04 –
05.07.26

Ghislaine Leung
17.07 –
18.10.26

Victor Ruiz Colomer
30.10.26 –
17.01.27

Camilla Wills*
14.07.26 –
17.02.27

*Exhibition in the lobby of the Fundació Joan Miró

For additional information:



With the collaboration of:

Sabadell
Foundation

Espai
13

Huaqian Zhang
ARNA (moth)

06.02 –
06.04.2026



Fundació Joan Miró

Parc de Montjuïc
 Barcelona

Centre d'Estudis
 d'Art Contemporani

Huaqian Zhang ARNA (moth)

Espai 13 presents ARNA (moth), Huaqian Zhang's first institutional exhibition.

Guided by a moth's fluttering, the installation interweaves everyday narratives with an industrial scale, thus deepening into belonging, estrangement and the haunting nature of certain objects. A large scale thermal sculpture built through standardized materials, gestures and processes performs as a heating system in the gallery space, and the exhibition's main feature. By fluctuating across multiple intensities and durations of heat and light, it sparks varying degrees of proximity and visibility, allowing thus to observe the threshold between reproduction and creation, revealing what is already there. As an object usually linked to cold weather and the appearance of structures that extend from domestic environments to urban leisure settings, the radiator evokes a movement that is both inwards and outwards.

The temperature imposed by the institution's closed circuit takes on a broader register in the Espai13. It anticipates the physical and structural vacuum through which sound and heat travel across.

Huaqian Zhang lives and works in Barcelona. They primarily work with sculpture, sound, textile and video, producing installations that alter the relationships between agency, dependence and desire. By interchanging these vectors as an syntactic exercise, their work generates somatic and affective conditions, revealing already existing sensory flows, structures and spaces.

Alejandro Alonso Díaz,
curator of the exhibition programme

CONVERSATION:

Alejandro Alonso Díaz:

I recall that our conversation began from your text «Overheating». Although the installation currently on display at Espai 13 is part of a different body of work, this initial point of departure has proved to be particularly fruitful: *... love causes friction / friction causes heat / heat causes pain / pain causes tenderness / tenderness causes love* The phrase that sets the rhythm of the text also gives it a circular structure. It's a kind of feedback loop. Temperature appears as a way of articulating the structural and the sensory, and that somatic impulse is also present in the Espai 13 installation.

Huaqian Zhang:

There's something temperamental about working with heat, like how our emotions can be affected by a change in the consuming too much. Heat accelerates transformation and cold preserves the status quo. You envisaged a room full of heaters, but we had to abandon that idea for fear of consuming too much energy. Although the image of incandescence remained etched in my mind: its maximalist effect, its capacity to channel so much energy into a material that it changes its state – to the point where it begins to glow and emit heat. Since it was impossible to put lots of heaters in the room, I decided to make only one, but a very large one. Scaling up the size of an object is like looking at it very closely, or making yourself small before it.

AAD:

This change of scale acts similarly to the cyclical structure of «Overheating». Both resist categorisation, while simultaneously containing an emphasis on feeling – now I recall the references to pop in several of our conversations, or the emotional response to certain songs. There's a great deal of careful attention given to the emotional encounter with the work as well as the circumstances in which this encounter occurs. Adrenaline, desire or melancholy are states that your work and practice in general explore, and perhaps this can be read as something that leans towards the romantic, with its life and death drives. Could you elaborate on this?

HZ:

What interests me about pop is its ability to be contagious. It spreads like a folk tale passed from mouth to mouth, a meme that goes viral, or a catchy song. A pop element originates in the mundane, is distributed en masse, circulates rhizomatically and is easily identifiable and appropriable. Lately, I've been thinking about what hyperpop art would be like. Not so much to define a specific aesthetic, but out of curiosity about how that emotional overload would translate into matter. I could sing what I want to say here with any love song, but I'm too embarrassed.

AAD:

The loops generated in these transactions between emotion and matter, interior and exterior, have led me to imagine the circle as a hole and this giant stove as a piercing device. In *Animal Joy: A Book of Laughter and Resuscitation*, Nuar Alsadir writes: «If we resist aligning our interiors with the social order, we create openings into which we can spontaneously grow.» You know the type of holes that open up when you hold a lighter to plastic? It's something like that.

HZ:

Yes, I know what kind of holes you're talking about... You mean the moment when something becomes detached from reality, as if losing its substance, blurring its contours and entering into a yet to be defined state. Fire is so alluring that when you stare at it, everything else ceases to exist. There's a haunting beauty in destruction. But if you focus all your love in one place, you'll end up getting burned.

**Excerpt from the conversation
between the artist and the
curator. Read the full conversation
here:**



ARNA (moth) has been produced in collaboration with Arnau Sala Saez and Skyland Dallal Rice (sound), Emma Prats and Indiana Pumar (pattern and garment making), and Mikel Adán and Joan Bennassar (assembly).