

Lingering

Hailin Li & Iris Su Jiayi

102 metres

“As music is the poetry of sound, so is painting the poetry of sight.”

--- James McNeill Whistler, *The Red Rag* (1878)

For many years, Dürer's *Saint Jerome in His Study* (1514) has been my desktop wallpaper. With his masterfully engraved lines, the most banal objects – the vines of the gourd, the knots on the ceiling wood panels, the folds on the pillows – become beautiful artefacts. The sunlight floods in through the windows, casting circular forms that echo the saint's halo.

This is a particularly striking detail. Through these minute lines, the gorgeousness of these windows residing at the edge of this picture manifests itself. All of a sudden, you truly see the window, the bullseye glass, and the divine light it lets in. There is such pleasure in seeing that. And this is what this exhibition is about.

It is about looking, the pleasure of looking, that moment of revelation, when beauty materialises before your eyes.

In both Hailin's subtly rendered paintings and Iris' window installation, meaning is elusive.

The forms in Hailin's paintings often derive from photographs she took. The strips of squares were wall tiles in an old building in Shanghai. The triangular form and the trapezium in *shadow light* (2026) were a play of light captured in a moment of intrigue. Only a thin layer of paint is applied onto the linen canvas. In certain areas, it looks as if paint is absorbed into the fabric. A painting of a wall on a wall. Hailin has rendered away depth as much as possible, both visually and thematically, while invoking complexity in the way they delight our eyes.

To linger is a transient state. It's the afterthought, the residue of a fading image. It's difficult to grasp what is there, or even if there is anything there.

In the far corner of the room, through this narrow floor-to-ceiling window, hair-thin lines, hollowed shapes, scribbling forms emerge in front of my eyes. I remember seeing the window installation for the first time in Iris' graduate show last summer, and thinking, is

the Slade so run-down that the windows are cracking? I was perplexed and drawn to this fragility. *Theta Wave* inhabits the window. At night, it dissipates into the darkness, and at dawn into the morning light. When the sunlight casts enigmatic forms into the room, where does it reside?

It is the job of the artist to latch onto those fleeting forms and shed light on their gorgeousness, or, in the words of the brilliant James McNeill Whistler, to be “seeking and finding the beautiful in all conditions and in all times”.¹

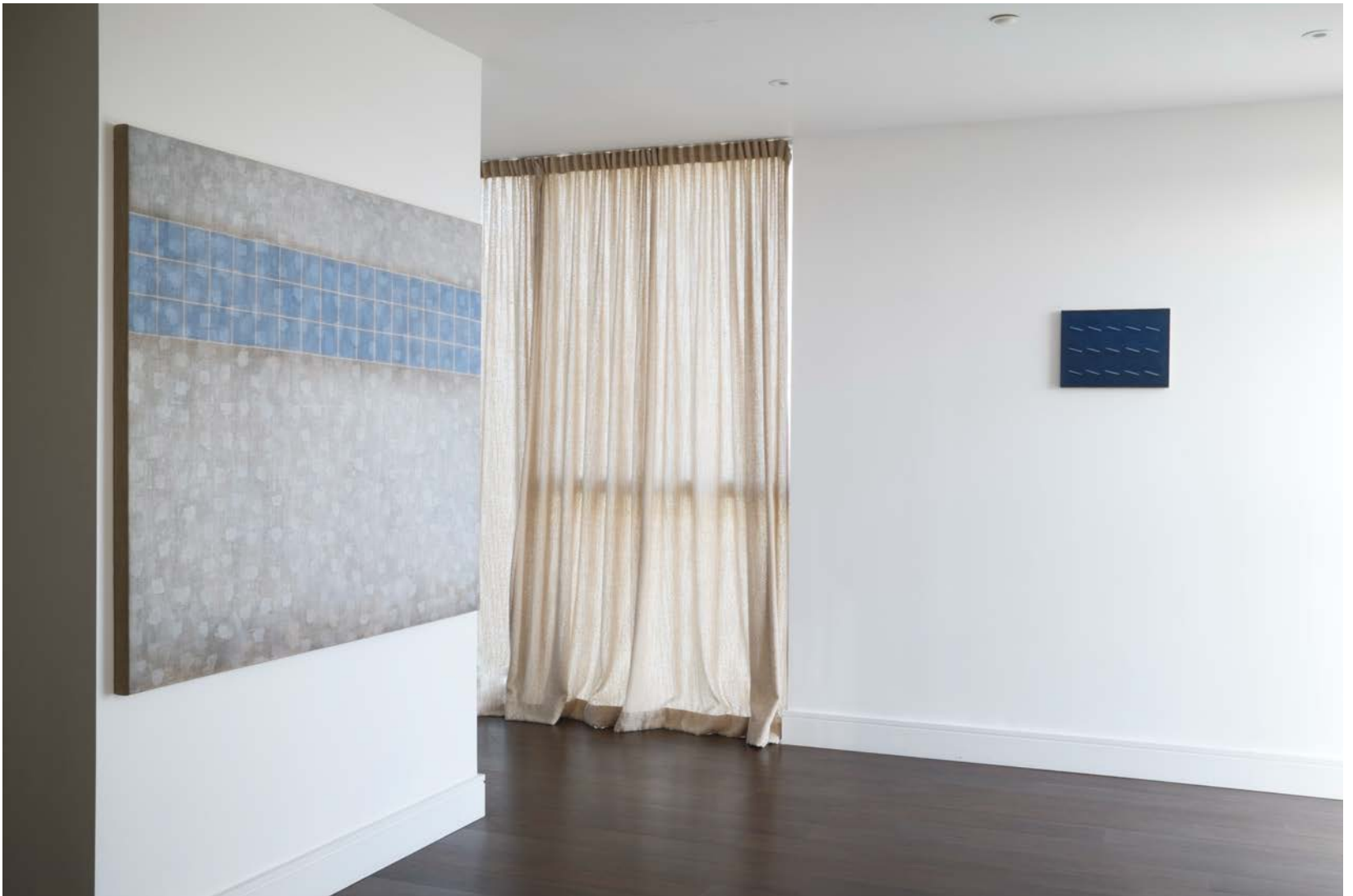
Hailin Li lives and works in London.

Iris Su Jiayi lives and works in Hong Kong.



Detail of Dürer's *Saint Jerome in His Study*

¹James McNeill Whistler, *Ten O'Clock Lecture* (1885)







Hailin Li

comma, 2026

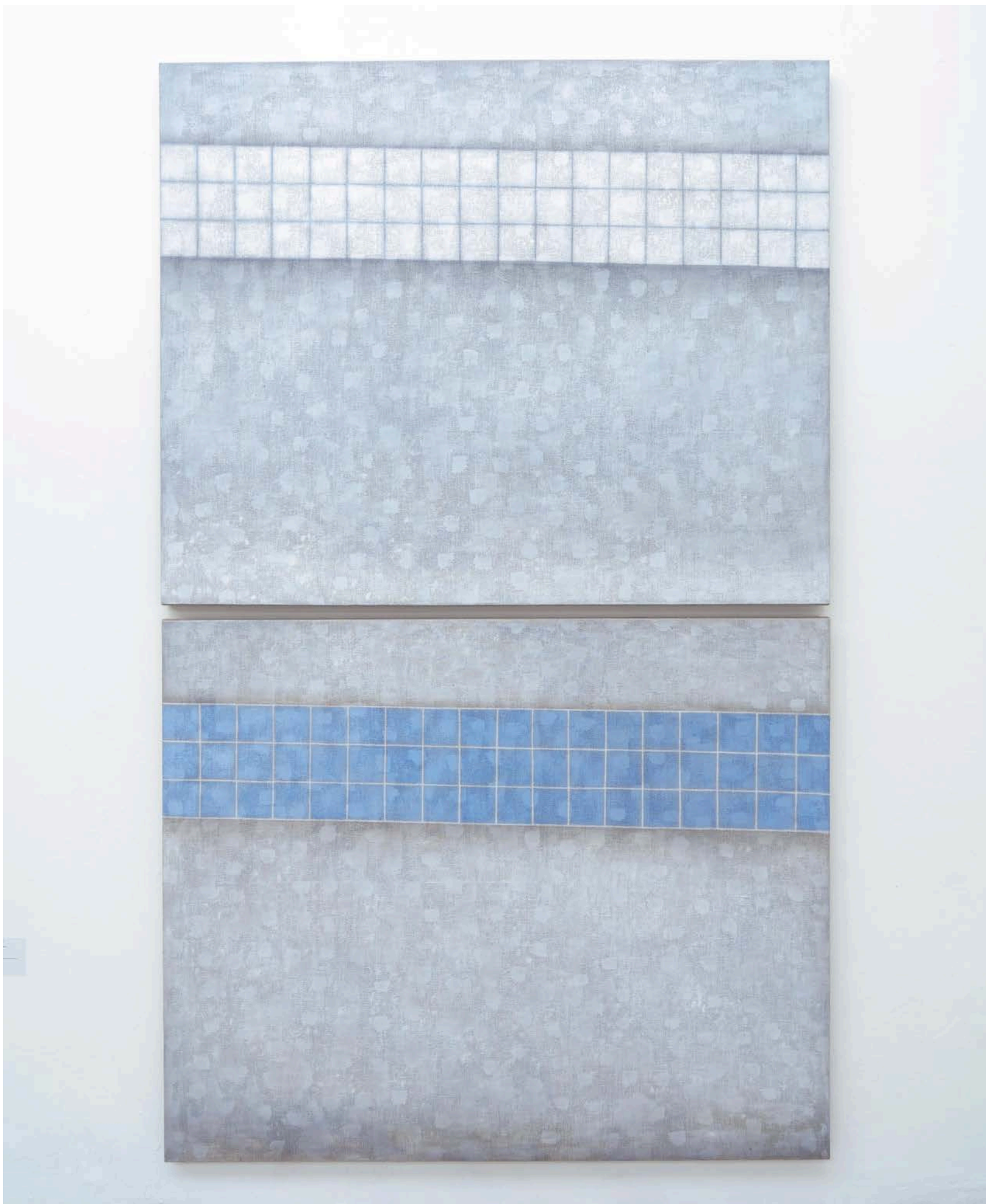
Oil on linen
30 x 40 cm



Iris Su Jiayi

Theta Wave, 2026

Clear acrylic sheet
120 x 260 cm



Hailin Li

wall (blue stripe), 2026

Oil on linen
160 x 130 cm each



Hailin Li

shadow light, 2026

Oil on linen
30 x 50 cm

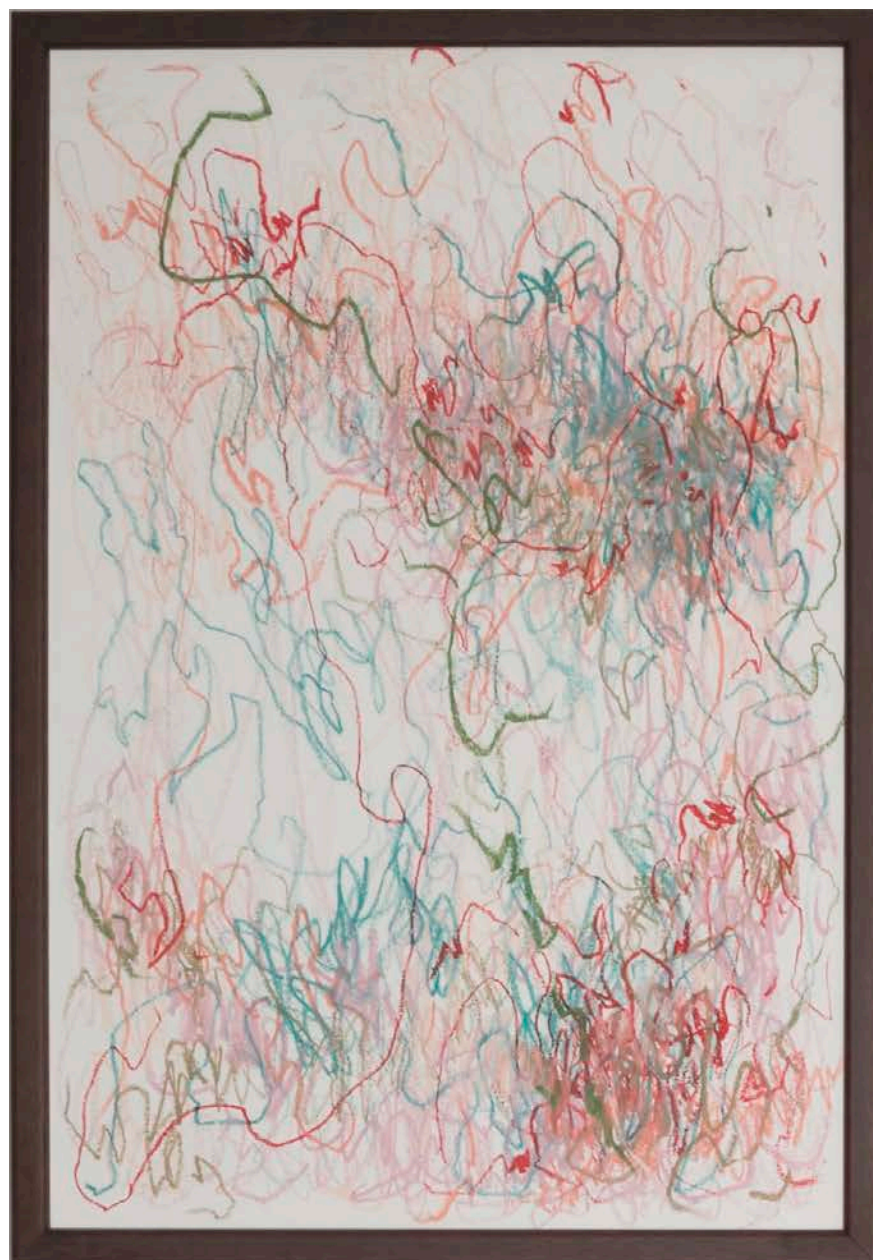


Iris Su Jiayi

Untitled (scribble drawings), 2026

Oil Pastels on paper
44 x 31 cm (framed)

£800



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