

half cadence

3 - 7 June 2025

Curated by Catherine Li and Xuan Feng

Photofusion Gallery

Unit 2, Beehive Place, London SW9 7QR

Private View: Wednesday 4 June 6-8pm

Bringing together six photographic series by six photographers, *half cadence* examines photography's potential to hold space for absence, suspension, and the complexities of transformation. The works reflect on the tension between individual agency and culturally inscribed norms, attending to how personal identity, cultural memory, and belonging are negotiated in the interstices between articulation and silence.

The title draws from a musical term: a half cadence concludes on the dominant, leaving the phrase unresolved. In these series, half cadence becomes a photographic metaphor; the transition is emphasised over resolution. As Susan Sontag writes, 'Between photographer and subject, there has to be distance.' In *half cadence*, this distance is both temporal and spatial. It is not a lack or rupture, but a condition of vision itself. It is through simultaneous separation and proximity that the image takes form, enabling us to enter it as subjects. Some series unfold through fragments and loose narratives, while others construct gestures of quiet rebellion and stage a saturated realism. Each withholds overt expression, akin to a pause within a passage. Operating both as a collection and as a singular photographic work, they postpone definitive meaning, questioning the instability of perception and the continual flux of daily life.

As viewers, our field of vision may never entirely enclose itself, for the act of looking possesses an inherent temporality; a necessity of reading the photograph gradually rather than comprehending it instantaneously. In Xuan Feng's *Call it, Noah* (2023-2025) and Zhou Zhang's *Almost Seen* (2024), this sequential logic and embedded temporality manifest not only in the compositions of individual images but also in the evolution of each work into a series. Rooms and figures reappear across multiple photographs, each iteration framed from gentle shifting perspectives, inviting us to trace time's passage through repetition and variation. In Yizhou Li's series of *North of the Rivers* (2024), the *conspira* sensibility guides us through a series of fragmentary, observational images where tranquility prevails among the mundane. Inertial scenes chime rhythms - like a slow walk or an unhurried reading across pages - with not a single additional frame obstructing their deep serenity. As if those once-inhabited cultures and stories continue to live on, their past eternally reverberating through time and space.

Another emerging theme across these works is how our perception of shelter - whether physical, cultural, or psychological - shapes the very essence of thought and imagination. In Xinyuan Yan's *Momento* (2023), the house becomes an integration, a container for loss and remembrance, that offers space for dreams to rest while awakening poetic reverie. By contrast, Yang Yan's *Captive Reflection: Zoo* (2001) frames shelter as confinement. The images of the imprisoned animals inhabit a mode of heightened realism, where the banal scenes of the zoo are rendered with controlled, stylised precision that edges into the uncanny. A quiet theatricality permeates the documentary approach: scenes that appear candid yet subtly orchestrated, with an understated critique carried. Yuxuan Zhang's *Daylight Firework* (2023) stages a visual refusal of normative societal expectations, a gesture hovering between resistance and self-definition. The group portraits of young women capture not merely opposition to imposed norms, but the fragility and fluidity of identity formation within restrictive structures. Here, the body, as a shelter, becomes both a site of containment and a field of potential transformation, where identity suspends in the becoming, shimmering between potential and fixation. *Text by Catherine Li*

About the artists

Zhou Zhang

Zhou Zhang is an artist working in photography and publishing. He graduated from the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. His practice explores the lived realities of LGBTQ communities in Asia and questions of identity within East Asian cultural contexts. Through a combination of images and text, he brings forward overlooked experiences and emotional landscapes, examining how individuals navigate and articulate their place within social structures.

Artworks: From the series of *Almost Seen*, 2024.

Xinyuan Yan

Xinyuan Yan's work begins with an intuitive observation of unease embedded in everyday life. As a photographer navigating between China and the UK, Xinyuan often finds herself lingering in a blurred space between home and elsewhere—a feeling of longing that never fully settles. This sense of emotional dislocation drives her to revisit Xinyuan's personal history and familial ties, exploring the delicate balance between intimacy and independence, truth and fiction. Through photography, Xinyuan constructs spaces that feel both real and dreamlike, where suppressed emotions, quiet desires, and the search for belonging slowly surface.

Artworks: From the series of *Memento*, 2023

Xuan Feng

Xuan Feng (b. 1997) is a Chinese artist working in photography and video. He received his MA in Photography from the Royal College of Art in 2023. He currently lives in London. His work explores the transformation of communities through urbanization and the narrative deconstruction and reconstruction of individual and collective living spaces. His recent project, "Call it, Noah", explores the visual narrative of queer migration, focusing on the emotional complexities of friendship and separation. The project documents a three-year journey of friendship between artist and Noah, the first friend he made upon arriving in London. Through images suspended between presence and absence, the project contemplates the quiet gravity of connection and the inevitable ache of farewell. In this context, parting is not an ending but a transformation which makes us feel our connection to someone more sharply. These shared memories and moments become a portal that keeps us close across space and time.

Artworks: From the series of *Call it, Noah*, 2023-2025

Yizhou Li

Yizhou Li (b.1999) is a Chinese photographer who recently graduated from London College of Communication with a master degree in Photography. His undergraduate studies in interior design cultivated his keen observation of architectural space and internal structure. While drawing, he started to get in touch with the camera and gradually tried to visualise his expression through the language of photography. His image style is deeply influenced by Japanese 'Conpora' photography, which is a simple and direct way to record things in the scope of people's daily life. These images, captured by pressing the shutter without overthinking, reflect his innermost emotions and his feelings towards the outside world. By learning the techniques of the darkroom, he was able to rethink his relationship with the image while making the photographs, and in the process exploring and building his own photographic narrative.

Artworks: From the series of *North of the Rivers*, 2024

Yuxuan Zhang

Gigi Yuxuan Zhang (b.1999) is a London-based visual artist. After earning her bachelor's degree in philosophy and music from Bard College in New York, she moved to London to pursue a master's degree in photography at London College of Communication. Drawing from her interdisciplinary background, she brings a critical and introspective lens to image-making. Her work often engages with existential thought, using visual language to probe how the self and different selves are formed and continually reshaped in relation to the world around it.

Artworks: From the series of *Daylight Firework*, 2023

Yan Yang

Yan Yang is a visual artist and photographer from Chengdu, China, currently based in London. He recently completed an MA in Photography at the Royal College of Art. His practice is grounded in photography while expanding into new media and contemporary art forms. He first turned to photography as a way to heal from severe depression, what began as a personal remedy gradually evolved into an artistic practice. The act of looking through the lens became a form of meditation, akin to Zen: a surrender of the ego in order to perceive the world, others, and the invisible with clarity. This process of feeling rather than judging lies at the heart of his practice.

Artworks: From the series of *Captive Reflection*, *Zoo*, 2021

About the curator

Catherine Li

Catherine Li is a London-based curator, whose practice centres on site-specific exhibition, public programme, participatory art, and digital archiving. Her work approaches curating as a way to contribute to cultural creation and open up space for reflection and exchange, with exhibition as platform for innovation and research.

After obtaining a Master's in Culture, Criticism, and Curation from Central Saint Martins, Li was selected for the Curator-in-Residence programme supported and funded by the Austrian Cultural Forum London. She has also worked with a wide range of cross-sector partners and organisations, including Tache Gallery London, Peckham Levels, Bomb Factory Art Foundation, Museum & Study Collection at Central Saint Martins and NEoN Digital Arts Festival Dundee.