For Immediate Release

Zheng Haozhong: Everything I Paint Is a Self-Portrait | 24 November 2026 - 9 January 2027

Opening Reception: 21 November 2026 (Southside Saturday), Saturday, 3-6pm
Venue: Blindspot Gallery, 15/F, Po Chai Industrial Building, 28 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong
Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday; 10:30am — 6:30pm; closed on public holidays; By invitation and appointment only

Blindspot Gallery is pleased to present **"Everything I Paint Is a Self-Portrait"**, a solo exhibition by **Zheng Haozhong**, opening on 21 November 2026, coinciding with Southside Saturday. The exhibition will be on view from 24 November 2026 to 9 January 2027. Marking the artist's second solo exhibition at the gallery, the exhibition culminates works from the past three years, tracing his painting practice which takes the studio as a starting point, extending through portraits of close acquaintances, staged scenes, still lifes, and sculptures.

For Zheng, the studio is not merely a site of artistic creation, but a psychological space that can be reconfigured, observed, inhabited, and continually revisited. He invites friends into the studio and paints them from life, incorporating his sitters' gestures, shifting light and shadows, foliage surrounding the studio, and arranged objects into his compositions. His brushstrokes are characteristically expressive and free, unfolding with the cadence of a musical performance. Underpinning the seemingly improvisational, personal sentiments are distilled through meticulously orchestrated colors and compositions. The studio emerges as a central stage in his work: at once a site of observation and artistic labor, and a refuge where conversations, acts of looking, and projections of the self converge.



Located in the suburbs of the city, Zheng's studio is anchored by five west-facing windows that form the visual and psychological focal point of the space. Faded gridded window film and climbing vines cast mottled shadows across the interior walls. Over time, these details become absorbed into his pictorial language, shaping the color and ambience of his paintings, revealing the studio as a place that is inhabited and layered with memory and imagination.

Spending nearly three years in relative isolation during the pandemic deepened Zheng's relationship to the studio. The windows ceased to function as merely a boundary between the inside and outside, but instead opened up his perceptual world. The window recurs throughout art history as an emotional threshold, associated with sentiments of solitude and longing for what lies beyond. Their repeated depiction in Zheng's work become a means of asserting his presence within the image, as evident in ***Studio Triptych*** (2023-2025), where perspectives oscillate between interior and exterior viewpoints, destabilizing the viewer's sense of position. In the flanking panels, the windows serve as portals to the external world, with the room imbued with the warm glow of the sunset. Painted with brisk strokes, leaves drift into the studio and settle upon the easel and table, as nature permeates the space.

The central panel is anchored by the heightened tension of looking. A female dozes in a chair as the viewer peers through the window from outside. Here, the window grilles are not only compositional grids but a barrier, one that cannot be transgressed. The triptych format reinforces the transitions across the panels: from openness to enclosure, from seeing to being seen,

constructing a charged spatial dynamic.

Using friends as models, Zheng paints their gestures and expressions while instilling aspects of his subjectivity into their representations. The figures do not appear as isolated portraits but as vehicles through which he reflects upon himself. Sitters merge with the studio's surroundings, and rather than functioning as distinct others, they become absorbed into the artist's own perceptual framework.



AG in the Studio (2026) portrays a woman in a black satin robe, with her loose dark hair merging with the chair, lending her a quiet, restrained gravitas. Her facial features, delineated in green, impart a sense of calm contemplation. Zheng frequently uses green to evoke tranquility, functioning not only as a formal device but also as a psychological register. In ***Like QIUCHEN in the Studio?*** (2025), the subject's profile is traced three times in green, with each expression differing subtly and coalescing into a meditative rhythm.

The palimpsest formed by multiple figures is characteristic of Zheng's portrait paintings. He likens painting to a musical arrangement: starting with a riff, or a repeated melodic phrase, one gradually adds further harmonies, building layer upon layer until the image blurs into white noise, a catalyst for something entirely new. At times, he wields this approach to construct narratives within the pictorial space.



Four Depictions of XINYANG LINKE HUYIKUAN (2023–2025), created over the course of two years, traces the passage of time. During this period, Zheng repeatedly painted over the same canvas, each time centering a different figure. Multiple faces and gazes accumulate and overlap, ultimately coalescing into the image of a woman wearing a facial mask, absorbed in her phone. Thick applications of white paint are built up across the face, accentuating the contours of the sitter's features. Resembling the base makeup of a clown, these layers amplify the full spectrum of the different figures' expressions and emotions.

Still life occupies an important place in Zheng's oeuvre. In the ***Indoor? Outdoor? Fruit?*** series (2019-2024), apples oscillate between freshness and decay, alluding to growth, decline, and change. In ***Pears and TANGCHAO in the Studio*** (2025), overripe pears on the sitter's clothing echo the dappled light entering through the window. Fruit was among the first subjects Zheng encountered when studying the history of painting, remaining a means through which he distils his painterly experience while returning to the origins of painting.



The exhibition also includes a group of wooden sculptures depicting houses of varying shapes and sizes. Some correspond to the artist's current studio; others recall the first studio at his family home in Shandong; still others project whimsical imagined architectures. Sculptures offer the artist an inverse perspective, allowing him to step outside the studio and gaze back as an observer.

"Everything I paint is a self-portrait," Zheng remarks. "Sometimes I imagine myself as an amateur, returning to the origins of painting." This desire to return to the beginning allows his work to retain a mode of looking that is direct and unpretentious. Likewise, his longtime engagement with self-portraiture resonates with an artistic tradition extending from Old Masters to Post-impressionists, for whom the self-portrait served as a means of reflecting on artistic identity. Within this context, Zheng's painting may be understood as an expansion of the very notion of self-

portraiture: the self no longer appears only through the artist's own image, but is projected onto objects, other people, and the surrounding environment. Rather than merely reiterating art historical forms, Zheng revisits enduring questions of space, perception, and identity through the lens of his studio and daily observations, establishing a conversation with artists who came before him.



Image captions:

[1] Zheng Haozhong, *Studio Triptych*, 2023-2025, Oil on canvas, triptych, 200 x 150 cm each

[2] Zheng Haozhong, *AG in the Studio*, 2026, Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 140 x 120 cm (work size)

[3] Zheng Haozhong, *Four Depictions of XINYANG LINKE HUYIKUAN*, 2023-2025, Oil and oil pastels on canvas, wooden frame, 100 x 80 cm (work size)

[4] Zheng Haozhong, *Indoor? Outdoor? Fruit? #2*, 2019-2024, Oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm

[5] Zheng Haozhong, *Studio Wood Sculptures* series , 2026, Wood, acrylic and mineral pigments

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About Zheng Haozhong

Zheng Haozhong (b. 1985, Shandong Province, China) is a painter, but he is also a musician and a writer. He makes connections between these different fields. His paintings depict his friends, acquaintances, himself in his studio, capturing their expressions and psyches. These works carry a rhythmic quality with expressive brushstrokes that are freestyle and not confined within a rigid parameter, mirroring the music he plays. His characteristic use of negative space conjures the imagery of “liubai” (leave blank) in Chinese ink paintings, bringing out a linearity which delineates the features of his subjects.

In 2014, Zheng’s painting *QIUCHEN* was awarded the First Prize for the John Moores Painting Prize China and was exhibited at museums internationally including the National Museums Liverpool (Liverpool, 2014) and 21st Century Minsheng Art Museum (now Minsheng Art Museum) (Shanghai, 2016). Zheng’s exhibitions took place in Guangdong Times Museum (Guangzhou, 2026), Aranya Art Center North (Beidaihe, 2024), Blindspot Gallery (Hong Kong, 2023), Rockbund Art Museum (Shanghai, 2024), White Rabbit Gallery (Sydney, 2022), KWM artcenter (Beijing, 2018) and Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art (now esea contemporary) (Manchester, 2016). He was previously artist-in-residence at Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art (2016) and Gwangju Museum of Art (2015).

Zheng is identified by his pseudonym "Li Cha" in his online publications. He is also part of the band Dolphy Kick Bebop, bAdBLUEbirdz, and Free Music Collective of Shanghai. Zheng currently lives and works in Shanghai, China.

About Blindspot Gallery

Set up in 2010, Blindspot Gallery is a contemporary art gallery based in Hong Kong. The gallery features diverse contemporary art practices, by emerging, established, and diasporic artists mainly from Asia and beyond. The gallery is committed to connecting its represented artists with an international platform and fostering global dialogues in the art community through its exhibition program and institutional collaborations.

Interviews with the artist are welcome. For enquiries and media interviews, please contact Edith Lu at +852 2517 6238 or edith@blindspotgallery.com