In the Mirrors of Dreams

Aobing Wang

Figure 1. Exhibition promotional poster (Source: Aobing Wang)
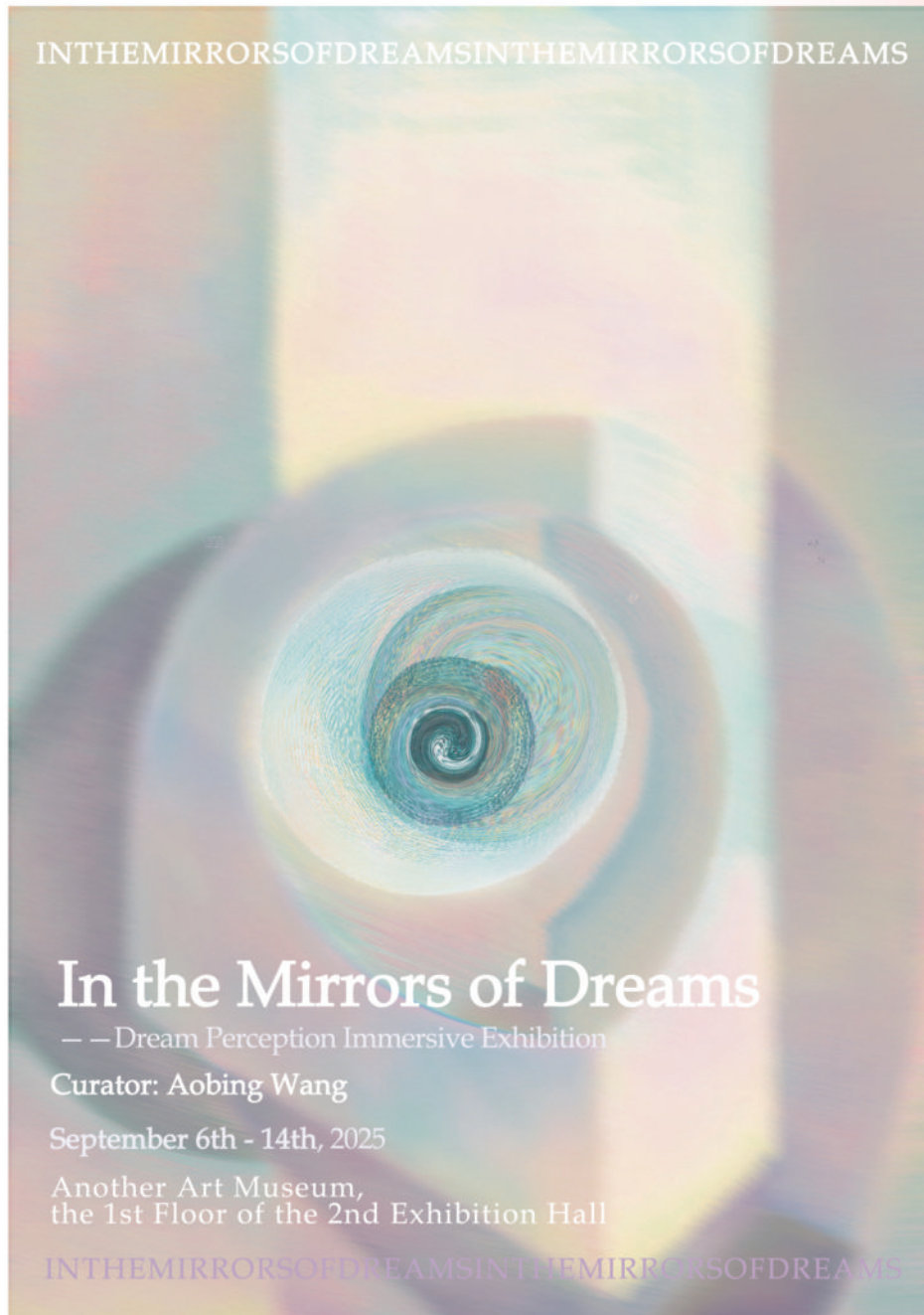
In the Mirrors of Dreams

Curator: Aobing Wang

Exhibition Period: August - September 2025

(Set-up period: September 1st - 5th; Exhibition period: September 6th - 14th; Takedown period: September 15th - 16th)

Exhibition Venue: Exhibition Hall on the 1st floor of Pavilion 2 of Another Art Museum (Guangzhou, China)

Target Audience Group: **Young people aged 18 - 35** (such as students from local art colleges); **Parents and children; Social media enthusiasts**

Contents

SUMMARY

Do we still dream when our dreams are data, goods, or other things?

Dreams have always been not only a private psychological theater, but also a product of the interaction between the subconscious mind and society, culture and language. the exhibition "In the Mirror of Dreams" attempts to transform dreams from individual narratives into spatial experiences, thereby guiding the audience to re-perceive themselves in the state of "uncertainty", "non-causal" and "subconscious interference".Inspired by Freud's mechanism of "displacement" and "condensation" in dreams, the exhibition emphasizes the ambiguity and overlap of symbols in space, as well as the non-linear organization of emotions and memories in the exhibition structure. At the same time, Jung's ideas about "collective subconscious" and "archetypal imagery" urge the curators to pay attention to the symbolic aspects of dreams that are both private and universal, concrete and vague, in the selection of works and the design of atmosphere. The exhibition also inherits Breton's praise for "irrational", "automatic writing" and "anti-narrative structure" in the Surrealist movement, and the overall spatial movement and exhibition logic avoid a single linear narrative, encouraging the audience to construct "their own dreams" in the free movement. Elements such as sound, smell, and light are given mental functions rather than visual instructions, making perception a linguistic extension of the dream. At the same time, the project is also inspired by Bushio's concept of "relational aesthetics", setting the viewer's interaction with the exhibition as a text generation mechanism. The audience no longer just observes the dream, but leaves traces in the dream, and the exhibition thus becomes a generative social vessel, recording how people re-stitch themselves and the world in the fragmented and blurred experience.

Figure 3. Interior of the Exhibition Hall
(Source: Another Art Museum)

SPACE

Location:

Hall 2, Another Art Museum,

No. 11 Gantang Avenue, Panyu District,

Guangzhou, Guangdong Province

China

Figure 2. Interior of the Exhibition Hall
(Source: Another Art Museum)

Why this Venue?

The curatorial department of Another Art Museum has long been committed to the exhibition practice of combining academia and art, successfully held a number of interdisciplinary art exhibitions, and has rich experience in the technical execution and operational management of immersive exhibitions. In addition, the curatorial team has long cooperated with experts from Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, a well-known local art school, to provide more professional academic suggestions for the exhibition.

Exhibition structure
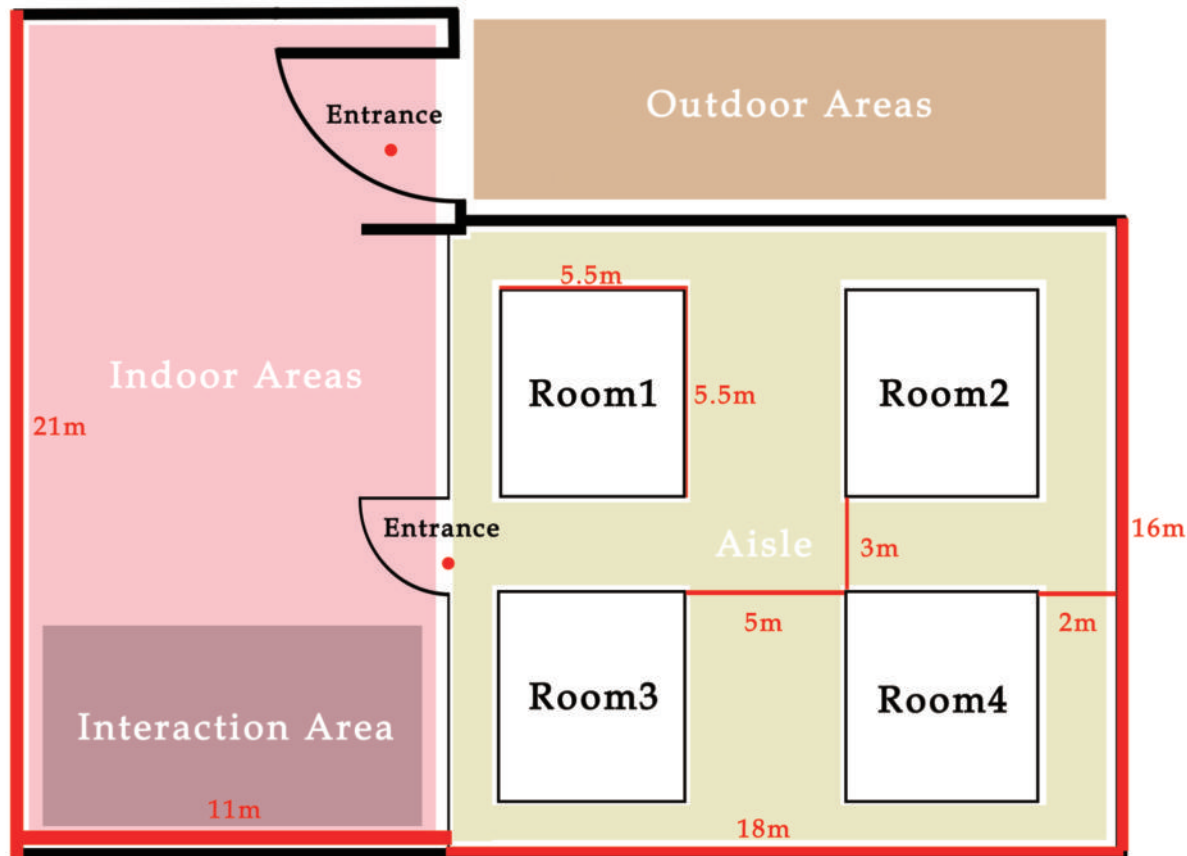
(* Each of the four rooms is of the same size.)

Figure 4 Floor Plan of Exhibition Area Division
(Source: Aobing Wang)

The exhibition *In the Mirrors of Dreams* hopes to fully convey the fuzziness, discontinuity and non-narrative of the dream itself to the audience. Therefore, this exhibition breaks up the entire exhibition space into four completely independent and closed exhibition rooms and path areas for the audience to walk through. The four exhibitions are isolated from each other and have no visual connection. Without a clear transition logic, the audience cannot peek into the main visual content of the space from the outside, and can only hear the leaked sound or a ray of light in the exhibition room. Through these Spaces, which form floating islands in dreams, the audience can play the role of sleepwalkers, freely traveling between the islands according to their own will.

(The room number does not indicate the order of tour)

Room1

Figure5. Hotbed's Alibi, Jie Xie, 2024
Variable size, crib, acrylic, monitoring equipment, display, carpet
(Source: REDNote)

Work Introduction: The author uses elements such as beds, toys, and surveillance videos to create a field about the traumatic childhood memories around the device itself, attempting to trigger the audience to re-think the sources of intimacy and security.

"For the memory loss of childhood, it might be caused by the lack of positive responses when there is a strong psychological need. And these traumas will not disappear but will appear in more covert ways, such as nightmares, automatic fantasies, confusion in the authenticity of memories, invasive images, or sudden flashes of memory fragments. Sometimes, it may even appear in more dangerous ways, such as repetitive compulsions, making oneself relive the traumatic experiences from childhood, repeating the same traumatic patterns. I hope to re-establish contact and attention with everyone's inner child, to confront the traumas, missing or unmet needs that might exist during childhood, as well as the beliefs and behavioral patterns formed at that time. I will no longer avoid and fear such traumas and memory losses." (Jie Xie, 2024)
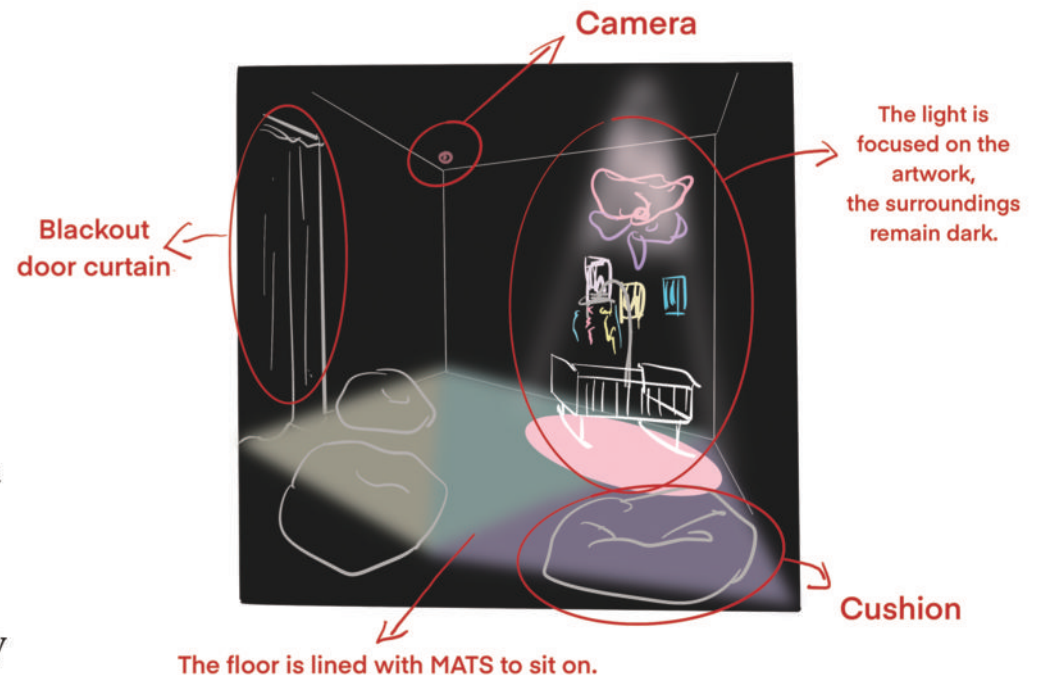
Figure6. Draft of the interior effect of Room1 (Source: Aobing Wang)

Based on the auditory perception in infancy, the work focuses on the safety and fuzziness in the uncontrolled state, simulates the passive viewing of the lying position of the infant during sleep, and responds to the problem of "non-controlling consciousness" in the dream. The multi-layered soft materials and low-frequency murmurs in the installation form a physical immersion experience that directly touches the curator's spatial imagination of the dream structure.

Room2

Work Introduction: The video work *The Scene of the Virtual Dreamscape* simulates the details of life in the millennium with 3D animated films. The author constructs a dream community floating in the space and time of past China with virtual images composed of electronic nostalgic materials. This paper attempts to re-link the identity of contemporary Chinese youth in the cultural rupture with the past, present and future.

Projection device

Millennial furnitures

The floor cover with old tiles.

Figure 8. Draft of the interior of Room 2 (Source: Aobing Wang)

Figure 7. The scene of the virtual dreamscape, Haoyang Chen, 2024, Variable size，Video
(Source: REDNote)

"Reminiscence is a unique emotion for human beings, which can bring us comfort and enlightenment. I have created a virtual dreamland filled with Chinese nostalgia, which is a space that is both connected to the past and full of infinite possibilities. It enables young people to reconnect with the past, reignite their expectations for life, and regain their yearning for the future, facing the present life with a hopeful mindset. It continues the contemporary youth's expectations and imagination for the future. In this virtual world, I hope they can feel familiar and free. They can temporarily break free from the constraints of the real world, find inner peace and freedom, and pursue the life they truly desire in the future." (Chen Haoyang, 2024)
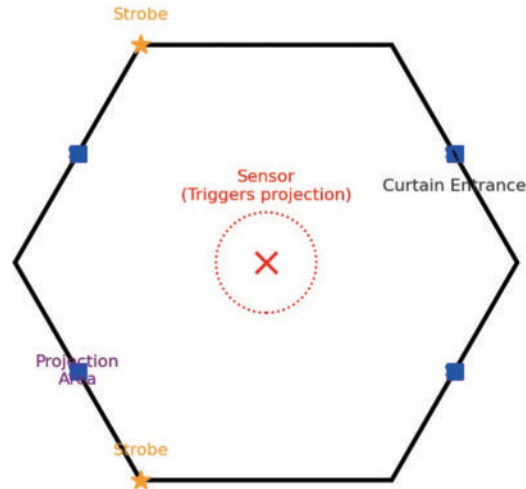
Room3

Figure 9. Draft of the internal structure of Room 3

(Source: Aobing Wang)

Work Introduction:

The author takes "Alice's rabbit hole" as inspiration to construct a perceptual space based on mirror-like cognition and self-splitting. The installation plays through mirror mazes and unrecognizable language, guiding the viewer to "lose the integrity of their image" in the space. Closely related to the theme of "subconscious fragmentation" discussed in the exhibition, it is a spatial deduction of Lacan's mirror theory.

" Alice's Dreamland Syndrome" is a mental disorder that frequently occurs in childhood. The name of the disease itself reveals its symptoms from the beginning. This installation work uses mirror lenses as the main material. When the viewer is inside, the distorted feeling presented by the mirror surface reflects the pressure, distortion, and alienation of contemporary people. Underfoot is a soft lawn, and the rabbit hole is right in the center. Just like the "dreamland" as the dream woven by "Alice" herself, what Alice needs to do is to fall into the rabbit hole and enter the "dreamland" to escape all the discomfort in real life. The sensory experience brought by the entire space atmosphere of the work is unreal, metaphorically reflecting the contradictions and struggles between illusion and reality, reality and ideals, distortion and calmness, pressure and escape among contemporary people. (Jieyu Tan, 2021)

Figure 10. *Alice*, Jieyu Tan, 2021
Size variable, Installation work, funhouse mirror lens, soil, turf
(Source: REDNote)

Room4

"Due to the somatic manifestations brought about by severe depression, I can spend 24 hours a day lying in bed. The bed has become an important part of my body. It's quite amazing that the plots in my dreams can be connected like those in a TV series, and the places in my dreams can be pieced together to form a complete map, as if an alternate world exists. In the dream, fish come in two types: the gentle and kind ones can swim freely in the sky, while the bad ones will be confined in cages, making me scared. Due to severe autism, anxiety, and the decreasing number of friends I have in contact with, the time I'm awake is painful for me. I began to look forward to having dreams every night. Many warm and glowing little fish are my good friends. With the company of my good friends, in the dream, my personality remains as cheerful as before. "
(Ziyue Jin, 2024)

Figure 12. "Good Night", Ziyue Jin, 2024
90cm x 180cm x 120cm, Glass, Resin, Bed Frame, Cotton, Curtains
(Sources: Aobing Wang)

Audience sits on the bed to complete experience of the artwork.

Soft light around the curtain
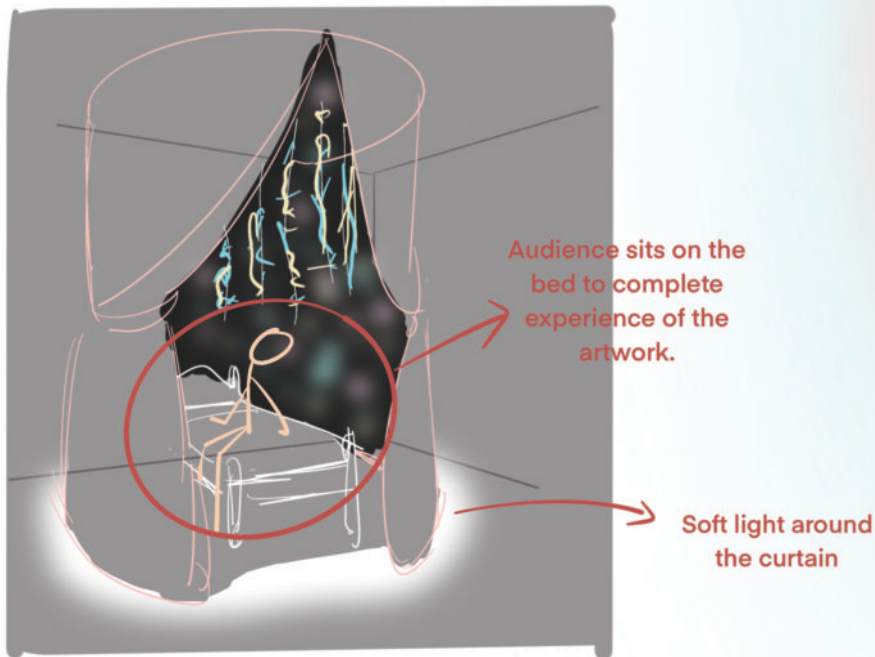
Figure 11. Sketch of the internal structure of Room 4
(Source: Aobing Wang)

Work Introduction:
This installation simulates the dream world of depressed patients with a combination of bed, glass cover and silent audio track. The audience is required to lie on the bed contained in the work and construct a field on the edge of waking through light, vibration and image response.
Through the design of "controlled loss", the work guides the audience back to the silent moment when the dream ends, and the audience can participate in the shared experience of the artist's psychological trauma through hearing, sight and touch.

Artists List

Jie Xie,
artist and illustrator,
graduated from the Central Academy
of Fine Arts.

Haoyang Chen,
interactive visual designer,
graduated from the Royal College of
Art.

Jieyu Tan,
clothing designer and illustrator,
graduated from Sichuan Fine Arts In-
stitute

Ziyue Jin,
illustrator and artisan,
graduated from the Central Academy
of Fine Arts.

Why these particular artists?

In this exhibition, I have chosen four emerging artists with experimental traits for collaboration. This decision is not merely based on the superficial align-
ment between their artworks and the exhibition theme, but rather on a profound assessment of their creative motivations and expression methods. Compared
to established artists who have already developed a stylized and systematic style, emerging creators have a higher degree of autonomy in expressing them-
selves. Their works more directly reflect their responses to real-life experiences, perceptual structures, and psychological states, and are less constrained by
market rules and fixed concepts. They employ various media forms such as images, sounds, interactions, and installations in their works, focusing on the
"structural experience" of dreams. They do not merely narrate dreams but create a viewing state that is similar to dreams. The ambiguity, fragmentation, and
sensory delay presented in these works are highly consistent with the "non-logical space construction" emphasized in this exhibition. Selecting these artists is
also a response to the current curatorial practices' focus on "new languages", "cross-disciplinary integration", and "audience perception mechanisms". I be-
lieve that such collaborations will not only bring a tense exhibition scene but also bring distinct contemporary expression value and continuous public discus-
sion possibilities to this project.

Public Programme

Form and Content:
This workshop will use papier-mache as the main material. Participants will be invited to create a small three-dimensional "dream form" together using shredded paper, old printed materials, transparent materials, and personal dream memories. The work can be either concrete or abstract, emphasizing the generation of emotional texture and tactile sensation. There will be drying and display areas at the event site. All completed works will form a temporary exhibition installation and be continuously integrated into the exhibition context.

Target Audience:
The event is aimed at young people aged 16 to 30 and college students. Participants who are interested in handicrafts, perception materials or dream expression are especially welcome. No art background is required. Non-professional visitors are also welcome to participate.

Why this form?
The pulp paste technique itself has the characteristic of "fragmentation - reformation", which is highly consistent with the psychological structure of dreams. The materials are cheap, the medium is friendly, the participation threshold is low, but the expression space is extremely large. It is suitable for transforming abstract dreams into concrete objects through hands, achieving a kind of "subconscious writing with hands".

Why target this group?
The youth group has a natural sensitivity to dreams in terms of psychological and social identity construction. They tend to express their inner experiences through imagery, symbolism and instinctively. The non-verbal and open structure of the pulp collage can provide a freer expression path for this group, and also respond to the public nature claim of the exhibition at the social perception level.

Figure 17 & 18. Presentation of Workshop Contents (Source: Aobing Wang)

Interactive area

The interactive area extracts 10 key words from the exhibition's curatorial concepts and discussions. Visitors can obtain physical key word notes here and use them as coordinate paths for viewing the exhibition. Besides, interactive papers will be set up. Visitors can receive a blank interactive paper at the entrance and record their feelings during the exhibition in various forms - it can be words, colors, symbols, a repeated character, or an unexplainable sentence. After the exhibition, visitors can throw the cards into the recycling device at the exit to form audience feedback.

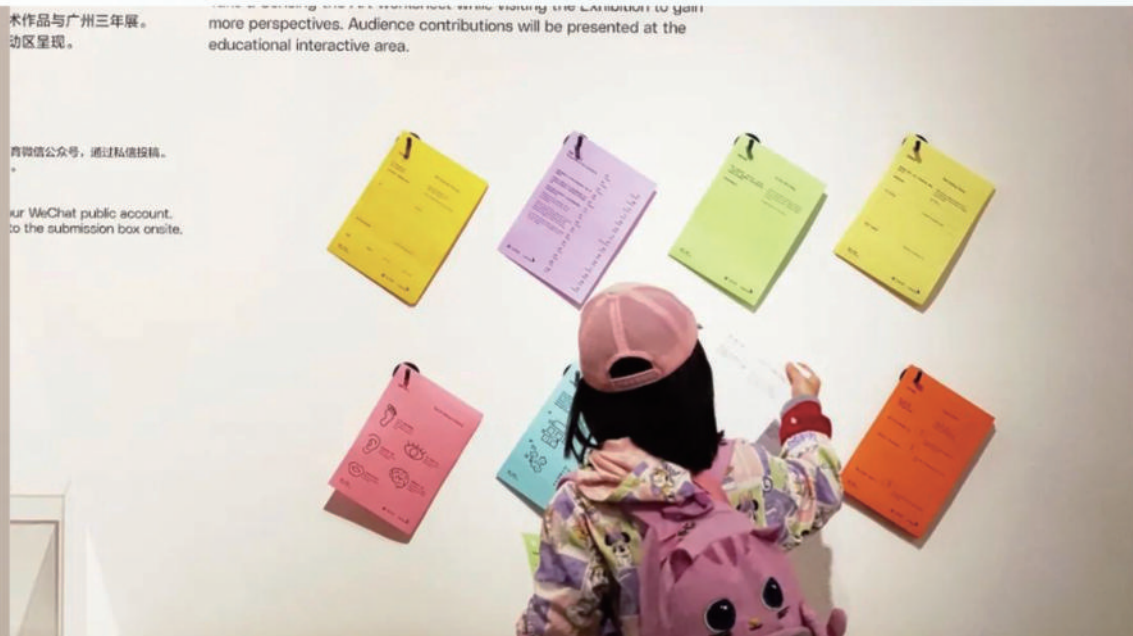Figure 19. Interactive Paper Case of Keywords (Source: Guangdong Art Museum)

Figure 20. Interactive Paper Case for Sensory Record (Source: Guangdong Art Museum)

Exhibition Promotion and Marketing Plan:

This exhibition adopts a phased, multi-platform, low-intervention, and high-visibility communication strategy. It uses the privacy and universality of dream experiences as the communication entry point to stimulate spontaneous dissemination and deep resonance among the audience. The communication rhythm is divided into three stages: pre-event information release to build a vague atmosphere; during the exhibition: strengthening the generation of interactive content and audience's secondary creation; after the exhibition: consolidating dream text and retaining online content. In terms of media cooperation, the exhibition will collaborate with local mainstream media and art professional platforms to release special content, expand non-art circle audiences, and increase the public discussion degree and dissemination radius of the exhibition. On social media platforms, the focus will be on operating major domestic social media such as Xiaohongshu and Douban, launching dream submissions and space experience sharing around the "#InTheMirrorsOfDreams" tag. During the exhibition period, regular releases of audience dream phrases and selected dream signatures will be made to build a fluid audience interaction content system. Offline promotion will involve placing exhibition promotional materials in surrounding areas of the exhibition hall and setting up dream message booths and joint activities with dream-themed special beverages in the art gallery's own coffee shop. A city-ground-based local perception communication path of "dreams emerging in daily life" will be created.

In terms of communication strategies, based on the speculation of the project's theme characteristics and the psychological profiles of the target audience, we chose to start from emotional resonance and immersion rather than directly relying on exhibition information. This approach is more conducive to stimulating spontaneous participation and deep memory from the audience.

The three-stage promotional rhythm (preparation - generation - consolidation) not only prolongs the attention cycle of the exhibition but also forms a continuous generation mechanism for content. In terms of platform layout, REDNote and Douban, which are among the mainstream social media in China with a foundation of young users and high interaction stickiness, are suitable for carrying "private and sharing-oriented content. Through the "#InTheMirrorsOfDreams" tag, it forms a clear and distinguishable communication path. Cooperation with local mainstream media and art vertical platforms in Guangzhou helps to reach cross-circles and enhance the cultural topic and city visibility of the exhibition.

In addition, the offline promotion combines the local resources of the art museum's affiliated coffee shop to create a joint dream special drink and an audience message interaction area, allowing the theme of "dream" to naturally integrate into daily life scenarios, enhancing the exhibition's sustainable and perceptible influence. The overall communication strategy takes into account the content tone and effect evaluation, providing sufficient secondary development space for brand cooperation and cultural resource integration.
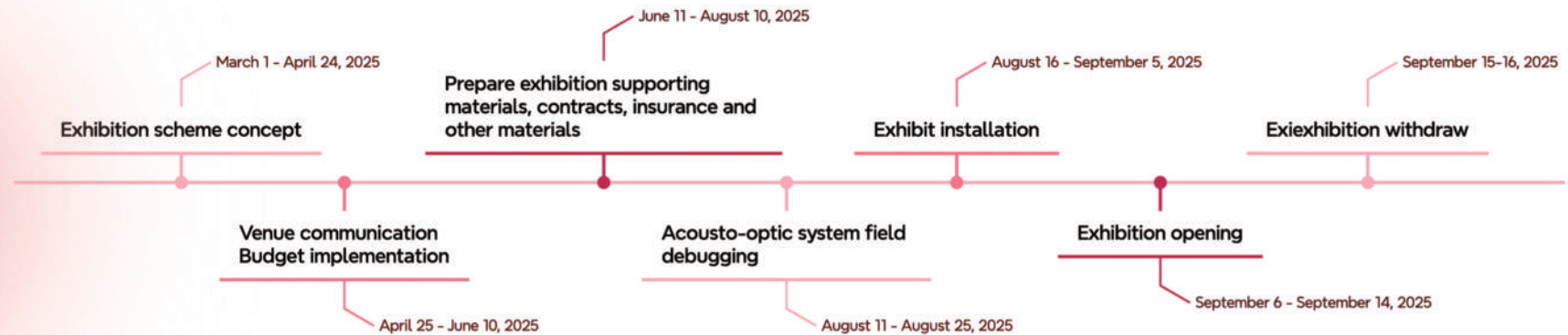
Timeline

June 11 – August 10, 2025

March 1 – April 24, 2025

August 16 – September 5, 2025

September 15–16, 2025

Exhibition scheme concept

Prepare exhibition supporting materials, contracts, insurance and other materials

Exhibit installation

Exiexhibition withdraw

Venue communication
Budget implementation

Acousto-optic system field debugging

Exhibition opening

April 25 – June 10, 2025

August 11 – August 25, 2025

September 6 – September 14, 2025

Figure 21. Timeline of the Exhibition (Source: Aobing Wang)

Execution Plan and Division of Responsibilities

The exhibition "In the Mirrors of Dreams" adheres to the principle of "curator-led with venue assistance" for its execution. The project was initiated, conceived, and led by the curator as an independent curator. The overall planning and core framework of the exhibition are fully responsible by the curator, including theme conception, work selection, exhibition content construction, space design, audience interaction mechanism, and exhibition budget coordination. The cooperating party "Another Art Museum" will provide exhibition venue support as well as technical and equipment support at the execution level. The curatorial team of the cooperating party will undertake the guarantee of exhibition infrastructure and on-site operation assistance.

Summary Report and Archives Construction

After the exhibition concludes, a Summary Report of *In The Mirrors of Dreams* will be produced. The contents to be archived include: on-site video materials, scanned versions of exhibition signs and interactive documents, interview materials, summary analysis charts of audience questionnaires, etc. All the contents will be uniformly archived in digital form and released publicly or stored internally based on their usability. This will facilitate research, teaching, and re-exhibition planning.

Fund

1. Self-financing by the curator: The curator will personally undertake the basic operation and pre-investment expenditure required for the initial stage of the project, mainly for the preliminary curation research, spatial scheme drawing design, literature collation and social media visual content development, etc., which is expected to provide about 2,000 pounds.

2. Crowdfunding: Initiate crowdfunding campaigns targeting art enthusiasts, dream analysis enthusiasts and the general public. The funds raised will be mainly used for the printing of exhibition-related materials, the preparation of materials for interactive areas and public project activities, as well as the production of exhibition-related publications. This fund is estimated to be 3,000 pounds.

3. The Youth Curator Support Program of Guangdong Provincial Art Museum: This is a special fund jointly organized by the Guangdong Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, the Guangdong Art Museum Association and the Guangdong Provincial Art Museum. It is open to all art museums and young curators in Guangdong Province. The funds will be used for artists' remuneration and public activity materials. It is expected that about 500 pounds of funding will be obtained from this channel.

In total: 5,500 pounds

Budget planning

Category	Amount	Instructions
Venue rental and equipment	Free application	The venue will provide hardware facilities including basic materials, space shading and sound insulation materials, lighting, sound, projection equipment, etc., and the construction team required for the exhibition.
Exhibit rental	£400	An average rental fee of £100 per work (total of 4 pieces); If the artist himself needs to be present at the exhibition, additional transportation costs will be provided.
Production of promotional materials	£1,500	Printing of promotional materials (posters, postcards, leaflets, guidebooks, etc.)
Education and public programs	£100	Including workshop materials, moderator subsidies and daily maintenance supplies for the interactive area
Personnel service	£3,000	Media hospitality, tour guides, volunteer subsidies and other temporary labor costs
Archive and make exhibition contents	£500	Exhibition catalogue preliminary editing, data archiving, exhibition image collection and other report content sorting work
Total	**£5,500**	

Risk management

During the execution of this exhibition, there may be three main risks: risks related to the safety of exhibits and equipment, instability of technical systems, and issues concerning audience management and public safety.

Firstly, since the exhibition includes video installations and interactive works, involving precise electronic equipment and non-standard materials, there are certain risks of damage, accidental operation or unexpected power outages. To address this, we will complete all equipment tests and backup configurations before the exhibition, and have the technical team of the art museum collaborate to be responsible for daily maintenance, ensuring the stable operation of the exhibits.

Secondly, the immersive spatial structure on which the themes of dreams rely is mostly closed or in dim light environments, which may cause visitors to get lost in their behavioral paths or experience sensory discomfort. Therefore, we will design reasonable guidance systems and safety prompts in each exhibition area, and arrange a visitor flow control mechanism to ensure the order of the visit and the psychological comfort of visitors.

Finally, in response to unforeseeable public health emergencies or sudden situations (such as epidemics, natural disasters), the exhibition will follow the existing emergency response mechanisms of the venue to implement crowd management and temporary closure procedures. All personnel before the exhibition will receive basic emergency training.

The above-mentioned risk points will be systematically managed through clear division of labor and contractual guarantees with the venue party, the art gallery's curatorial department and the volunteer team. This will ensure that the exhibition maintains good operational flexibility and public safety response capabilities even in complex circumstances.

Exhibition Ethics

This exhibition places emphasis on the diversity of the audience and their equal participation experience. In the design of the space, there is an accessible circulation line, and low-light sensitive channels and graphic and textual guide materials are provided for visually impaired and hearing-impaired audiences. Safety prompts and age-appropriate guidance are available at the interactive area.

All the interactive content generated by the audience is anonymously collected and displayed after screening to avoid sensitive or invasive expressions. The image and text contents of the artist's works have been authorized in writing, and portraits of the figures will be blurred or replaced.

The project has not been within the scope of ethical approval by internal assessment, but the curatorial team has established a content review mechanism to ensure that the exhibition is safe and inclusive in terms of emotions, culture and perception, respecting the boundaries and feelings of audiences from different backgrounds.

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