

Curatorial Proposal

Category: Uncategorized

written by Siqi Xue | 2 March 2026

Title

Awareness: How Materials Accompany Us, and How They Push Back

Treat everyday materials as weighty presences, so viewers relearn attention through bodily pacing and looking. — Siqi Xue

Concept and curatorial questions

This group exhibition centres on “awareness”, but I want to pull it away from an abstract self-help term and return it to a concrete viewing practice: how we treat objects often mirrors how we treat ourselves and others. Under urban speed, efficiency logics, and social discipline, materials are frequently reduced to tools. Yet in many cultural contexts, objects can also be revered, carefully attended to, and allowed to hold space. The question is not whether an object is “just an object”, but whether we are willing to acknowledge that materials carry relationships, memory, labour, and power.

Here, awareness becomes a three-step practice:

1. Companionship: materials as quiet companions that slow us down.
2. Friction: materials that make comfort fail and expose conflict.
3. Decentring: materials that pull the human subject off-centre and force reorientation.

Artists and selected works

A) Jiang Miao

Jiang Miao's three works all point to the first level of "awareness": not a didactic spiritual therapy, but rather, through carving and the hardness of metal/wood, she brings attention back to the rhythm of touch and breath. Her paintings are like a state of repeated polishing, reminding the viewer that awareness is not a sudden flash of inspiration, but rather a long-term training.



Mindfulness 20241205, JIANG MIAO, 2024. Acrylic on aluminium panel, carving. 250.0 × 400.0 cm.



Mindfulness 2024.5.5,

JIANG MIAO, 2024.
Acrylic on aluminium
panel, carving. 160.0 ×
130.0 cm.



Taoist Trinity and the Self
2023.10.22, JIANG MIAO,
2023. Acrylic on wooden
board, carving. Diameter 217
cm.

B) Suyon Huh

Her works materialize everyday fears, absences, and fictitious orders into tangible material systems: papier-mâché, string, thread, Korean paper, watercolor, and oil painting overlays. They look light, but actually form a pulled structure in the space, causing the audience to experience physical tension and self-projection. She is responsible for the transition between the second and third sections of the exhibition: from being soothed to being pulled back to reality.



Garden in Reality, Suyon Huh, 2023. Watercolour, oil paint, and paper pulp on hanji. 200 × 180 cm.



The Perfect Society in Absence, Suyon Huh, 2023. Paper pulp, hanji, rope, ribbon. Dimensions variable.



Phone Phobia, Suyon Huh, 2023. Wooden frame, telephone, paper pulp, string, sand. 69 × 69 × 116 cm.

C) Guo Puyi

Guo Puyi is responsible for pushing the exhibition to the third level of “awareness”: the material not only accompanies it, but also organizes the space in turn, forcing us to adjust the way we see. In particular, he turned the text, structure and splicing system into a scalable installation logic, making the audience realize that the relationship between people and the real materials of the world is not a slogan, but a kind of repeated construction and maintenance.



A small “family” of objects shares the same room but holds different degrees of freedom. A balloon-like void is kept inside a metal cage, while a rocking-horse body lies on the floor like a toy that has grown heavier than play. Nearby, modular steel

figures stand upright, as if play has been reorganised into structure. In this scene, comfort, control, and companionship are negotiated through material weight and spatial distance.



Placed among drawers and corners, the work behaves like something that escaped storage and began to travel. It turns the domestic into a site of agency, not just comfort.



A cluster that looks

like a soft plant but is built from rigid modules. It suggests how connection grows: not as one perfect form, but as many small contacts holding each other up.

Exhibition structure and visitor journey

Section 1 Entering and getting close (quiet companionship)

Featuring: Jiang Miao Fig.1–3

Mode: start with distance, then approach to read carving traces

Experience: attention returns from information-flow to surface, rhythm, breath

Section 2 Friction and rupture (comfort fails)

Featuring: Suyon Huh Fig.4–5

Mode: structure first, then strings and tension capture your gaze

Experience: material discomfort reveals how discipline enters everyday life

Section 3 Widening the gaze (decentring the human)

Featuring: Suyon Huh Fig.6 + Guo Puyi Fig.7–9

Mode: from being “caught” by structure to being “re-positioned” by it

Experience: you realise you are part of a relational network, not its centre

Display strategy (Custom Lane)

Lighting: Jiang’s works benefit from soft, even light to reveal carved shadows.

Heights: large panels read as a “breathing wall”; the circular work becomes a pause-point.

Installation safety: Huh’s string-based works require clear distances and subtle floor cues.

Guo Puyi: place modular works near the end as a “return point”, transforming earlier tension into a proposal for re-forming connection.

Audience and public programme

Audience: local Edinburgh publics, art students, visitors interested in material and installation, and those seeking slower forms of attention.

Low-cost programme

- 30-min guided walk-through: one work, one question.
- Small workshop: build a “structure of attention” using paper and string.
- Online layer: short texts plus alt text for every work

to reduce barriers.

Ethics and collaboration

- Clear permissions and crediting, with artist approval of all information.
- Transparent fees, transport, and insurance to avoid hidden labour.
- Avoid exoticising cultural background; centre material and embodied viewing.
- Accessibility basics: clear labels, alt text, transcript for tour notes.

Budget (Total £10,000)

Item	Estimate (GBP)	Rationale
Venue hire (Custom Lane)	1,932	£276 × 7 days (kept under £500/day).
Venue tech / staffing contingency	600	basic ops, cleaning, equipment add-ons
Artist fees / loan fees (3 artists)	3,000	£1,000 each, labour and permissions respected
Transport & packing	1,600	local courier + lightweight international packing (paper/small works)
Insurance (artworks + public liability)	700	conservative placeholder pending quotes

Installation & materials	900	plinth tweaks, fixings, labels, minor lighting
Graphics & print	450	A2 poster set + in-space print
Documentation (photo/video)	550	one on-site documentation session
Accessibility & translation	300	bilingual text, alt text, text guide
Contingency	968	~10% buffer
Total	10,000	balanced

Custom Lane link [exhibition-space](#)

Timeline

- Weeks 1–2: confirm loans, artwork info, permissions
- Week 3: transport and insurance locked; finalise texts and layout
- Week 4: technical coordination; plinths and fixing plans
- 2 install days, 7 public days, 1 deinstall day, 1 archive day