

# Guo Tiantian

All fervor sublimates through restraint

Exhibition in Beijing: 2025.8.30 – 10.19

Opening: 2025.8.30, Saturday, 4pm

Galerie Urs Meile Beijing is pleased to announce *All fervor sublimates through restraint* by Guo Tiantian (b. 1988), which marks Guo's first solo exhibition with the gallery and offers a comprehensive look at the artist's recent works. The exhibition showcases her innovative approach to reinventing traditional lacquer through a contemporary lens and features installations that explore abstract connections between sound, her painting practice, and personal experience. She subtly translates auditory experiences into visual language, transcending the binary opposition between tradition and modernity.

Guo Tiantian masterfully navigates the delicate balance between the allure of abstract painting and the materiality of lacquer. While the medium demands elements of craftsmanship and process, as well as a heightened sensitivity to physical materiality, the artist remains firmly rooted in the essence of painting. Guo's practice has consistently engaged in a rigorous exploration of composition, colour harmony, and the interplay of line, form, and texture. By merging abstract forms with intuitive experience, she creates layered perceptual fields that resonate with colour, echo with texture, and are imbued with a profound historical consciousness.

Guo Tiantian's work is a form of future archaeology. It dissects and reflects on the history of lacquer art across vast stretches of time, while grounding itself in deep emotional and physical experience—a continuous rediscovery of the unity between mind and hand. For her, tradition is not a ready-made object or a static inheritance to be passively claimed, but a living process to be uncovered, excavated, and reinterpreted.

Driven by a focus on the inner order of things rather than their surface appearances, and guided by a process-rich, associative mode of thinking, Guo Tiantian has arrived at synaesthesia as a central theme in her work. In her Script and Music series, poetry swells into waves (*Silence is waves breaking against the boat's bow*, 2024–2025, lacquer, mother-of-pearl inlay, silver, double-sided lacquerboard, 60 × 40 cm), tonal rhythms chart the weather (*Weather Map*, 2025, lacquer, mother-of-pearl inlay, silver, double-sided lacquerboard, 60 × 40 cm), musical notes fall like cool rain (*The Cool Descends*, 2025, lacquer, mother-of-pearl inlay, woven ramie cloth, wooden board, 80 × 60 cm), a score plucks stars from the sky (*Picking the Stars*, 2025, lacquer, mother-of-pearl inlay, woven ramie cloth, wooden board, 80 × 60 cm), and spoken words chime like bells (*The Speaking Bell*, 2025, lacquer, brass, woven ramie cloth, wooden board, 90 × 70 cm). Synaesthesia is more than a playful sensory crossover; it rejects the fragmentation of the world into isolated senses, disciplines, or mediums, and defies the linguistic structures that seek to predetermine the boundaries of meaning. Here, synaesthesia is a call to reclaim the whole human being. This raises a profound concern in Guo's work: When perception transcends singular, fixed channels, our systems of categorising knowledge begin to loosen. In the resulting gaps—where things slip out of place—art creates that which resists classification and defies certainty.

In Guo Tiantian's hands, lacquer is both ancient and new. It is not bound to any specific era; rather, it establishes its own tempo with each layer that is applied and each stroke that is wiped away. To touch these surfaces is to encounter the latent: the unspoken histories and futures still taking shape. Time here is not linear but recursive, folding back and forth between the material and the maker, the hand and the mind.

(This text incorporates passages from “The Philosophy of Concealment”, an essay by curator Jiang Feiran written for this exhibition.)

#### About the Artist

Guo Tiantian (b. 1988, Hunan, China; lives and works in Wuhan) received her BFA in Mural Painting from the China Academy of Art in 2010 and her MFA in Lacquer Art from the same institution in 2013. She was a visiting scholar in Fine Arts at the State Academy of Fine Arts Stuttgart, Germany, in 2011. Currently, she works at Hubei Institute of Fine Arts. Her works have been exhibited at institutions including BY ART MATTERS, Hangzhou (2025, 2024); Hubei Museum of Art, Wuhan (2023, 2019); Donghushan Art Museum, Wuhan (2019); Art Museum of Nanjing University of the Arts (2018, 2016); Tsinghua University Art Museum, Beijing (2017); National Art Museum of China, Beijing (2014); and Art Museum of China Academy of Art, Hangzhou (2013) etc.