

# Heterotopia

## Exhibit Artists

Xianghan Cheng  
Oliver Stern  
Ruotai Tang  
Candy Qu  
Hongshan Feng  
Yanci (Pepper) Liu

## Curators

Yichen Ji  
Yuanjie (YJ) Chen

***October 31 — November 10, 2024***  
***13 Grattan St, #402, Brooklyn, NY 11206***



*The Accumulating Past*, Oliver Stern  
2024  
Oil on Canvas  
20" x 16"

## Opening Reception Friday, November 1, 6 - 8 PM

A Space Gallery is pleased to present Heterotopia, a group exhibition for an artists' colony that unveils the thought-provoking creations of artists who ventured into the remnants of a former New York hospital. Once a place of healing and isolation, this abandoned site now evokes a powerful visual narrative of decay and resilience, inspiring artistic interpretations that reveal complex layers of memory and identity.

Drawing on philosopher Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia—a space that exists between reality and fantasy, the mundane and the extraordinary—the artists have transformed this forgotten landscape into a dynamic canvas. Their works illuminate how a single location can hold divergent meanings, blending historical fragments with contemporary perspectives.

This exhibition presents thought-provoking works created by artists during their exploration of the former hospital. The site, once dedicated to healing and seclusion, now stands as an evocative symbol of decay and resilience. Inspired by Foucault's concept of heterotopia, these artists have transformed this forgotten landscape into a canvas that reflects complex layers of space, memory, and identity. Their creations invite viewers to engage with the intersection of past and present, offering new interpretations of this historic site.

Xianghan Cheng's *Untitled 2024* captures layered impressions of decay and rebirth through intricate use of color and line. His oil painting embodies the hospital's history with vibrant graffiti juxtaposed against broken walls, blending traces of past vitality with contemporary artistry. Cheng's work creates an ongoing dialogue between the original site and the marks left by successive visitors, reflecting Foucault's view of heterotopia as spaces that contain multiple, often conflicting, narratives.

Oliver Stern's *The Accumulating Past* visually represents the convergence of history and the present, with multiple flashlights illuminating sections of a dark, unknown room. This work speaks to the "simultaneous" nature of heterotopia, as each light captures fragments of the past alongside present observers' shadows. Stern's *Back to the Real World* continues this exploration by contrasting the hospital's overgrown ruins with glimpses of a road beyond its walls, examining the boundaries that separate and yet connect heterotopic spaces with the surrounding world.

Ruotai Tang's mixed media installation explores the tension between nature and human-made structures, symbolizing the hospital's evolution from a space dominated by human control to one where nature reclaims its own. Using soil, plants, and industrial remnants, Tang creates a narrative of resilience and interdependence, underscoring the hospital's transformation as a place where nature and civilization collide and coexist, resonating with the heterotopic concept of ever-shifting meanings.

Candy Qu's *The Window of Confusion* challenges perceptions of reality within a surreal landscape. Seen from the hospital's abandoned perspective, Qu's work asks whether the observer is looking outward at reality or trapped within a distorted heterotopic view. Her piece invites viewers to question their own perspectives, drawing attention to how heterotopic spaces obscure distinctions between what is seen and what is felt, emphasizing Foucault's notion of fluid boundaries.

Hongshan Feng's *Viewfinder* centers the window as a symbol of confinement and freedom, mirroring the dual nature of heterotopia. Feng's use of withered vines, burned canvases, and metal frameworks captures the hospital's transformation, depicting its walls as barriers and also as portals to the outside. The window embodies both the physical and metaphorical separation of the hospital's inhabitants from the external world, questioning the role of perception in framing memory and identity.

Yanci (Pepper) Liu's photographic series *Harbor* contrasts urban and natural heterotopias, showcasing the hospital's decayed interiors alongside portraits and cityscapes that blur boundaries of time and place. Her black-and-white photographs embrace the layered stories of these spaces, capturing their melancholic beauty and inviting viewers to see the site not as a forgotten relic but as an ongoing, evolving part of the city's narrative.

Gerry Tao's video piece from the series *Poché* - 片面之间 is a poetic exploration of hidden spaces and their mysteries. Inspired by the concept of *poché*—the unseen voids in architecture—Tao reimagines this hidden zone as a dynamic, living entity. His video invites viewers to imagine what might emerge within the dark void, suggesting it could transform into a forest, swamp, or something unexpected. Reflecting on the former hospital as fertile ground for memory and transformation, Tao's work offers a metaphor for heterotopia, urging viewers to engage with the unseen narratives within these layered, contradictory spaces.

### **About A Space Gallery:**

**A Space provides a cutting-edge and creatively rich platform for young emerging artists in contemporary art world. We collaborate with talented artists and brands to co-curate art exhibitions, art parties, and other art events.**

For more information, please contact [aspacebj@gmail.com](mailto:aspacebj@gmail.com)