

Independent

Booth 704

05.08 - 05.11.2025

YveYANG

## How to Make a Convincing Object: A conversation between Allan Rand and Huidi Xiang

By Dan Duray

YveYANG Gallery's booth at the Independent Art Fair will showcase new sculptures by Huidi Xiang (b. 1995, Chengdu, China) alongside recent paintings by Allan Rand (b. 1983, Vejle, Denmark). At first glance, the curation appears to emphasize the disparate qualities in their work. They hail from far flung geographies – Xiang now lives in New York, Rand in Australia – and different micro-generations. Moreover, Xiang's sculptures mine modern politics and pop sensibilities, whereas Rand's paintings are soulful and brimming with mystery.

In fact the two have a great deal in common. Considering their works in the booth, the two artists took the opportunity to reflect on each other's practices, offering visitors the opportunity to learn what went into the works on display at the Independent Art Fair and the YveYANG OVR.

**Allan Rand:** Recently, in New York, I saw your work for the first time, in the exhibition *goes around in circles, til very, very dizzy*. It reminded me of the book *On the Line: Notes from a Factory* by Joseph Ponthus, which touches on themes of labor and working conditions.

I think you use the medium of the exhibition to create a situation that gives rise to different kinds of thoughtfulness. Ponthus' book suggests that "poetic language can spark collective awakening and resistance to dehumanizing conditions." Might this connect with what you had in mind for that show - are you interested in "critical un-siting?"



Huidi Xiang, Installation view of *goes around in circles, til very, very dizzy*, 2025. Courtesy of the artist and YveYANG Gallery.

**Huidi Xiang:** With my work, I try to present narratives existing before or after the moments we usually see—imagining the behind-the-scenes, where power structures unfold beneath the glossy, magical, and effortless facades of the original stories I'm referencing.

The language of sculpture allows me to bring out nuances. It gives me a way to create spaces where familiarity can be experienced through different timeframes and modes of engagement. As viewers move around the works in a specific site, they are given time and space to notice something is off, prompting reflection on the subtle twists beneath the surface.

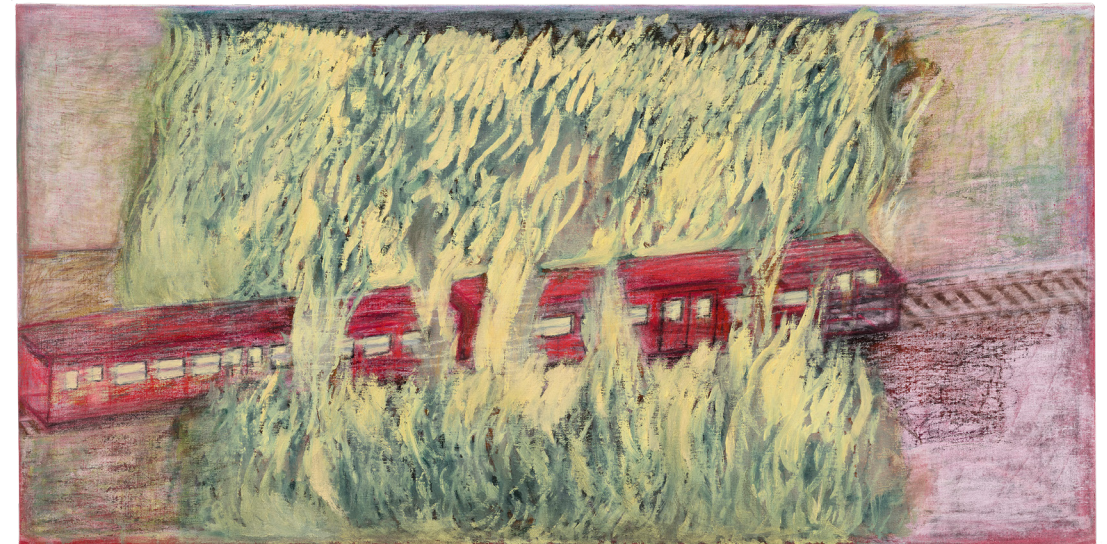
**AR:** I see this as an invitation to a potentially fruitful path between maker, onlooker, and work. I want to ask you: if this is the case, how does your sculptural work both explore its subjects and transcend them? Is it, or how is it, possible for a piece to be both autotelic—serving a purpose in itself—and outwardly engaged with social concerns? Are your sculptures both inward- and outward-facing? Can they function as ambiguous or even seemingly formal objects while also addressing specific real-world issues? I find this see-saw dynamic to be a productive kind of question mark, something that remains unresolved for me.

**HX:** I believe that ambiguity and specificity can coexist in art. I'm not interested in adhering to a singular narrative—this is something I am exactly trying to critique in my work—but I do aim to be specific and honest in how I approach narration and exploration. The subject matters, but my goal is more to articulate a method or a mode of exploring, rather than arrive at fixed conclusions. I extend that process as an invitation for others to participate. Viewers are free to enter, depart, and navigate their own paths through the work as they see fit.

There's always a negotiation of agency in the making and viewing of art—a dynamic tension between intention and interpretation. As you mentioned, it's a see-saw. I hope my sculptures function as both inward- and outward-facing, each bearing its own agency while also holding space for real-world resonances.

In an earlier conversation, you asked me what I think a painting is—whether it's a vehicle or a container. I said for your work, it feels more like a vehicle, especially considering your earlier work, *Untitled (Passing Through)*, where you literally painted a train. But I do think perhaps painting isn't a train but something more unpredictable, multidimensional, and multidirectional. You

jokingly suggested it might be a UFO, which I love. So now I'm curious—how do you see your painting? Or more in general, how do you define painting? Is it a container, a vehicle, a bridge, or something else entirely? Can you unpack “this UFO” a little bit?



Allan Rand, *Untitled (Passing Through)*, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and YveYANG Gallery.

**AR:** Firstly, I want to say that I find your consideration of painting as “unpredictable, multidimensional, and multidirectional” really on point.

For me, painting is something we cannot fully capture or understand neither in a moment, and less so over time. It changes as both humans and the world continue to evolve. I think it's a real gift to not know, and to maintain an openness that also comes with a beginner's mind. Not knowing and not understanding holds so much potential and each time can give way to feeling, wondering, inventing and exploring associations. It can be a gift that continues to unfurl.

You inspire me to suggest that both painting and its perception seems to move in any direction and dimension without prediction. Painting is an extremely

broad language, we have around 8000 human languages in the world, and I believe all of these people can engage with painting because it's a universal language.

Paintings are mute and inanimate objects, they're completely still and a silent presence in contrast to us as thinkers. But perhaps they share an elusiveness with UFOs. If we were to metaphorically or metaphysically consider painting as unidentified flying (or flat) objects, would they be powered -or even electrified by viewers' subjective synapses? Would viewers be abducted by their own perceptions?

**HX:** To me, color seems like one of the key initial forces that activates this "electrification." Can you talk about your approach to color? The works you're showing here feature a range of colors and different ways of handling them. I imagine this variation might be tied to different time periods or bodies of work, but I'm curious—how do you think about color in your practice? Is there a specific logic guiding your choices?

**AR:** In terms of tonality I think of each work as something specific, demanding its own approach to colour and material. I think of colour as an implicated substance in multiple ways. How I handle and involve these substances depends on the needs of each piece, my feel for it, my subjective preoccupations, I guess a colours' destiny is to be entangled in everything else. I'm curious how colour will interact with your black sculptures.

In my experience, your sculptures open up a conversation about the possible relationships between aesthetics and ethics. I want to consolidate this into a question about the role of your sculptures in this context: how might you relate to the phrase "Aesthetics without ethics are cosmetics"?

**HX:** As an object maker, one of the most important things for me is to create

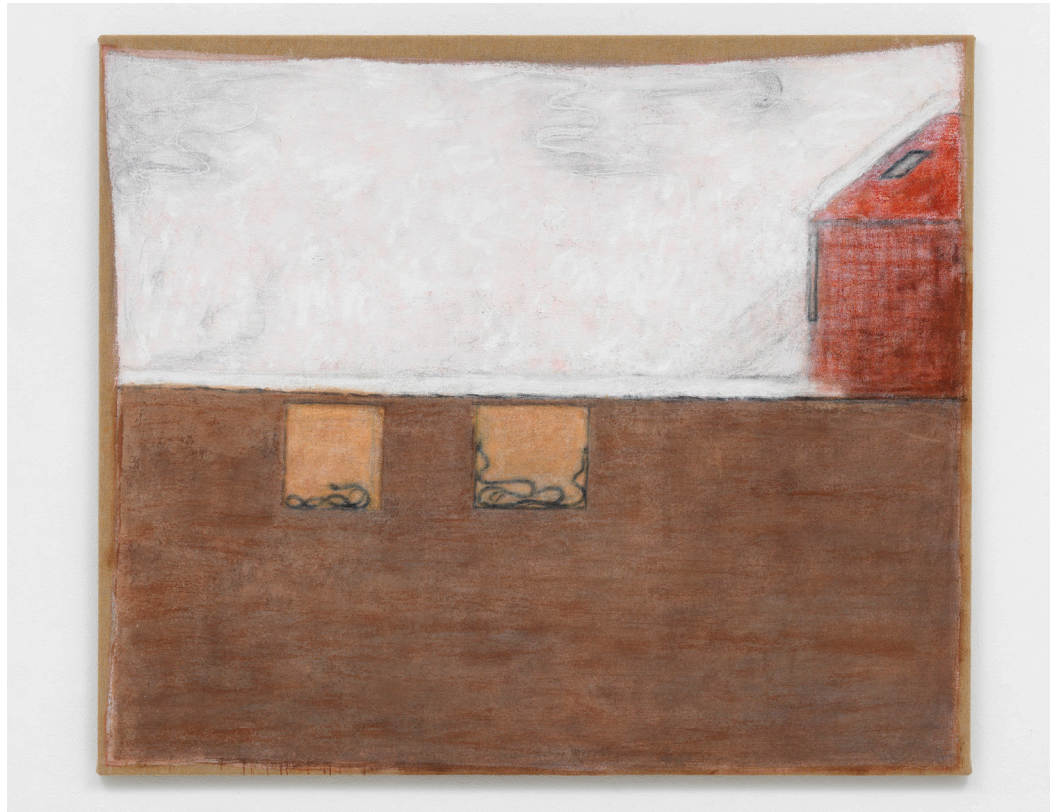
a *convincing* object. And this "convincing" can take on many qualifiers—aesthetically, critically, culturally, or even just in terms of *vibe*. The specifics really depend on the context.

I do want my work to be rigorous, both in its visual language and in the questions or messages it carries. At the same time, I understand that I can't control the context my work enters or how viewers will perceive it. So I'm constantly navigating that space—that double role my sculptures are trying to take on. I think I'm always on a journey to find and recalibrate that balance.

I'm curious about your approach to storytelling—or narration—through painting. Your work has a strong sense of storytelling for me, though often in an open-ended and ambiguous way. In one of the paintings you show in our Independent setup, *Snowscape (Snakepits)*, for example, the scene seems quite tranquil, yet there's an underlying tension that takes time to unravel. Or in *Untitled (Emerald)*, the dense rendering of jade mist seems to conceal stories. Do you begin with a clear narrative in mind and follow it closely, or do you find yourself wrestling with the painting's inevitable shifts as it unfolds?

**AR:** Often for me to begin a painting, there's a confluence of things that come together including stories. The scenario and its motifs can be very particular from the onset, which was the case for *Snowscape (Snakepits)*. To me, painting is something that allows each work its own special cycle of creation and after that, the [works] continue to produce stories. It's an ongoing thing. Strong vision and shifts co-exist. Shifts are an integral and a natural part of it; layering, pentimento, the unpredictability of working with materials in painting and learning as one goes will inevitably also change things around. These discoveries become necessary and make for a liveliness, to have the presence of an object which could not have been predicted from the onset.





Allan Rand, *Snowscape (Snakepits)*, 2017. Courtesy of the artist and YveYANG Gallery.

In the case of such dynamics of objecthood, I see a surface of innocence in the form-language of your work, challenged or detoured by the material of metal. Your objects have the ability to give off different moods—an equilibrium of moods. For me, that's one of the peculiar behaviours of painting; in your sculpture, I think it happens through things that are both familiar and unfamiliar at once. Is this something you can talk about?

**HX:** I really appreciate what you said about “an equilibrium of moods.” In my work, I try to capture the layered, often contradictory emotions we experience in contemporary life—where there's rarely a single, clear-cut feeling; instead, it's usually a tangle of ambiguity, subtlety, and complexity.

Take the tomato-pincushion-shaped works I'm showing this time, for

example—the use of metal, the play of form and scale, all aim to express that emotional messiness: the quiet tension between familiarity and estrangement, playfulness and melancholy, healing and harm, affection and resentment. I want the work to hold space for these contradictions without the need to resolve them.

This idea of layered emotions and unresolved tension makes me think of your work as well. Your work has been described as portraying “the internal landscape of a melancholia,” which makes me curious about this idea of “internal” or “insideness” in your paintings. There seems to be a strong presence of interior space in your work—whether physically, conceptually, or psychologically. In the *Snowscape (Snakepits)* work, for example, and in *Mesopotamian*, from our booth, the pink frame gives me the feeling of peering inside—inside this ancient civilization, as the title suggests. As a viewer, I feel positioned on the outside, uncertain if I'm invited in. It's almost as if you've made an incision for us to look through, yet the “interior melancholia” remains just out of reach. Could you speak to this tension between interior and exterior in your work?

**AR:** Paintings seem to accumulate many subjective descriptions, some which may act as mirrors of the describer. With regards to viewing there is no such thing as discrepancy because the viewers' experience is valid and personal. The viewer standing outside the painting essentially absorbs themselves into the painting. Perhaps it's true that there is a secret world to be imagined between the second and the third dimension. The space between the viewer and the painting becomes this enormous sphere for sensations and experiences, which ultimately renews itself. Within the two paintings you mention, I think the compositions leave space for us to move and imagine.

I'd like to learn about the making of your sculptures. How does one of your

sculptures physically come about, from the early stages until it is incorporated into an exhibition?



Huidi Xiang, *maxim tomato: 10 hours of sleep, maxim tomato: decreased stress, maxim tomato: inner child*, 2025. Courtesy of the artist and YveYANG Gallery.

**HX:** My process typically begins with a specific theme I want to explore—in this case, the labor of love and care. From there, I consider the context in which the work will be shown, which informs the visual narrative. When I have a specific exhibition planned, I usually start by creating a site model, which I refer to throughout the process. I constantly revisit this model to see how different elements of the work interact with one another and how they engage with the space.

Even though my practice is rooted in sculpture and installation, I've always been drawn to the distinct and powerful way painting conveys energy. How do you think about “energy” in your work? How do you navigate the

relationship between your own energy, the viewer's energy, and maybe also the energy of your subject matter? In many of the paintings, like in *Memory* and *Détournement* from this booth, I notice the presence of multiple figures. Who are these people? Are they specific characters, or do they serve more as vessels for certain emotions or energies you want to deliver?

**AR:** I think these multiple energies you mention — along with the energy of the material, its *Duktus*, and the work's particular surface and objecthood — all work together and enhance one another; they form a circuit, become generative, creating and re-creating the work over time.

*Allan Rand and Huidi Xiang's work will be on view in person at the Independent Art Fair from May 8 to May 11*

Allan Rand (b. 1983, Vejle, Denmark) is a painter based in Broulee, Australia. He has lived and worked in Paris, Mogendoura, Sydney, Brussels, Porto, Düsseldorf, London, Amsterdam and Copenhagen. In chronological order, he has also had studios in West Oakland (California), Haa (Sweden), Lima (Peru), and Los Angeles (California). He has had solo exhibitions and participated in group exhibitions in galleries and institutions in Germany, Australia, Canada, United States, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Portugal, Estonia and Britain.

#### Solo and Duo Exhibitions

- 2025 *When I can't get to sleep, I dismantle my world*, with Audrey Gair, Galerie Eli Kerr, Montreal, Canada
- 2024 *Machine Breakers*, Moon Grove, Manchester, England  
*Cantoria*, with Claus Haxholm, Farveriet, Spinderihallerne, Vejle, Denmark
- 2023 *27 Eyes*, with Henri Frachon, Poush, Paris, France
- 2022 *Rand, Hartigan*, with Patrick Hartigan, Haydens Gallery, Melbourne, Australia  
*Up the mountain in my city shoes*, with Spencer Lai, Bossy's Gallery, off-site location Melbourne CBD, Australia
- 2020 *Arthur Phillip puts his head down, Barangaroo 1788*, Chauffeur, Sydney, Australia
- 2019 *Meandering Antonia*, Petit Rouge, Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2018 *House of a Misanthrope*, Knulp, Sydney, Australia  
*Haus eines Misanthropen*, Gartenpavilion, Jacobigarten, Künstlerverein Malkasten, Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2017 *Serendipitous Sojourns*, Galerie Nagel Draxler, Reisebüroalerie, Cologne, Germany

#### Group Exhibitions

- 2024 *Nemesis*, YveYANG Gallery, New York, USA
- 2022 *Cave 4.0*, curated by Cave Offsite International at Martin Kippenberger's METRO-Net, Hrousa, Syros, Greece
- 2019 *Preparation*, Haydens Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
- 2017 *71. Internationale Bergische Kunstausstellung*, Kunstmuseum Solingen, Solingen, Germany  
*Pharmacy for Idiots*, Rob Tufnell Galerie with Tanya Leighton Gallery, Cologne, Germany  
*All Day Breakfast*, curated by Matt Copson and Alastair Mackinven, Reading International, Munches, Reading, England
- 2016 *Marres Currents #4: Running Time*, Marres House for Contemporary Culture, Maastricht, Netherlands
- 2015 *German Promises*, Ornis A. Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2014 *Ultima Ratio*, Hydra Helix, Düsseldorf, Germany  
*Memorandum*, Hôtel de Clermont-Tonnerre (rue du Bac), Paris, France
- 2013 *17a Bienal de Cerveira*, Fundação Bienal de Arte de Cerveira, Cerveira, Portugal
- 2012 *Ciao*, with Julian Fickler and Behrang Karimi, Ringstube Ausstellungsraum, Mainz, Germany  
*Ich Wittre Morgenluft*, Kunst Im Tunnel, Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2010 *You Can Leave Your Hat On*, Schmela Haus, Düsseldorf, Germany



Huidi Xiang (b. 1995, Chengdu, China) is a sculptor based in Brooklyn, New York. Her sculptures and installations recreate pop cultural products and phenomena, constructing alternative narratives to explore emerging forms of labor in late capitalism. Huidi holds an MFA in Art from Carnegie Mellon University and a BA in Architecture from Rice University.

Huidi's work has been exhibited internationally at venues including the Bronx Museum of the Arts (Bronx, NY), YveYANG Gallery (New York, NY), KAJE (Brooklyn, NY), Tutu Gallery (Brooklyn, NY), Lydian Stater (Long Island City, NY), and Contemporary Calgary (Calgary, Canada). She has presented commissioned works at the Jing'an International Sculpture Project (Shanghai, China, 2024), X Museum Triennial (Beijing, China, 2023), and OCAT Biennale (Shenzhen, China, 2021). Huidi has also participated in numerous artist residencies, including the Bronx Museum AIM Fellowship, Lighthouse Works Fellowship, NARS Foundation International Residency Program, and Millay Arts Residency Program.

#### Solo and Duo Exhibitions

- 2025 *the maxim of the tomato*, Buffalo Institute for Contemporary Art (BICA), Buffalo, NY
- goes around in circles, til very, very dizzy*, YveYANG Gallery, New York, NY
- 2024 *i made it.*, YveYANG Gallery, Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong
- 2023 *we've decided to grow oranges together*, Lydian Stater, Long Island City, NY
- when held properly*, Tutu Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
- 2022 *neither here nor there (two person show)*, Lydian Stater, Long Island City, NY

- 2021 *how to be an artist in minecraft*, Ender Gallery with MacKenzie Art Gallery, online in the video game Minecraft
- 2019 *The Etymology of Window*, Frame Gallery Window Front Space, Pittsburgh, PA
- Cheese Column*, Powder Room, Pittsburgh, PA

#### Group Exhibitions

- 2024 *Alien*, David Castillo Gallery, Miami, FL
- Jing'an International Sculpture Project* (commissioned public sculpture), Jing'an Sculpture Park, Shanghai, China
- Dialogues: PhillipsX + The Here & There Co.*, Phillips New York, NY
- Bronx Calling: The Sixth AIM Biennial*, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, NY
- Running Jokes*, The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, New York, NY
- 2023 *X Museum Triennial 2023: Home Is Where the Haunt Is* (commissioned installation), X Museum, Beijing, China
- Voyager 1*, Hive Becoming | Shanghai, Shanghai, China
- Offworlds*, YveYANG Gallery, New York, NY
- State of Play*, The Here and There Collective Studio, Brooklyn, NY
- 2022 *Just about in the round*, KAJE, Brooklyn, NY
- In Good Company*, Lydian Stater, Long Island City, NY
- Traces*, NARS Foundation, Brooklyn, NY
- Dear Mother*, LA Artcore, Los Angeles, CA
- Gem Box*, LATITUDE Gallery, New York, NY
- /'kapCHər/*, NARS Foundation, Brooklyn, NY
- Post-Sinofuturism: Beyond Raw*, Meta ZiWu@XIRANG, online on the metaverse platform XIRANG
- Rerouting*, Contemporary Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada



- 2021 *Boomerang: OCAT Biennale 2021* (commissioned installation),  
OCT Art & Design Gallery, Shenzhen, China  
*A Couple Of*, Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China
- 2020 *Art as Message*, CICA Museum, Gyeonggi-do, Korea  
*What does a pencil know?* (three person exhibition),  
Platform-Melwood Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2019 *Eighteen Wheeler Platform Shoes*, Platform-Melwood Gallery,  
Pittsburgh, PA  
*SLG Hosts: School of Speculation*, South London Gallery, London,  
UK
- 2018 *Unmaking the Bed*, Unmaking New Orleans, Center for  
Architecture and Design, New Orleans, LA  
*4th Yiiiie Gallery Group Show*, Yiiiie Gallery, Chengdu, China

# YveYANG

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## Currently on view

Sam Ghantous  
*your golf course made my GPU*  
May 2 - July 5, 2025  
[Online](#)

Lexia Hachtmann  
*Waiting Room*  
May 2 - July 5, 2025  
[Online](#)

## Previous Exhibition

Zoë Buckman, Curtis Kulig, Alissa Ritter, Yves Scherer, Sofie Schnellbach  
*Sehnsucht*  
March 7 - April 26, 2025  
[Online](#)