

Kiang Malingue

馬凌畫廊
kiangmalingue.com

10 Sik On Street, Wanchai, Hong Kong
50 Eldridge St., New York, NY 10002

Vibrancy, Vibrancy, Vibrancy

(Artist) Zheng Bo

(Opening)
Thur, 18 September, 6 – 8 PM

(Date)
19 September – 1 November 2025

(Gallery Hours)
Tue to Sat, 10 AM – 6 PM

(Location)
50 Eldridge Street, New York, NY
10002

(Contact)
office@kiangmalingue.com;
+1 (917) 722 8228

(Media Enquiries)
Yiyun He
yiyun@kiangmalingue.com;
+852 28100317

(All Other Enquiries)
Jim Koenig
jim@kiangmalingue.com;
+1 (917) 722 8228

Kiang Malingue is pleased to present in its New York space *Vibrancy, Vibrancy, Vibrancy*, an exhibition by Zheng Bo, comprising videos and drawings from the past five years, made in collaboration with the coral lagoon of New Caledonia-Kanaky, the primeval forest of Dalarna, Sweden, and the natural landscape of Lantau Island, Hong Kong. This is the artist's first solo exhibition in New York.

For Zheng Bo, the condition surrounding an exhibition emanates as an evolving ground that sustains artworks as living, akin to plant life. Embedded within each artwork is a latent continuity arising out of an ethics of ongoingness and a potential for growth. Time is an alive material. Anchoring the exhibition are two video works that encompass Zheng's continual engagement in other-than-human agency, the politics of plants and marine life, and their subjectivity and sentience as philosophical compass. *The Political Life of a Coral Lagoon 1*, 2025, is composed of footage from daily swims near Poé, among the resplendent biodiversity of the world's second-largest coral lagoon, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Inspired by the 12th-century poem 'The Conference of the Birds' by Sufi poet Attar of Nishapur, biologist Thomas Seeley's 2010 book 'Honeybee Democracy,' and drawing on fish behavior research by scientists Iain Couzin and Jens Kraus, Zheng perceives the marine ecosystem as a sophisticated political community. In a script written by the artist that transitions into a final passage enlisting ChatGPT, a speculative first-person dialogue between fishes rouses in speech bubbles. Beginning with an incantatory slogan by iridescent damselfish (*Chromis viridis*) swimming through an *Acropora* coral: "Our motto is: Vibrancy, Vibrancy, Vibrancy," it is a clarion call for a deeper connection and reflection of nature and environmental intelligence, for beauty and political wisdom, against the tides of human hubris, towards a multi-species and interspecies vibrancy.

The video *Le Sacre du printemps* 春之祭, 2021-22, emerged from a long-term collaboration between Zheng and DACE (Dance Art Critical Ecology, founded by Rickard Borgström and Rebecca Chentinell), with a dance set in a primeval forest in Dalarna, Sweden, between five humans and centuries-old pine trees. In a communion channeling collective ecosexual desire, the dancers shake their bodies to acclimate with the trees, and ground themselves into the soil by dancing upside down, their legs embracing the trunks, in ecstatic moan. The act of inversion and fusion, of seeming gravitational defiance, is further intensified by the upside-down view of the mossy landscape. In spring 2025, the project unfolded as a live performance in Nuuksio National Park, Finland, presented by the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, where visitors hiked into a boreal forest to witness dances between humans and anthills, mosses, and spruce trees.

Two ongoing series of ink and pencil drawings, forming parenthetical meditative zones that precede and follow the pathways into and out of the video works, connect to the natural environments where Zheng lives, between Lantau Island, Hong Kong and Gouaro, New Caledonia-Kanaky.

Drawing is part of an ecology that often circulates as prologues and epilogues of larger projects, putting into relation life cycles of artworks as well as of the natural world. Recalling the intimate form of address in traditional Chinese art albums made for private viewing, Zheng's observation of plant life and marine life is a practice guided by Daoist wisdom, through looking, sensing, growing, being, and drawing, that dissolves the boundaries of the aesthetic, erotic, and political, so that they can be reconfigured and reimagined. Some of these drawings are installed low to the ground, as an invitation to sit and spend time, enabling renewed bodily and perceptual relationships.

Sketched from sitting sessions observing their plant neighbors in the hills behind Zheng's home village on Lantau Island, the *Drawing Life* series consists of grids of fifteen pencil drawings. Each set marks a solar term in the East Asian lunisolar calendar, which divides a year into 24 terms of fourteen to sixteen days. Tracking the cycles of the Moon and the Sun, these terms compose an almanac of seasonal and ecological events that signify cycles of natural phenomena and agricultural practices. On view are *Drawing Life (Lesser Heat)* 寫生 (小暑), 2021, corresponding to the 11th term occurring in the summer; *Drawing Life (Grain Rain)* 寫生 (穀雨), 2022, marking the sixth term and end of spring; and *Drawing Life (Lesser Cold)* 寫生 (小寒), 2023, the 23rd term and the coldest time in winter. Each set shuttles between close-ups and long views of trees, branches, and flowers, simultaneously evoking sensations of movement and stillness, registering time as flexible, embodying at once ephemerality and timelessness. They consider the nature of observation over time, where impressions, conditions, sameness, and change are imbricated. Inscribed on the edges of some drawings are dates, locations, and identification of certain plants, advocating for the sensorial primacy of encounter over the authority of encyclopedic impulse.

Mer de Corail, 2025-ongoing, ink drawings grouped in sets of four and fifteen, are made from memory of marine life through Zheng's daily swim in the coral lagoon of New Caledonia-Kanaky. With an awareness of Chinese painting tradition and calligraphy, in which the living body, and its bone, flesh, tendon, and blood, are evoked in the quality of the brushstrokes, Zheng consciously moves towards a personal technique by drawing with wooden sticks and vines collected from walks. Imbued with sensuous swiftness and animated lightness, the depictions of unicornfish, toby, shrimpgoby, Moorish idol, boxfish, sweetlip, porcupinefish, trevally, juvenile emperor angelfish, sea turtle, New Caledonian sea krait, Blacktip reef shark, and various types of corals, reflect a community where, as proclaimed by a black saddled toby (*Canthigaster valentini*) in *The Political Life of a Coral Lagoon 1*, "each fulfils its place in the interwoven lattice of life."

The Political Life of a Coral Lagoon 1, 2025 is commissioned for the exhibition *Manifesto of Spring* at the National Asian Culture Center (ACC), Gwangju, in collaboration with M+, Hong Kong and ZKM Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, on view from September 5, 2025 to February 22, 2026.

On Saturday, September 20, 2025, 2-4:30pm, a two-part conversation between Zheng Bo, evolutionary ornithologist and biologist Richard Prum, and choreographer and writer Anh Vo, tending to topics converging around the natural world and dance in *Vibrancy*, *Vibrancy*, *Vibrancy* will take place at 99 Canal (99 Canal Street, 6th Fl, New York, NY 10002).

(About Zheng Bo)

Zheng Bo (b. 1974, Beijing) is an ecoqueer artist of ethnic Bai heritage, living on Lantau Island, Hong Kong and Gouaro, New Caledonia-Kanaky. Through drawing, dance and film, they cultivate kinships with plants. These relations are aesthetic, erotic, and political. For them, art does not arise from human creativity, but more-than-human vibrancy. Guided by Daoist wisdom, they grow weedy gardens, living slogans, biophilia films, and ecosocialist gatherings. These diverse projects, alive and entangled, constitute a garden where they collaborate with both human and nonhuman thinkers and activists.

Recent commissions include *Le Sacre du Printemps (Nuuksio)* at Kiasma, Helsinki (2025), *Fragrant Eight-Section Brocade* at The Huntington, Los Angeles (2024), *Dance Grass Dance Tree* at Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth (2024), *Bamboo as Method* at Somerset House, London (2024), and the Artist's Garden at Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai (2023). Their works are in the collections of Tate, Hammer Museum, and Hong Kong Museum of Art, among others. They participated in Venice (2022), Liverpool (2021), Taipei (2018), and Shanghai (2016) biennials.

(Public Program)

How not to dance like a human:

Zheng Bo in conversation with Richard Prum and Anh Vo

Saturday, September 20

2-4:30pm (door 1:45pm)

99 Canal (99 Canal Street, 6th Fl, New York, NY 10002)

On Saturday, September 20, 2-4:30pm, please join us at 99 Canal for a two-part conversation between Zheng Bo, evolutionary ornithologist and biologist Richard Prum, and choreographer and writer Anh Vo, tending to topics converging around the natural world and dance in Zheng Bo's exhibition *Vibrancy, Vibrancy, Vibrancy*.

2pm, Session One: Zheng Bo and Richard Prum

Zheng Bo and Richard Prum will discuss a range of topics, from what we can learn from the beauty of birds and fish, to how aesthetics and evolution are interlinked, and how the "art world" can become more-than-human.

Richard Prum is an evolutionary ornithologist and biologist, William Robertson Coe Professor of Ornithology in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Yale University, Curator of Ornithology of the Yale Peabody Museum, and author of "The Evolution of Beauty" (named one of the Top Ten Books of 2017 by the *New York Times*, and finalist of 2018 Pulitzer Prize in General Nonfiction) and "Performance All the Way Down: Genes, Development, and Sexual Difference" (2023, University of Chicago Press).

3:30pm, Session Two: Zheng Bo and Anh Vo

Zheng and Vo will discuss a range of topics around dance and performance, from the ontology of the naked body, possession and ritual, cohabiting with nature and the unknown, to how not to dance like a human.

Anh Vo is a choreographer and writer working in the expanded field of performance, whose practice mobilizes the naked body in its variations to

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make visible the entanglement of power and apparitional forces that cut across flesh. They foster artistic exchange of experimental practices in contemporary dance and performance between New York City and Hanoi/Saigon, serving as Contributing Editor of the *Movement Research Performance Journal* and co-organizer (with maura nguyễn-donohue and Lumi Tan) of *We Exist in the Ambivalence of Those Motherfuckers*, an upcoming program of residencies, performances, and public events exploring contemporary Vietnamese performance, hosted by Performance Space New York and the Center for the Arts at Wesleyan University in 2026.

How not to dance like a human is organized by Jo-ey Tang (Artist Development and Curatorial Director of Kiang Malingue).