

Border(line)

September 13–October 25, 2025

5–6/F, H Queen's, 80 Queen's Road Central, Central, Hong Kong



Francis Alÿs, *Painting/Retoque*, 2008. © Francis Alÿs. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner

David Zwirner is pleased to present a group exhibition at the gallery's Hong Kong location. *Border(line)* centers on the inescapable thresholds—literal and abstract—that demarcate nations, spaces, and contemporary life, and considers borders as conceptual and psychological states of being. Bringing together a diverse group of artists from the gallery's program alongside voices from across Asia, this presentation offers an opportunity for global connection and exchange around the existence and possibilities of such partitions. *Border(line)* is curated by Patricia Crockett, Senior Director at David Zwirner Hong Kong.

A seminal video work by the Belgian-born, Mexico-based artist Francis Alÿs serves as the exhibition's thematic anchor. In *Painting/Retoque* (2008), Alÿs repaints the fading median strips of a road that crosses the Panama Canal, a gesture that underscores the mutable and arbitrary nature of such boundaries. Since 1997, the artist has completed a number of projects exploring sociopolitical conflict in border regions—demonstrating his distinctive and poetic approach to artmaking as a means to foster understanding around some of our era's most pressing issues. Among the most referenced artists by his peers, Alÿs's wide-ranging practice has had a profound global influence and finds resonance with the works on view throughout this exhibition.

Works by David Zwirner artists Josef Albers, Raoul De Keyser, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres additionally explore the idea of frames, horizons, and boundaries from multivalent perspectives. An iconic example from Albers's *Homage to the Square* series complements De Keyser's *Model for Cabinet* (1989); both paintings employ related strategies of nested shapes and color play, while the architectural references in De Keyser's composition form a contrast with the largely perceptual intentions of Albers's work. In *"Untitled" (Diptych)* (1994) by Gonzalez-Torres, a pair of framed photographs show birds in flight. This recurring motif in the artist's work alludes to themes of migration, belonging, and the porousness of borders—a reminder of how the many boundaries that govern modern life are not natural, but imposed.

In *Border(line)*, these works appear alongside others in various media by contemporary artists whose practices investigate the tensions between interior and exterior states of being, memory and reality, and nature and the built environment. The photographs and illuminated installations of Beijing-based Chen Wei employ imagery that recalls moments of nightlife community, social isolation, and urban commercialism, while Thai artist Prae Pupityastaporn's large-scale paintings depict serene, occasionally haunting snippets of natural and manmade landscapes.

Chinese painter Hu Xiaoyuan has created two new works for *Border(line)* that exemplify her nuanced perception and philosophical reflections on human nature, combining traces of the everyday and natural materials such as wood, silk, and marble in a sensitive exploration of the impermanence of time and the tension between interior states and external structures. A painting from Beijing and Chengdu-based Xie Nanxing's *Postcard* series showcases the artist incorporating traditional techniques into his contemporary canvases, resulting in an abstract composition that exposes the potentials and limitations of the self as it interacts with nature. London-based Thai painter James Prapaithong presents a monumentally scaled diptych whose blurred, nostalgia-tinged imagery is reminiscent of a film still or found photograph.

Hong Kong-based artist Wong Ping's hallucinatory and humorous animated video *Sorry for the late reply* (2021)—which was commissioned by the New Museum, New York, for his 2021 solo exhibition—explores the friction between personal desire and societal pressures.

Together, these artists present a multifaceted, cross-generational, and transcultural vision of twenty-first-century life, one that is shaped and reshaped by constantly changing borders, both real and imagined.

Josef Albers (1888–1976) is considered one of the most influential abstract painters of the twentieth century, as well as an important designer and educator. Albers's artistic career, which bridged European and American modernism, consisted mainly of a tightly focused investigation into the perceptual properties of color and spatial relationships.

Francis Alÿs (b. 1959) is known for his in-depth projects in a wide range of media, including film, painting, photography, performance, and video. Through his practice, Alÿs consistently directs his distinct poetic and imaginative sensibility toward anthropological and geopolitical concerns centered around observations of, and engagements with, everyday life.

Chen Wei (b. 1980) works across photography and installation to construct cinematic, dreamlike scenes that reflect the psychological landscape of urban China. His meticulously staged images capture moments of stillness within the flux of modernization, offering nuanced meditations on solitude and youth culture in a rapidly transforming society.

Raoul De Keyser's (1930–2012) sophisticated and tempered paintings subtly and evocatively explore the relationship between color and form. Made up of simple shapes and painterly marks, his works allude to the natural world and representational imagery, while avoiding suggestions of narrative or reductive frameworks that limit experience and interpretation.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957–1996) was one of the most significant artists to emerge in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In its reduced formal vocabulary, conceptual rigor, and evocative use of everyday materials, the artist's work resonates with meaning that is at once specific and mutable, rigorous and generous, poetic and political. A solo exhibition of the artist's work will open at David Zwirner Hong Kong in November 2025.

Hu Xiaoyuan (b. 1977) is a prominent voice in contemporary Chinese art; she was the first female Chinese artist to be invited to participate in Documenta, in 2007. With a post-minimalist philosophical rigor, Hu implements organic materials like wood, insects, silk, and hair in materially rich installations. Her practice addresses the impermanence of time and the tension between interior states and external structures, rendering fragility and resilience as coexisting forces.

James Prapaithong (b. 1996) is noted for his contemplative and atmospheric paintings, which employ soft, diffused forms and layered textures inspired by water, stars, and the sky. Often derived from personal photographs, his canvases evoke the soft glow of intimate moments, inviting quiet reflection on memory, loss, and the elusive nature of place.

Prae Pupityastaporn's (b. 1981) paintings contemplate the body, language, and material as intertwined forces and frequently depict elements of landscape that convey the subjectivity of memory. Rooted in feminist discourse and both Thai and German cultural references—Pupityastaporn studied art in Dusseldorf—her practice critically addresses systems of power and representation through tactile, embodied storytelling.

Wong Ping (b. 1984) creates vivid, provocative animations that blend absurdist humor with incisive social critique. Combining surreal narratives with aesthetics borrowed from pop culture, his practice explores themes of repression, morality, and political friction, unveiling hidden desires and tensions beneath the surface of contemporary life in Hong Kong.

Xie Nanxing (b. 1970) makes conceptually driven paintings that challenge the boundaries of image-making through visual interference and erasure. His approach, a confluence of Chinese and Western figurative traditions, resists fixed interpretation, instead opening up unstable fields of perception where memory, image, and abstraction intersect.

For all press inquiries, contact:

Victoria Kung
vkung@davidzwirner.com