



For Immediate Release

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RECLUSE: ZHANG XIAODONG SOLO EXHIBITION

Opening Reception: Thursday, 12 February 2026

12 February – 28 March 2026

64 Grosvenor Street Mayfair London W1K 4PZ



Zhang Xiaodong, *Dunhuang Music and Dance*, 2022 © Zhang Xiaodong, courtesy of Upsilon Gallery and the artist

Upsilon Gallery London is pleased to present *Recluse* · 隱士, a solo exhibition by Zhang Xiaodong (b. 1981), a contemporary Chinese artist recognised for reviving the ancient Tang Dynasty Dragon Scale Binding technique. Following the successful introduction of his work to London audiences through a previous duo presentation, this exhibition marks a significant development in Zhang's practice. Bringing together a focused body of works—including pieces from his ongoing Dunhuang-inspired series—*Recluse* considers seclusion not as a withdrawal from the world, but as a conscious return to inner discipline shaped by time, humility, and reflection.



In Zhang's work, retreat becomes a way of seeing more clearly, of standing apart in order to understand the world more deeply. Drawings from the spiritual and cultural legacy of Dunhuang, where caves functioned as sites of devotion, preservation, and quiet labour across centuries, Zhang approaches seclusion as a lived condition rather than a symbolic gesture. The cave, both physical and metaphoric, emerges as a space where time slows, surfaces accumulate memory, and the self is refined through sustained attention.

Across the works presented in *Recluse*, material restraint and compositional stillness mirror this inward movement. Forms appear pared down, measured, and deliberate, resisting immediacy in favour of duration. Silence here is not an absence, but a presence, an active state in which humility, compassion, and composure are gradually cultivated.

In an age defined by acceleration and constant visibility, *Recluse* proposes seclusion as a necessary counterpractice. The exhibition invites viewers to step away from noise and spectacle, to encounter another rhythm of time, and to consider retreat not as escape, but as a quiet form of resistance and continuity.

Zhang Xiaodong is a contemporary Chinese artist and recognised cultural heritage inheritor, internationally known for his mastery of Dragon Scale Binding, a rare and intricate book art form that dates back to the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE). Since revitalising the technique in 2010 through his *Diamond Sutra* project, Zhang has developed a distinctive practice that bridges traditional craftsmanship with contemporary conceptual approaches. His works transform books into sculptural objects of spatial and temporal resonance. Pages hand-bound with custom-dyed Xuan paper are rolled, rested, and fixed to form painterly surfaces that pulse with rhythm and architectural presence.

A 2025 Finalist for the LOEWE Foundation Craft Prize, Zhang was also a featured artist at the China Pavilion during London Craft Week 2025. His works are held in prominent private collections across Asia and Europe, and he has collaborated with global luxury houses including Givenchy and La Mer. Upsilon London presented Zhang Xiaodong's debut to the London market with *Fold Voices*, a duo presentation that marked his first exhibition in the UK.

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