

ZHAN ZHANG 11059 CUTS

AUGUST 26, 2026 - FEBRUARY 6, 2027

Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery

Zhan Zhang is a Toronto- and Shanghai-based visual artist whose soft sculptures, paper installations, and video works evoke a fragile, dreamlike atmosphere suspended between memory and materiality. Influenced by the ancient tradition of Chinese paper cutting (*jianzhi*) as well as contemporary and surrealist aesthetics, Zhang has developed a method she describes as “drawing” with scissors, which reduces paper cutting to its most elemental gesture: the cut itself.

Traditionally associated with women’s domestic labour and folk culture, Chinese paper cutting was often excluded from dominant art historical narratives that privileged painting and calligraphy. By translating these inherited techniques into contemporary installation and sculptural practices, Zhang challenges longstanding hierarchies between craft and fine art while reaffirming paper cutting’s cultural significance within contemporary art.

Zhang’s works resist the sensory overload of modern life by foregrounding slowness and the act of making. The repetitive process of freehand paper cutting becomes a record of time, memory, and the artist’s connection to her materials—each cut marking a second of the artist’s life. Rooted in childhood memories of making paper window decorations in Northeastern China, Zhang’s practice combines personal memory, cultural history, and contemporary artistic experimentation to demonstrate how paper continues to inspire new forms of artistic expression.

Zhang holds a double Honours Bachelor of Arts from the University of Toronto with majors in Visual Arts and Arts Management, and a 3D Animation Post Graduate Degree from Seneca College (Toronto). Her work has been exhibited across Ontario, including at the L.L. Contemporary Gallery (Richmond Hill), Tom Thomson Art Gallery (Owen Sound), Latcham Art Centre (Whitchurch-Stouffville), Cedar Ridge Gallery (Scarborough), and Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (East York) as well as at Artspace Peterborough and Art Toronto.



Artist Talk

with Zhan Zhang

Saturday, October 3, 11:30 a.m.

Full details at jnaag.ca

Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery
147 Lochiel Street, Sarnia
www.jnaag.ca



Front Image: Zhan Zhang, *11059 Cuts* (detail), 2026; handcut Kraft paper, pins, projection.