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Nianxin Li  
Neon Haze

September 5 – November 1, 2025  
Opening Reception: Friday, September 5, 6 – 8pm

Uffner & Liu is pleased to present *Neon Haze*, Nianxin Li's first solo exhibition at the gallery. In this new body of work, transparency becomes both subject and material—a slippery conduit through which questions of privacy, estrangement, and perception are explored.

At first glance, Li's paintings are dazzling: deep purples and radiant disco hues glow with a kind of synthetic vitality. Yet the more time the viewer spends with them, the more elusive they become. Translucent shell-like membranes twist and mirror themselves, suspended against a receding, infinite field of shadow. Biomorphic surfaces bulge, spiral, and stretch taut, reflecting light that scatters like an echo. Li's compositions are somehow simultaneously soft and impenetrable, inviting yet withholding. They shimmer with presence but resist interpretation.

Accordingly, the exhibition title, *Neon Haze*, evokes both radiance and obscurity—an atmosphere where clarity is suffused with distortion. In the artist's own words: *"In contemporary life, privacy exists in a state of hyper-visibility. We inhabit a transparent space with almost no refuge—one can be seen, yet not truly known. This transparency resembles glass or plastic: it admits light and gaze, yet seals away scent, touch, and breath. Intimacy becomes visually exposed while remaining impermeable to genuine exchange."*

Within this framework, transparency functions not as clarity, but as alienation. In Li's world, light streams across her forms without truly penetrating them, making the shell-like vessels look evacuated of internal life. Intimacy, when it appears, is cool and abstract—more data than desire.

In nearly every painting, a dark central vanishing point emerges—a soft void or aperture that anchors the composition. These shadowy cores suggest more than just spatial recession; they feel like portals, openings into interior worlds. At times, they resemble bodily cavities. This recurring motif deepens the sense of tension in the work: the viewer is pulled toward these centers, yet never quite allowed to cross their threshold.

Throughout the show, Li plays with scale and mood. Beneath their cool detachment, the paintings in *Neon Haze* pulse with unexpected levity. Glowing gradients in the top quadrants of three large paintings evoke the flicker of disco lights, while the background in *Unfurnished Place* glimmers like an LED dance floor. Many of the forms appear suspended mid-spin, like shells caught in a strobe-lit sway—weightless, luminous, and full of latent energy.

Uffner & Liu  
170 Suffolk Street  
New York, NY 10002

+1 212 274 0064  
info@uffnerliu.com  
uffnerliu.com



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The smaller pastels on panel offer a different energy – denser and more intimate. Twisted knots and folded ribbons of color intertwine across velvety surfaces. These forms suggest something interior, perhaps anatomical.

The central theme that emerges across *Neon Haze* is a sustained inquiry into what it means to be perceived without being known. The digital age has flooded our lives with exposure and endlessly circulated imagery. Li's work captures the emotional residue of this condition: the beauty and alienation of a world saturated in light, where attention is abundant but understanding remains scarce.

**Nianxin Li** (b.1999, China) earned her MFA at the School of Visual Arts, New York, NY in 2023 and her BFA at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy in 2021. Li has had recent solo exhibitions at Harper's, New York, NY (2025); and the K11 Museum, Shanghai, China (2023). Li's work has been included in group shows at The Hole, Los Angeles, CA (2025); Harper's, New York, NY (2024); Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York, NY (2024); Latitude Gallery, New York, NY (2024); La Beast Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2024); Berry Campbell Gallery, New York, NY (2024); and Tang Contemporary Art, Hong Kong, China (2024). Li currently lives and works between Brooklyn, NY and Jersey City, NJ.

Image: Nianxin Li, *Silence, Split Open*, 2025, acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30 in (101.6 x 76.2 cm)

Please call +1 (212) 274-0064 or email Lucy Liu, Partner, [lucy@uffnerliu.com](mailto:lucy@uffnerliu.com) for more information.

Uffner & Liu  
170 Suffolk Street  
New York, NY 10002

+1 212 274 0064  
[info@uffnerliu.com](mailto:info@uffnerliu.com)  
[uffnerliu.com](http://uffnerliu.com)