

Diaspora Climate

“Diaspora Climate” is a yearlong Curator-in-Residence project led by Yan Zhou, at the Department of Visual Arts, Western University, focusing on Social and Environmental Justice. 2025-2026.

Drawing from the concept of “Climate” from Japanese philosopher Tetsuro Watsuji, who interprets climate phenomena as the ways that humans relate to a particular land and culture, "Diaspora Climate" investigates the experiences of displacement, transplantation, and adaptation of both natural and social climates in Canadian diaspora communities. The project aims to expose the sensibility and resilience of diaspora individuals as they navigate the processes of being de-rooted and re-rooted, resisting or accepting integration. The project explores the ecology of the diverse cultures and histories of diaspora communities, foregrounding their role as caretakers and warriors, upholding justice and solidarity with both local and home countries in their shared struggles against environmental, social, and political injustice wherever they live and prosper.


Curator-in-Residence webpage: <https://www.uwo.ca/visarts/ourresearch/CiR.html>



Logo design by Lilin

Diaspora Climate Exhibition

DIASPORA CLIMATE
CURATED BY YAN ZHOU



SARA ANGELUCCI. NEITHER HERE NOR THERE. PHOTOGRAPHY ON MURAL PAPER. 2025.


MA YONGFENG **TERESA CHAN**
REHAB NAZZAL **SARA ANGELUCCI**

FEBRUARY 12 – MARCH 5, 2026
RECEPTION: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12 FROM 5-7 PM
ARTLAB GALLERY, WESTERN UNIVERSITY

PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

INK MARBLING WORKSHOP TERESA CHAN FEBRUARY 12, 11 AM – 2:15 PM VA 206 / JLVAC	MUMURATION - LIVE SOUND PERFORMANCE TERESA CHAN & JAN LAI FEBRUARY 12, 5:45 PM – 6:15 PM ARTLAB GALLERY
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SCREENING: *VIBRATIONS FROM GAZA*
DISCUSSION: REHAB NAZZAL, KIRSTY ROBERTSON,
SHERI NAULT, MA YONGFENG, AND YAN ZHOU.
FEBRUARY 23 FROM 1:15 PM – 3 PM
VAC 249 / JLVAC & ZOOM

Poster design by Stefania Andreea Dragalin

2025–26 Curator-in-Residence in Social and Environmental Justice with the Arts.
artLAB Gallery. Department of Visual Arts. Western University. London, Ontario.
February 12 to March 5, 2026

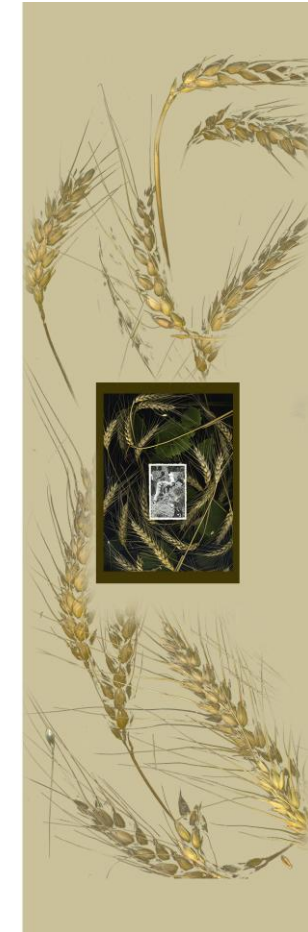
The exhibition features work by four artists: Sara Angelucci (Toronto), Teresa Chan (Toronto), Ma Yongfeng (Berlin), and Rehab Nazzal (occupied West Bank, Palestine). Their works respond to relationships with particular places, cultures, histories, climates, and environments, while also addressing ongoing afflictions of social and environmental violence, driven by brutal global capitalism, colonialism, and arbitrary state apparatuses. These forces bring wars, relentless exploitation, and the dispossession of living space and life for both nature and people, intensifying the Climate Crisis. The voices and gestures that artists share through their works are ripples of Global Diaspora Solidarity.

Exhibition webpage: https://uwo.ca/visarts/artlab/exhibition_archive/20252026.html#diaspora

List of Exhibited Works

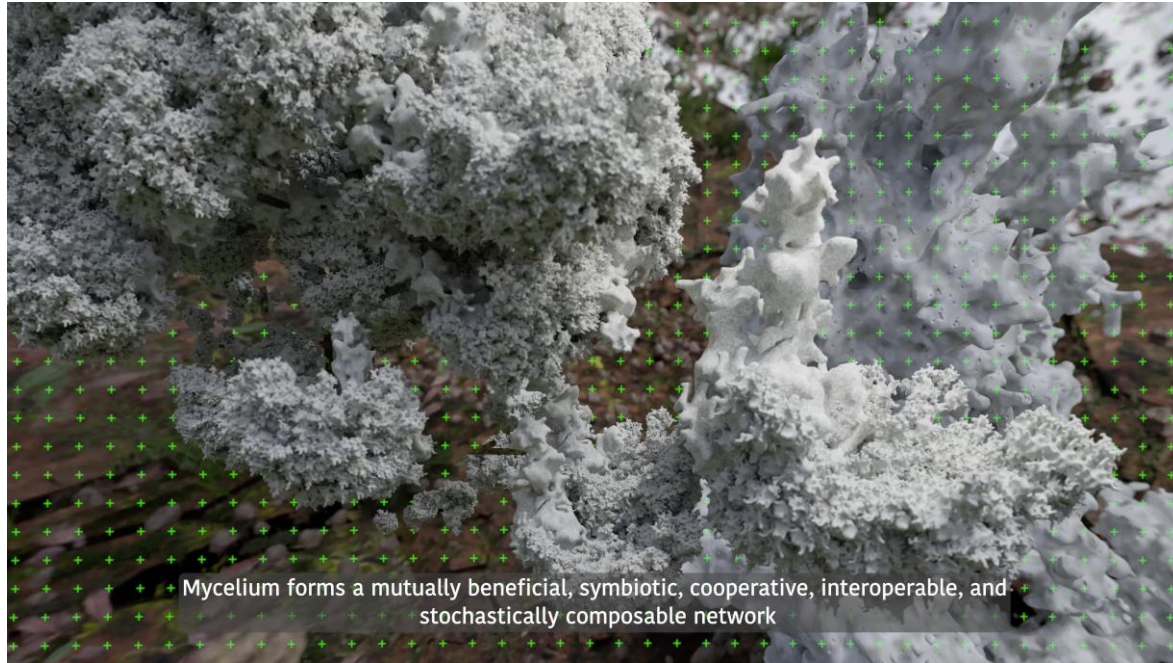
1. Sara Angelucci. *Neither Here nor There*. Photography on mural paper. 2025.
2. Sara Angelucci. *Family Harvest*. Photography on mural paper. 2025.
3. Teresa Chan. *A Murmuration of Diaspora (呢喃: 驪歌)*. 2025-2026.
4. Ma Yongfeng. *Poetics of Mycelium*. Essay film, 4K, 16:9, 42:05 mins. 2025.
5. Rehab Nazal. *Healing Moments*. Video, 8:21 minutes. 2023.
6. Rehab Nazal. *Canada Park*. Documentary film, 13:40 minutes. 2015.
7. Rehab Nazal. *Looking Back, Looking Ahead (Driving from Ramallah to Bethlehem and Driving from Jenin to Ramallah)*. Double screen video, 40:15 minutes. 2023.
8. Rehab Nazal. *Driving from Jerusalem to Ramallah*. Video, 4:28 minutes. 2019.
9. Rehab Nazal. *Driving from Ramalla to Salfeet*. Video, 6:08 minutes. 2022.
10. Rehab Nazal. *Destruction Caused by the Israeli Occupation Forces Bulldozers in the Eastern Neighbourhood of Jenin, August 2024*. Photograph.

Sara Angelucci's Work



Left. *Neither Here nor There and Family Harvest*. Neither Here nor There. Photography on mural paper. 2025.
Right. *Family Harvest*. Photography on mural paper, and a framed photograph. 2025.

Ma Yongfeng's essay film *Poetics of Mycelium*



Poetics of Mycelium. Essay film, 4K, 16:9, 42:05 mins. Still images. 2025.

Rehab Nazzal. *Looking Back, Looking Ahead.*



Rehab Nazzal. *Looking Back, Looking Ahead* (Driving from Ramallah to Bethlehem and Driving from Jenin to Ramallah), double screen video, 40:15 minutes, 2023.

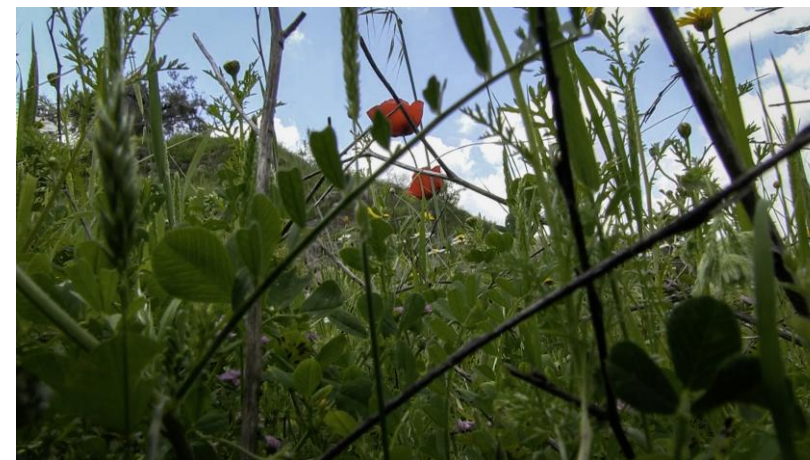
Rehab Nazzal's documentary film *Canada Park*. 2015.



Rehab Nazzal. *Healing Moments*.

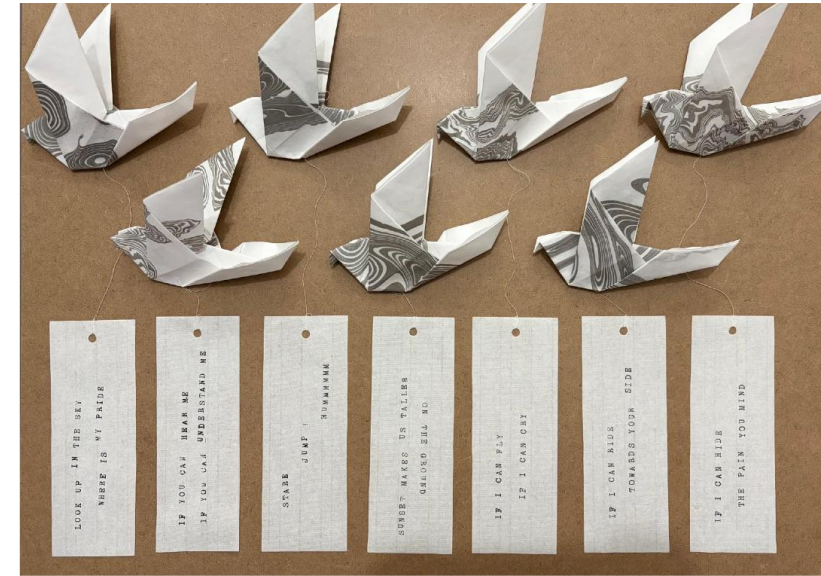


Rehab Nazzal. *Healing Moments*, 8:21 minutes, 2023.





Teresa Chan. Installation components.



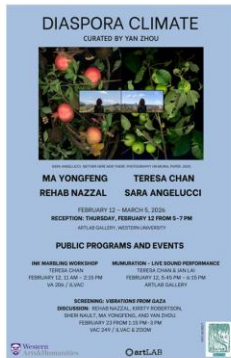
Teresa Chan. Installation: *Birdcage; Make-A-Wish interactive installation; Origami Birds*. 2026.

Diaspora Climate
exhibition installation view
Photos by Dickson Bou



Curator-in-Residence talks

- *Terra incognita to Heterotopias: Plant Transmission and Cultural Exchange Between China and Europe (16th–Early 19th Century)*. In. Exophony Symposium, organized by Soheila Esfahani and Behnaz Fatemi Jahmani. Department of Visual Arts. Western University. April 23, 2026.
- *Exophony and Diaspora Solidarity*. In. In-between Cultures: Cultural Translation in Contemporary Diasporic Art (Course instructor: Professor Soheila Kolahdouz Esfahani). Department of Visual Arts. Western University. February 25, 2026.
- *Behind the Scenes: Diaspora Climate Exhibition*. Art Now! Speakers' Series, by Yan Zhou. Department of Visual Arts, Western University. February 12, 2026. <https://www.uwo.ca/visarts/speakers.html>;
https://www.academia.edu/164673642/Yan_Zhou_Behind_the_Scenes_Diaspora_Climate_Exhibition
- *Community, society, ecological being, and public space—Community gardens tour in Toronto and elsewhere*. In. VA9500, Master's Research Methods and Practices (Course instructor: Professor Alena Robin). Department of Visual Arts. Western University. November 20, 2025.
- *Early Chinese AI-Image Making Emerged During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Digital Tools, Digital Literacies (Course instructor: Professor Ruth Skinner). The School for Advanced Studies in the Arts & Humanities (SASAH), Western University. November 17, 2025.
- *Curating is making connections and...--My curatorial experience*. In Graduate Studio Seminar. (Course instructor: Professor Christof Migone). Department of Visual Arts, Western University. September 18, 2025.



Behind the Scenes: Diaspora Climate Exhibition

Art Now! Speakers' Series

Yan Zhou

February 12, 2025
Western University, WIRB 1170

<https://www.uwo.ca/visarts/speakers.html>

Talk script link:
https://www.academia.edu/164673642/Yan_Zhou_Behind_the_Scenes_Diaspora_Climate_Exhibition

Community, society, ecological being, and public space —Community gardens tour in Toronto and elsewhere

Guest Speaker: Dr. Yan Zhou
yzho588@uwo.ca
VA9500, Master's Research Methods and Practices
Course instructor: Professor **Alena Robin**
November 20, 2025
Room VAC 247
Department of Visual Arts, Western University.

Photo by Tish Carnat, Jangdup Sangmo and Yan Zhou. Visit to Milky Way Garden, Toronto, July 28, 2023.



Ladybird Theatre, *Riding a Roller Coaster, Flying into the Future*, 2013. Video still.

Curating is making connections and...

My curatorial experience

Presented by Yan Zhou, curator-in-residence
In: 9540/9543 Graduate Studio Seminar, Visual Arts,
Western University.

Professor: Christof Migonne

September 18, 2025

yzho588@uwo.ca
<https://www.cacnart.com/>
<https://utoronto.academia.edu/yanzhou>



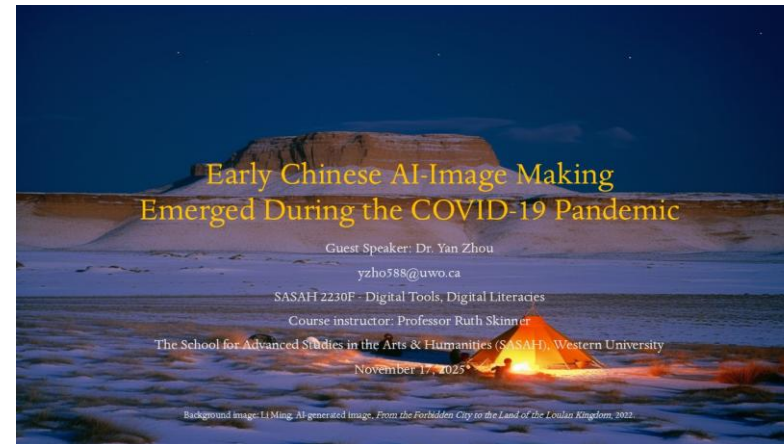
Exophony and Diaspora Solidarity

Guest Speaker: Yan Zhou, curator-in-residence

In-between Cultures: *Global Translation in Contemporary Diaspora Art*
Professor Soheila Kholodji (Eshani)

www.uwo.ca/visarts
Department of Visual Arts, Western University

February 25, 2025



Early Chinese AI-Image Making Emerged During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Guest Speaker: Dr. Yan Zhou
yzho588@uwo.ca

SASAH 2230F - Digital Tools, Digital Literacies

Course instructor: Professor Ruth Skinner

The School for Advanced Studies in the Arts & Humanities (SASAH), Western University

November 17, 2025

Background image: Li Ming AI-generated image, *From the Forbidden City to the Land of the Loulan Kingdom*, 2022.



Terra incognita to Heterotopias

Plant Transmission and Cultural Exchange Between China and Europe
(16th–Early 19th Century)

Exophony Symposium

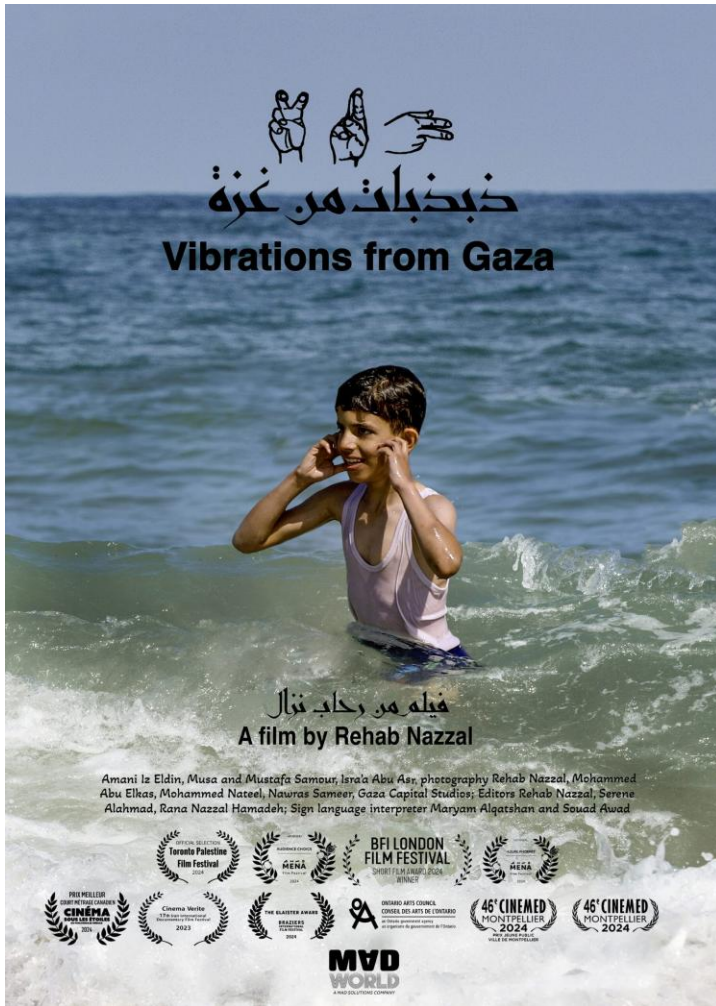
organized by Soheila Eshani and Behnaz Fatemi Jahmani

Presented by Yan Zhou

April 23, 2026

The Department of Visual Arts, Western University

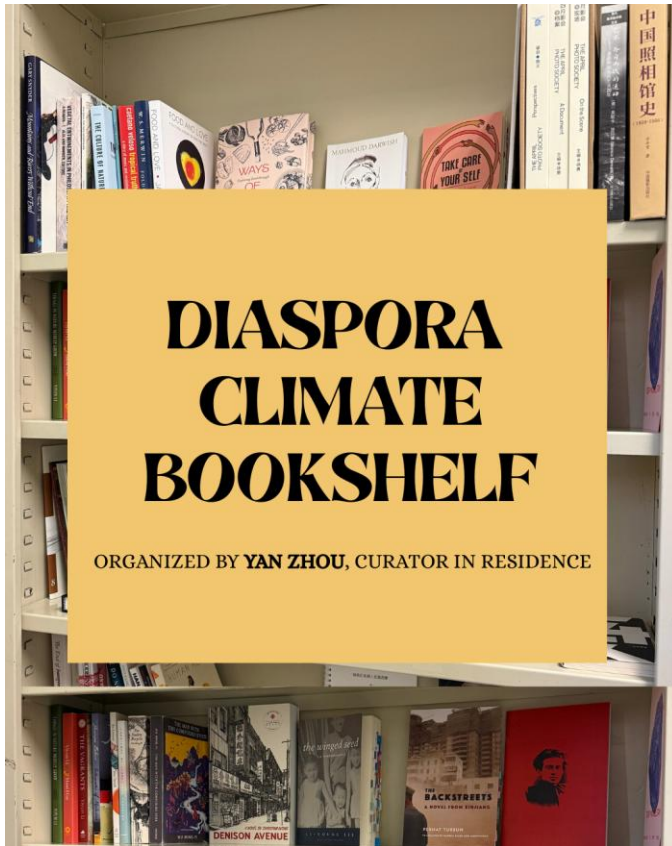
A "Lilinaea amabilis" flowering tree in Toronto, photographed by Yan Zhou.
Lilinaea amabilis, also called *Kolkwitzia*, and *Kolkwitzia amabilis*, commonly known as beauty bush; is originated in China, called 栒实, or 栒实. It had the name because its fruit resembles a hedgehog.



Curator-in-Residence programs and events

- **Diaspora Climate Bookshelf**
- **Screening and Discussion: Rehab Nazal's documentary film *Vibrations from Gaza*.** Participants: Rehab Nazal, Kirsty Robertson, Sheri Nault, Ma Yongfeng, and Yan Zhou. Department of Visual Arts. Western University. February 23, 2026.
- **Climate Diaspora: Refugees and Refuges.** Co-organized with Aaron Ambroso. Department of Visual Arts. Western University. December 4, 2025.
- **Mid-Autumn (Moon) Festival.** Organized with Yan Zhou. Department of Visual Arts, Western University. September 17, 2025.

Diaspora Climate Bookshelf



Poster design by Stefania Andreea Dragalin

Diaspora Climate Bookshelf is a community engagement program of the **Diaspora Climate** project.

Diaspora Climate Bookshelf engages communities on campus and connects them with broader art communities in Canada and the international art and culture world.

Diaspora Climate Bookshelf presents over a hundred books, artworks, and artist books collected by the Curator-in-Residence, or donated by curators, artists, and art activists, such as Kathleen Hearn, Alexandre David, Xu Yong, Jin Hua, Wang Yifan, and Lin Yutong. These include content from diverse cultures and diaspora communities that are less accessible or not widely known in Canada.

Location: Room V241c-2. Department of Visual Arts. John Labatt Visual Arts Centre. Western University.

Open: by reservation. Please send an email to artlab@uwo.ca to access the bookshelf.

The Diaspora Climate Bookshelf catalogue weblink:

<https://www.uwo.ca/visarts/ourresearch/Diaspora-Climate-Bookshelf.pdf>

Climate Diaspora: Refugees and Refuges

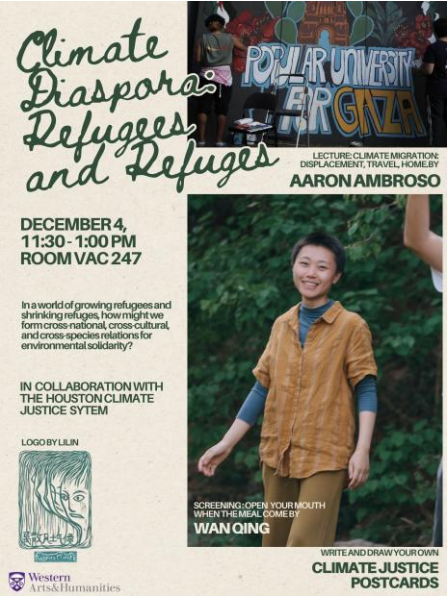
A public programs of Diaspora Climate project

Co-organized with Aaron Ambroso

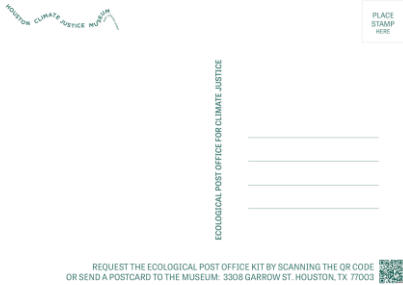
December 4, 2025

In a world of growing refugees and shrinking refuges, how might we form cross-national, cross-cultural, and cross-species relations for environmental solidarity? *Climate Diaspora: Refugees and Refuges* shared the Chinese artist Wan Qing’s film, *Open Your Mouth When The Meal Come*. Film. 2022. In addition, Pd.D. student Aaron Ambroso introduced the exhibition *Climate Migration: Displacement, Travel, Home* (2023-4), presented by the Houston Climate Justice Museum. In collaboration with the Houston Climate Justice Museum, the program designed Diaspora Climate Postcard: Ecological Post Office for Climate Justice, and invited people to respond to the cause by creating their own intervention on the postcard.

<https://www.uwo.ca/visarts/ourresearch/CiR.html>



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Mid-Autumn (Moon) Festival

A public program of the **Diaspora Climate** project, organized with Yan Zhou. September 17, 2025.

- Mooncake sharing and moon cake dice game (The Moon Festival Bóbing Game).
- Andy Patton, a painter and a poet, who is an alumnus of Visual Arts at Western, read the poem “Spring River in the Flower Moon Night” by Tang Dynasty poet Zhang Ruoxu.
- Film screening and online interaction: *Qingbuliang & Tabbouleh*. In the film *Qingbuliang & Tabbouleh*, made by Cyan and Yang Guangmiao, displaced Syrian children and their families in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon and migrant workers’ children in Haikou City, Hainan Island, China, met online and shared their favorite food: the Hainan Island fruit bowl “Qingbuliang” and the Middle Eastern salad “tabbouleh,” during the 4th Children’s Art Festival of Kindergarten Without Walls in Haikou, China, in August 2025. During the screening, we also shared the food “Qingbuliang” and “Tabbouleh,” and hold discussion with the filmmaker Yang Guangmiao.



Poster design by Stefania Andreea Dragalin

Mid-Autumn (Moon) Festival event online album:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/westernuvisarts/albums/72177720330121418>

Media Coverage

- Fazio, Cynthia. 2026. “Meet Western’s Inaugural Curator-in-Residence, Yan Zhou.” *Western News*, February 9, 2026. <https://news.westernu.ca/2026/02/meet-westerns-inaugural-curator-in-residence-yan-zhou/>.
- Wade, Gabrielle. 2026. “Western’s First Curator-in-Residence Brings Activism into the Gallery.” *Western Gazette*, March 4, 2026. https://westerngazette.ca/news/western-s-first-curator-in-residence-brings-activism-into-the-gallery/article_15a8a8aa-6500-4bc5-859a-85237aa8191a.html
- Smith, Ellie. Forthcoming. “Ellie Smith in Interview with Curator-in-Residence Yan Zhou.” *SATELLiTE: In Orbit*.