

Mandarin Express

Nothing to do here but Wait

Amiko Li

September 12 – October 26, 2025
Wednesday – Sunday, noon – 6PM
Opening: September 12, 6 – 8PM

147 West 35th St, #211
New York, NY 10001



Still from *Nothing to do here but wait*, 2025, Single Channel Video.

Mandarin Express is pleased to announce the launch of its exhibition program with a solo presentation by **Amiko Li**, *Nothing to do here but Wait*, on view from September 12th, 2025. As the organization's inaugural exhibition, this presentation marks Li's first New York project conceived for a temporary, alternative-space setting, debuting a new moving-image work alongside sculptural and installation pieces. The choice signals Mandarin Express's commitment to championing Sinophone artists in experimental exhibition formats that break from the limits of the white cube and cultivate new relations between art and audiences.

Nothing to do here but Wait posits the elevator as an ostensibly nondescript space of everyday waiting—recasting it as a metaphor for temporary dwelling that sharpens one's sense of existence and orientation. The motif of "waiting" speaks to our recent experiences of uncertainty: when faced with an unknown future, we long for change, closeness, and clarity, yet often find ourselves held in suspension—like elevator-riders caught in between movements, inhabiting an interval charged with hope and cruel optimism.

Li describes the work as a "minor imagination" of the elevator, echoing Gilles Deleuze's idea of a "minor literature" that releases new potentials out of a given normal. Here, the elevator is loosened from a fixed route and linear logic, treated instead as a conceptual and affective space.

The curation is intentionally slow-paced: at a time when attention is treated as capital, the exhibition rewards those willing to spend time with it, challenging the expectation that art must operate as spectacle. The audience, while standing on the conveyor belt, is compelled to move only so they can remain still. In this tension between voluntarily staying still and being mechanically carried forward, waiting emerges not as a neutral pause but as an enforced condition.

Threaded with fragments of Li's elevator memories from growing up in Shanghai and other cities, this exhibition also probes how the elevator mediates between public and private experience. Language—voiced in more than one tongue—unfolds with deliberate fractures of syntax and grammar, allowing the spatial-temporal conditions of speech to choreograph the body's presence in time and space. Rather than hastening to name what is felt, the work attends to the weight and intensity of thought and emotion in this transitional conduit. As the doors open and close, mundane footage collapses into a fictional register, recasting the elevator not as a minor, linear passage of modern architecture but as a metaphor of temporary dwelling that sharpens awareness of one's own presence and orientation.

Nothing to do here but Wait is on view at 147 West 35th St, #211 through October 26th, 2025.

About the Artist:

Amiko Li (b. 1993, Shanghai) is an interdisciplinary artist who translates everyday stories and encounters into film, installation, and performance, to explore and contextualize the underlying complexities and themes, such as intimacy, waiting, and value. Li's recent exhibitions and performances include Center for Art, Research, and Alliance, New York; The Shed, New York; Asia Art Archive in America, New York; Ulster Museum, Ireland; Haus der Elektronischen Künste, Switzerland; UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, China; and Power Station of Art, China. Li's work has been supported through fellowships and residencies at Delfina Foundation, London; Triangle Arts Association, New York; and Kunstlerhaus Dortmund, Germany; and By Art Matters, Hangzhou.

About Mandarin Express:

Mandarin Express is a New York City-based non-profit art initiative dedicated to cultivating an alternative space for artists, curators, and researchers across disciplines and stages of practice. Centered on the exploration and articulation of Sinophone culture in global contexts, we spark cross-cultural conversation and artistic experimentation through exhibitions, publications, and research-driven programs.

Our mission is to foster an inclusive and responsive environment where cultural practitioners engage critically with historical, social, and aesthetic concerns. Positioned outside conventional art frameworks, we work to expand the visibility of Sinophone perspectives within contemporary art discourse. Through interdisciplinary programming, we seek to generate meaningful exchanges between artists and audiences, challenge dominant narratives through Sinophone lenses, and amplify the voices shaping our cultural landscape.

