



MengDu: *In the woods, might be late*

December 6, 2025–February 22, 2026
Fou Gallery, New York

Address: 89 Fifth Avenue, Suite 701, New York

Opening: December 13, 2025, 4–8 pm

Curator: Sharon Xiaorong Liu

In the exhibition ***In the woods, might be late***, artist Meng Du reflects on how the life of her garden has quietly reshaped her perception. Presented at Fou Gallery in New York and curated by Sharon Xiaorong Liu (**December 6, 2025–February 22, 2026**), the exhibition borrows its title from Peter Handke's documentary to propose a slower and more humble mode of coexistence with botanical life. Through the light, transparency, and fragility of glass, Du gives form to her way of seeing plants, an imperfect imagination that can never fully grasp their alterity, yet one she refuses to abandon. She tends without denying control, imagines without claiming understanding, working slowly through trimming, tending, casting, and shaping.

The story starts with, according to Meng Du's naming traditions, "The Beard" (pulsatilla), "Little Barberry" (Japanese barberry that ambushes humans with their thorns), and "Lazy Big Brother" (a rose bush that never blooms) in her garden. Naming is her first step toward building a relationship with botanical life, not taxonomy but a recognition of mutual influence. In ***We Are the Coming Forest*** (2025), inspired by cockleburs and maple seeds, Du crafts minuscule glass sculptures that mimic the parasitical act of clinging to others, while in her mosaics series, shattered glass resembling rose thorns, which almost scratch the artist's hands, is fixed in mosaic grout to reflect her encounter with botanical defense. Both works unfold around the artist's careful negotiation with plants. Du's glass thorns, transparent and brittle, seem to mock their own metaphorical weight—neither defensive nor threatening, merely breakable. The exhibition also poses questions: Are thorns truly plants' "weapons," or is this just us humans projecting? Has this kind of humanistic attribution become overly romanticized, even facile? Have stories about "the weapons of the weak" become a contemporary art cliché, appearing so frequently that they have lost their critical edge?

This project honors plants' survival wisdom and a gardener's labor without resolving the tension between care and control. Humans' romanticization of plant "resistance" may obscure the actual control we exert over them—the pruning, the cultivating, the deciding what lives and what gets cut away. In ***All That is Cut Away Becomes Constellations*** (2025), Du recasts recycled glass bottles into sculptures of plants' "deadheading" tools, mirroring the logic of pruning, an act of subtraction that paradoxically nurtures a more vigorous life form. The project also favors slower, quotidian, even seemingly "futile" modes of being-with, operating across different scales of time. In ***To Leave, To Arrive*** (2025), the dove tree becomes a witness connecting deep pasts to uncertain futures. In ***A Call From...*** (2025), a cast-glass telephone carved like a cedar cone, alongside spiral mesh tubes containing seed-like wooden beads, forms a threshold linking human time with plant time, suggesting that our

anxieties and disruptions are brief interruptions in a longer conversation between life forms and their environments.

Du's practice depends entirely on humanistic imagination. Her glass sculptures hold this contradiction without resolving it: they aspire towards the multiple temporalities that plants inhabit while acknowledging our imperfect imaginative capacity. In the woods, we might be late to understand, to act, but perhaps not too late to stay, to tend, and to keep trying to listen.

*The press release is based on the curatorial essay by Sharon Xiaorong Liu, edited by Iris Zhang.

Artist: Meng Du (b. 1986, Beijing, China) graduated from the Graphic Design program of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing (B.F.A.) in 2008 and the Department of Glass and Glass Sculpture Program of Rochester Institute of Technology (M.F.A.) in 2013. Currently, she is living and working in Beijing. Her work has continued to exhibit in China, Europe, and in the U.S.A., including Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2025); Shanghai Museum of Glass, Shanghai (2023); Genesis Foundation, Beijing (2022); Today Art Museum, Beijing (2021); The Delaware Contemporary, U.S.A. (2020); Fou Gallery, New York (2025/2022/2019/2016); Shanghai Museum of Glass, Shanghai (2018) and *The International Exhibition of Glass Kanazawa* at Shiinoki Cultural Complex, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan (2016). Meng's solo show at Fou Gallery (2016) signifies the debut of her artistic career, marking her inaugural solo exhibition. She served as a residency artist at Seto International Ceramic & Glass Art Exchange Program, Seto, Japan (2021) and Aichi University of Education Glass Program, Aichi, Japan (2017). Her work has been widely featured in *China Daily*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue*, *Yitiao*, *Art China*, *CAFA Art Info*, and other media platforms. She was invited to give lectures at TEDTalk (2024), YiXi (2020) and ROG International Art Project Online Symposium (2020). In 2016, she won the Honorable Mention for The International Exhibition of Glass Kanazawa (Kanazawa, Japan). In 2018, she won the 2018 Saxe Emerging Artist Award at 48th Glass Art Society Conference (Venice, Italy). She is the youngest artist who presented a solo exhibition at the Shanghai Museum of Glass. Her work is in the permanent collection of Burberry (Shanghai), Corning Glass Works (Shanghai), Shanghai Museum of Glass, Zhuzhong Collection (Beijing) and Victoria and Albert Museum (London).

Curator: Sharon Xiaorong Liu (she/her) is a curator, writer, and researcher based in New York. Her interest in translating and balancing the tension between opacity and account in exhibitions led her to establish Project Lingxi, a network of artists, curators, and scholars exploring the intersection of art and translation, and to launch the project's inaugural exhibition *Translation in the Expanded Field* (2025) in Tokyo, Japan. She has also curated exhibitions at Amherst College Mead Art Museum (2025), Amherst College Library (2024-25), and Yurakucho Art Urbanism (2023). She earned a bachelor's degree in Art History and Mathematics from Wellesley College as well as a master's degree in East Asian Studies from Yale University.

FOU GALLERY Established in 2013, believes in the power of art to heal, transform, and foster deeper connections with oneself and the world. We create spaces where art serves as a tool for emotional and spiritual healing, offering moments of tranquility, reflection, and renewal. Our gallery goes beyond exhibitions, providing an immersive experience where art becomes a practice of mindfulness. Additionally, we are committed to amplifying the voices of Asian diaspora artists and providing a supportive community. Through curated exhibitions, healing sessions, and community gatherings, Fou nurtures a shared journey toward balance, inner peace, and a harmonious relationship with the earth, while celebrating the diverse cultural narratives that enrich our collective experience.

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	Meng Du, <i>We Are the Coming Forest No. 01</i>, 2025. Fabric, Glass, Metal Parts, Found Object, 145.7 × 28.3 × 1 inches. Photograph by Puffer Hu ©Meng Du, courtesy of Fou Gallery
	Meng Du, <i>Thorns of Light No. 01</i>, 2025. Glass, Mirror, Wood, Cement-Based Grout, Cement Pigment, Acrylic Paint, 20.9 × 15.9 × 2 inches. Photograph by Puffer Hu ©Meng Du, courtesy of Fou Gallery
	Meng Du, <i>All That Is Cut Away Becomes Constellations-No. 07</i>, 2025. Kiln-Worked Recycled-Bottle Glass, Tea, Copper Thread, Wood, 12.8 × 4.7 × 0.6 inches; 14.2 × 7.5 × 6.3 inches (with copper wire). Photograph by Puffer Hu ©Meng Du, courtesy of Fou Gallery
	Meng Du, <i>A Call From... No. 01</i>, 2025. Kiln-worked Glass, Silver Leaf, Stainless Steel Mesh, Wood, Mixed-media, Tea, 12.6 × 13.4 × 4.5 inches. Photograph by Puffer Hu ©Meng Du, courtesy of Fou Gallery
	Meng Du, <i>Forked Pathway (Clockwise)</i>, 2025. Kiln-worked Glass, 10.6 × 7.1 × 4.9 inches. Photograph by Puffer Hu ©Meng Du, courtesy of Fou Gallery
	Portrait of Meng Du. Photography by LIANG MU