

Huidi Xiang: the maxim of the tomato

04.25.25 – 06.28.25

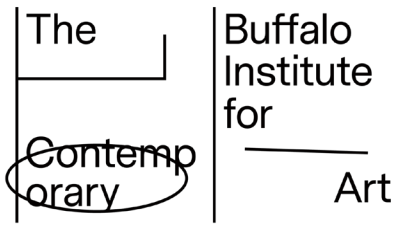


Opening Reception: Friday, April 25th, 7-10PM

Artist-led walkthrough: Saturday, April 26, Noon

In *the maxim of the tomato*, Brooklyn-based artist Huidi Xiang has created a sculptural installation that transforms the humble tomato pin cushion—a ubiquitous sewing tool found in homes for generations—into a poignant metaphor for the contradictions embedded in care work. Traditionally, the tomato has been associated with health, healing, and prosperity, appearing in folklore as a protective charm and in pop culture as a symbol of recovery—most notably as the Maxim Tomato in the *Kirby* video game series, where it instantly restores a character’s health. But in the form of a pincushion, it becomes a site of puncture, pierced over and over by needles—a vessel of both nurture and violence.

Xiang’s installation amplifies this tension, reflecting on the hidden costs of care in systems that extract emotional and domestic labor as an endless resource. The exhibition space becomes a “palace of wounded tomatoes”, where 3D-printed stainless steel tomato forms—some resting on the floor, others suspended in midair—bear the marks of exhaustion and overuse. Many are punctured with needles, while others are split open to reveal fragile, vulnerable interiors, inspired by the soft, crying “inner child” of Kirby.



An oversized needle pierces aluminum tomato silhouettes, literally threading through the gallery walls, binding and destabilizing the space.

This project positions the tomato pincushion as a contradiction—both a nurturing tool and a site of piercing and puncture. By exposing the exhaustion, harm, and systemic violence endured by caregivers, Xiang challenges romanticized ideas of care.

Xiang's approach to labor and belief is shaped by her ongoing exploration of capitalism, consumer culture, and video game aesthetics. Her past projects have transformed Animal Crossing gameplay data into sculptural works, tracking the way leisure becomes an obligation and play morphs into labor. Here, her tomatoes are similarly doubled—evoking childhood healing tropes while simultaneously bearing the scars of overuse and exploitation. The work critiques the undervaluation of domestic and emotional labor, particularly the disproportionate burden placed on women, immigrants, and marginalized communities.

About the Artist

Huidi Xiang (b. Chengdu, China) is a sculptor based in Brooklyn, New York. She holds an MFA in Art from Carnegie Mellon University and a BA in Architecture from Rice University. Huidi's work has been exhibited internationally at venues such as the Bronx Museum, Contemporary Calgary, The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, KAJE, Tutu Gallery, and YveYANG Gallery. She has also created commissioned projects for the Jing'an International Sculpture Project (Shanghai, China, 2024), X Museum Triennial (Beijing, China, 2023), and OCAT Biennale (Shenzhen, China, 2021).

This project was supported, in part, by a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant.

I WANT TO BELIEVE is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, M&T Bank, the New York State Council on the Arts, and Erie County.