ALMINE RECH

# After Fire

## Apr 3 — Sep 6, 2026 | Aranya Art Center, Beidaihe, China

Aranya Art Center presents the group exhibition 'After Fire,' featuring nearly 100 fire-making tools spanning several centuries from the collection of Tian Jiaqing, in dialogue with artworks by 14 contemporary artists of diverse cultural backgrounds. This exhibition marks Aranya Art Center's first foray into integrating historical collections within the curatorial context of contemporary art. Through five thematic chapters and archival displays, it traces the trajectory of humanity's mastery over fire, exploring the complex and often contradictory relationship between this force of nature and human civilization.

The first instance of fire-making marked the beginning of a long relationship. Fire sparked leaps in human civilization and technology, while also setting humanity on a path of trials that persists to this day. We still live in an era driven by "combustion": energy flows unseen beneath the ground, through pipes and engines; fire is embedded within infrastructures, becoming the hidden heart of cities and global systems. At the same time, uncontrolled wildfires, the fires of war, and climate crises constantly remind us of the cost of this dependence.

The continual evolution of fire-making tools forms material cross-sections of systems, faith, war, industry, and consumer society. Across time and geography, they trace the trajectory of humanity's interaction with fire. These tools appear throughout five galleries, juxtaposed with contemporary artworks and reactivated as media for understanding the present.

This exhibition seeks to open a perceptual passage between past and present. From minuscule sparks to vast energy networks, from handheld firesteels to massive industrial facilities, fire touches the most intimate everyday experience while also being deeply rooted in the structure of civilization. The exhibition invites us to reexamine how fire has shaped the world we inhabit and the ways we understand it, and how our journey with fire straddles the line between dominance and dependence.

This exhibition is organized by Assistant Curator Jiang Ruoyu and Associate Curator Wu Yiyang at the Aranya Art Center.