

Michael Gao
Bio



Michael Gao (b. 2002, Beijing, China) is a painter living and working in London. He explores social dynamics, identity, violence and desire, placing these themes in the ever-changing context of contemporary visual culture. Gao casts domesticated animals as a counterpoint to human tension – a figure of primal detachment amid socially coded behaviour. He uses fine airbrush techniques combined with loose oil brushstrokes to create realistic yet surreal compositions, flattening the space to evoke a sense of claustrophobia. With the subtle staging of dominance, threat, or exclusion, he subverts the expectation of violence and instead uses the animal as a strange mirror: instinctively present, yet curiously disconnected from the drama we choreograph around it.

Using animal and human imagery, Gao reimagines carnival as a post-internet space. This setting further deepens the contrast between reality and fantasy, the familiar and the alien. In this series of works, the carnival world becomes a lens to explore how desire has become performative and ritualistic in the Internet age - it can both connect people and isolate them, both elevate and constrain them.

EDUCATION

- 2025 MA Painting, Royal College of Art, London
- 2023 BA (HonS) Painting in Edinburgh College of Art

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 *Salt Land*, Mandy Zhang Art
- 2025 *Full Moons*, Tuesday to Friday Gallery, Valencia, Spain

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 *The Law of Desire*, Larry's List x Mandy Zhang Art, HK
- 2026 *The 120 Days of Sodom*, Nan Ke Gallery, Shanghai
- 2025 *We Heard a Rumour that the Gallery is Shutting Down But the Gallery isn't Shutting Down*, Moosey, Norwich, UK
- 2025 *Real Artist Sweat*, Tiderip, London, UK
- 2025 *Where the Wild Things Are*, Mandy Zhang Art, London, UK
- 2025 *Nice to See You / Hope to See You Again*, Tuesday to Friday, Valencia, Spain
- 2025 *Pedigree*, OHS Projects, London, UK
- 2025 *Michael Gao, Liang Zou, Yuang Zhang, Pan Kecheng*, Simulacra Gallery, China
- 2024 *Kingdom*, Tuesday to Friday, Valencia, Spain
- 2024 *On Loose Terms*, Patriothall Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland

ART FAIRS

- 2025 Art SG, Singapore, Mandy Zhang Art (London)

PRESS

- 2025 *Michael Gao transforms furry culture with sincerity and horror, **It's Nice That***
- 2025 *Los furrys contemporáneos de Michael Gao 'invaden' Tuesday to Friday, **Cultur Plaza***
- 2023 *Michael Gao on His Art Journey, Life in Edinburgh, Influences, Gaming and Favorite Things, **Overstandard***
- 2023 *Michael Gao, **London Paint Club***
- 2023 *In the Studio with Michael Gao, **Auc Art***