

Press Release

Depictura

Dexter Dalwood | Van Hanos | Zhao Gang

6 September – 25 October 2025

2/F, 27 Huqiu Road, Shanghai

Lisson Gallery Shanghai brings together three figurative artists – Dexter Dalwood, Van Hanos and Zhao Gang – whose works collapse and expand space and time, traversing the borders between hyperrealism, abstraction and imagined realities. Each creates object-worlds for viewers to travel through, using spatial ambiguity and surreal juxtaposition to imbue two-dimensional images with three-dimensional ambitions.

Taking its title from Leon Battista Alberti's original treatise on line and perspective in art, *De Pictura (On Painting)* from 1450, this exhibition also marks a moment when the poles of flatness and depth shift — as it was in the transition from the Medieval to the Renaissance — and explores the possibilities that exist between two and three dimensions. To 'depict' is also to paint or document what is in front of the beholder, an act of looking and absorbing that nevertheless reveals different approaches in these three painters.

Each work in this selection of paintings portrays elements of visible or recognisable reality, but simultaneously combines these physical and painterly sensibilities with interruptions, whether symbolic gestures, innovative mark-making or imagistic collage. Each artist can also be said to embody or refer back to some of the key tenets of (Western) art history – employing the traditions of landscape, still-life and history painting, for example – while also breaking down these hierarchies and creating new literary, cinematic and political fields for experimentation.

In **Dexter Dalwood's** practice, the medium of painting is not only examined and celebrated in terms of its history and legacy; he also demonstrates the enduring contemporary relevance of painting as a way of communicating how we experience the world in which we live. In *Hard* and *Lux* (both 2018), Dalwood harks back to the origin of post-Impressionist painting by constructing a space for contemplation and solitude in the image of natural phenomena. The act of looking becomes disrupted — the viewers are placed inside a vehicle, looking out through a rain-streaked windshield or a snow-filled backseat window. While in *2059 (knife)* (2021), the artist scales this oil on canvas to Jean-Siméon Chardin's *The House of Cards* (1737), offering a reflection on the medium today, and stretching his references across time to juxtapose classical still-life motifs with bright, futuristic planets and galaxies.

Van Hanos' approach to painting is best undefined, forsaking particular modes or methods. Ranging from landscape to portraiture, beyond categorisation as either figuration or abstraction, his work navigates perceptual shifts and thematic rupture. Hanos explores the tremendous range of possibilities within the human mind and experience, and his paintings can be created as meticulous oil renderings of images taken from photographs, with technical precision and photographic tendencies, or as sublime, abstracted amalgamations of past observations and ruminations, replete with internal references to other paintings or past subjects, and layered with meaning. Hanos' work always beckons the viewer to look closer—as what one first experiences is undoubtedly bound to shift upon continued investigation.

In his work, **Zhao Gang** delves into the fluidity of individual identities, the clash of cultures, and the intricate interplay of fragmented historical events. In *Chicken, Duck and Fish* (2023), raw-cuts of meat, poultry and fish collectively serve as an alternative 'self-portrait' through which Zhao suggests identity is something 'eaten' and reassembled through desire, power, and the mythologies of East and West. Alongside this are a pair of collages drawn from Zhao's personal resonance to Qingdao, where he first visited in 1978.

Taking the style of montage to reflect the artist's past and present memories of the coastal city in China's Shandong Province, the fragmented composition also evokes social media grids, inviting viewers to form their own interpretations and narratives.

About the artists

Dexter Dalwood (b. 1960, Bristol, UK) is based in Mexico City. In 2017 he undertook a residency in Oaxaca and made a series titled *An Inadequate Painted History of Mexico* on his return to London, which has since featured in the touring show, 'Esto No Me Pertenece' at Centro de las Artes San Agustín, Oaxaca, Mexico and Museo Nacional de Arte (MUNAL), Mexico City, Mexico (2021-22). Dalwood's other major solo museum shows include Kunsthaus Centre PasquArt, Biel, Switzerland (2013); CAC Málaga, Spain (2010); FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims, France (2010) and Tate, St. Ives, UK (2010).

Van Hanos (b. 1979, Edison, USA) lives and works in Marfa. He has a BA from Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD, USA (2001), and an MFA from the School of the Arts at Columbia University, New York, NY, USA (2010). Recent solo exhibitions include *Twin* at Lisson Gallery, London, UK (2022); *Conditional Bloom* at Lisson Gallery, New York, NY, USA (2021); *Interiors* at Château Shatto, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2020); *Mommy's Boy* at Cleopatra's, New York, NY, USA (2017); *Late American Paintings* at Château Shatto, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2017); *Awake At The Funeral* at Tanya Leighton, Berlin, Germany (2017); *Van Hanos* at Parapet Real Humans, St. Louis, MO, USA (2017); and *Intercalaris* at Rowhouse Project, Baltimore, MD, USA (2016).

Zhao Gang (b. 1961, Beijing, China) is based in New York and Beijing. He obtained a Master of Arts degree from Bard College, New York (1999). Zhao Gang's recent solo exhibitions includes TAG Art Museum, Qingdao, China (2025); D+ Museum, Shenzhen, China (2024); Long Museum, Chongqing, China (2022); Long Museum, Shanghai, China (2021); Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei (2020); Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL, USA (2019); Museum of Contemporary Art, Santiago, Chile (2016); Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China (2015); Today Art Museum, Beijing, China (2011); Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong, China (2008); and He Xiangning Art Museum, Shenzhen, China (2006).

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and promotes the work of more than 70 international artists across spaces in London, New York, Los Angeles and Shanghai. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists and others of that generation, from Carmen Herrera and Olga de Amaral to Hélio Oiticica and Lee Ufan. In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Liu Xiaodong, Otobong Nkanga, Pedro Reyes, Sean Scully, Hiroshi Sugimoto and Wael Shawky. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists including Dana Awartani, Cory Arcangel, Garrett Bradley, Ryan Gander, Josh Kline, Hugh Hayden, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost and Cheyney Thompson.

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