



Alex Gardner, *Catapult*, 2025. Acrylic on canvas. 48 1/16 x 96 1/16 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

ALEX GARDNER

ANIMALS

June 6 – July 11, 2026

Perrotin Los Angeles is pleased to present *Animals*, the gallery's second solo exhibition with Long Beach-based artist Alex Gardner (b. 1987). Featuring Gardner's characteristic faceless figures, the show features 13 new paintings rendered in the artist's rich palette of bruised blues and dense greens across a range of scales, with some canvases as small as 10x14 inches and others as large as 4x8 feet.

The Los Angeles native abstract figure painter's new body of work, on view from June 6 through July 11, demonstrates the shifting phases intrinsic to being alive; since his last solo exhibition in Los Angeles a decade ago, Gardner has become a father twice over, and the life-altering experience of fatherhood has introduced new inspiration for his quiet, placeless scenes of floating bodies rendered in various stages of embrace and interconnectedness.

"I used to not depict youthful figures – or children, or babies – prior to having them, so that's the biggest visual shift [in my work]," Gardner says. "I'm not talking about fatherhood directly as much as I'm using kids as a symbol of optimism and hope for the future."

This optimism is as much the artist's present-day manifesto as it is a salve for his past self whose work was once guided more heavily by existential anxieties and concerns about the fate of humanity. *Animals* reveals an artist more wisened in his acceptance of the world we've inherited, less bound by a desire to look beyond himself for answers and instead content with the ones that already reside within.

Gardner's love of film and music hums in the background of these works: cinematic, rhythmic, and universal in their consciousness, the acrylic paintings are a reflection of the artist's penchant toward solitude, while the show's title gestures at how impossible it is to separate the individual from the whole. "*Animals* refers to all people being part of the human race...but it also has an aggressive, barbaric element to it [revealing] the nature of humans and how we are not as refined as we like to believe we are."

In *Catapult*, the artist explores the ways in which two parents juggle the imperfect intimacy of raising a child, while other works explore different types of familial relationships in order to deploy understanding to a range of viewers, all operating from different positions in a family unit (or in society writ large). And *Bunker* hints at the more haunting reality of needing to occasionally escape from responsibility in an act of self-preservation.



Alex Gardner, *Big Toothy Grin*, (detail) 2025. Acrylic on canvas. 48 x 60 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

Across these works with figures foregrounded against backdrops of blue, it's as if Gardner's anonymous subjects are at once sinking and being baptized by the suggestion of water; the paintings are made, formally speaking, with composition, shapes, and movement in mind, but according to the artist, "there's a lot to be seen that's not just the image, per se," indicating an interest in conceptual, narrative subtext beyond the literal application of the paint.

In these works (and across Gardner's oeuvre), color is used as an emotional tool, creating contrasts and commentary on faceless figures that have the potential to be politically loaded – or politically agnostic – depending on one's point of view. The starkness of luminous white shirts against navy skin can be understood as a racially-coded choice, but the absence of facial features and culturally-specific motifs is a deliberate choice by the biracial artist to eliminate the concept of race from his paintings, with an eye toward universal experiences rather than defaulting to a posture of depicting division vis-à-vis identity. In this way, Gardner's figures in *Animals* can be anyone, which ultimately arrives at a more powerful conclusion, which is that they can be everyone.

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