

HARIDAS
CONTEMPORARY

INSIGHTS

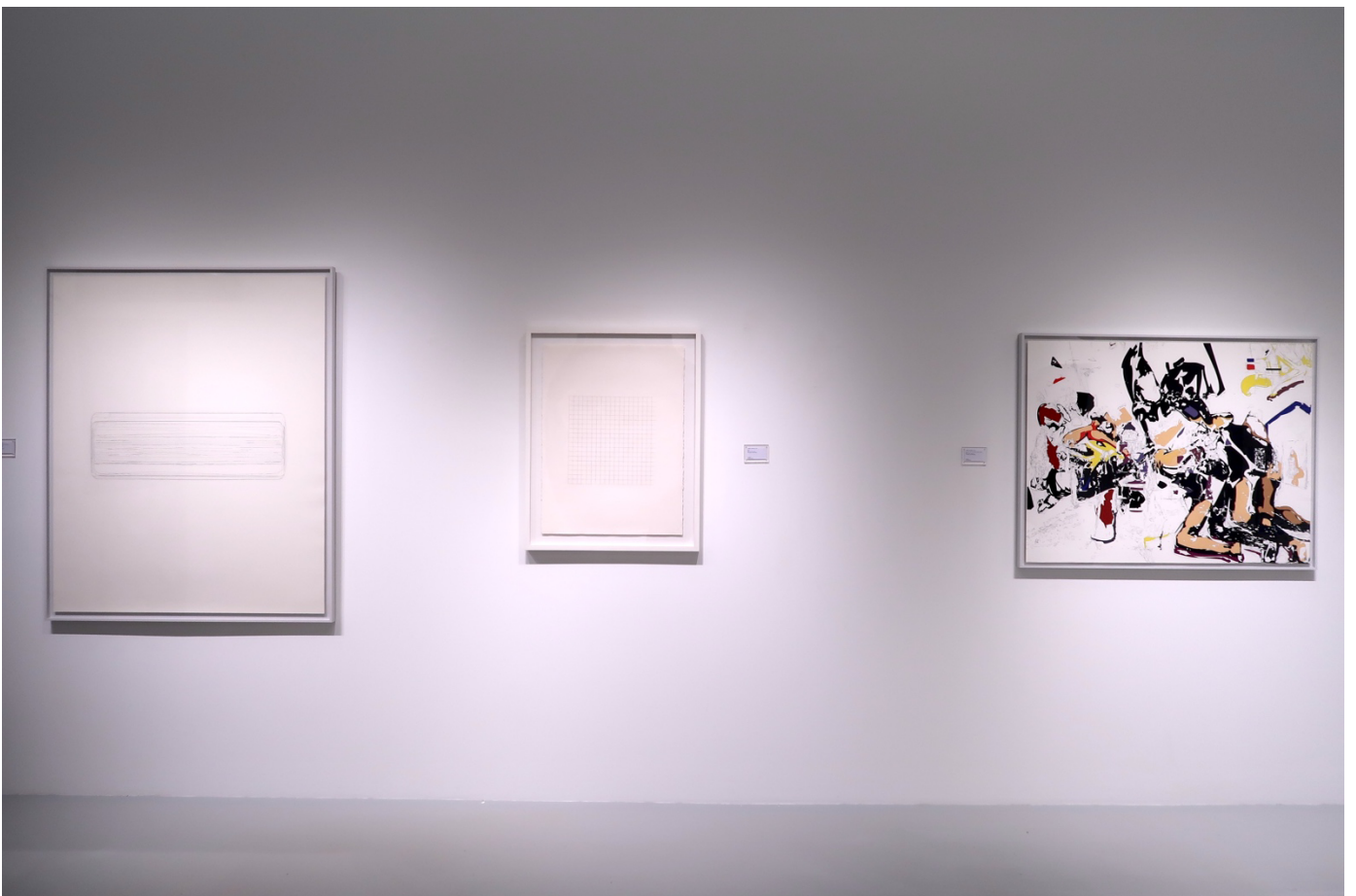
FEATURING PAST WORKS OF
JEREMY SHARMA & ESMOND LOH

26 APR - 18 MAY 2025



Install Images









Jeremy Sharma Statement

I am interested in drawing (in a wider sense - art) in the age of mechanical, industrial and digital reproduction. Because perspective creates an illusion of depth in reference to the real world, I wish to focus on a centralized, frontal and flattened plane so as to emphasise verticals and horizontals and pure line, therefore referencing the reality of drawing as an ideal. This really links to my current investigation into the conceptual nature of my work to the nature of art itself. The drawings here are opposite of architectural plans or the blueprint, because they do not reference something to be made but rather they come from something that is already made and available through the search engines of the Internet, referencing the found image.

There are three mediums to be observed here: digital drawing, silver gelatin print and silver point drawing, each bearing a relationship to one another. Digital Art probably took off in the mid 20th Century with the advent of computers, the silver gelatin print process began in the late 19th century, which is basically the suspension of silver salts in gelatin on resin-coated paper that exposes the blacks, greys and whites in a photograph. Silverpoint is a technique of depositing silver on a grounded paper by dragging a metal stylus across the surface. It was a popular medieval technique and during the early renaissance before graphite took over. What I am after here is the investigation between silver and imaging and the conflating of different techniques that were invented in their time as a new way of creating an image, into a single presentation. Like my paintings, and this is through the legacy of conceptual art, I tend to want to test the limits of what painting and drawing can be, a question really of the 'emperor's new clothes'. In these works, what constitutes a photograph, a print, a design or a drawing is basically a re-structuring of language. If I had a philosophy for these works, it would be: they are simplified paths - the entropy of images leads to the purity of lines.

The process of making these drawings starts from culling images off the internet and turning images into contours; pixels into lines through a design and illustrating software. They are then either translated into silver gelatin prints or traced into silverpoint drawings. Because data is converted to pure line on the computer, they do not lose resolution or sharpness when blown up. I like the idea of the transposition of the digital to photography (writing with light) with the silver gelatin prints; likewise, the digital to hand drawn in the silverpoint drawings. I am interested in the constructed image as virtual and physical space, and in the deeper sense – psychic space – there and not there, becoming and disappearing. I also like the idea of cross-sections, creating spatial dimensions and seeing through the drawing. This continues my dialogue with representation/form/abstraction through my paintings and drawings.

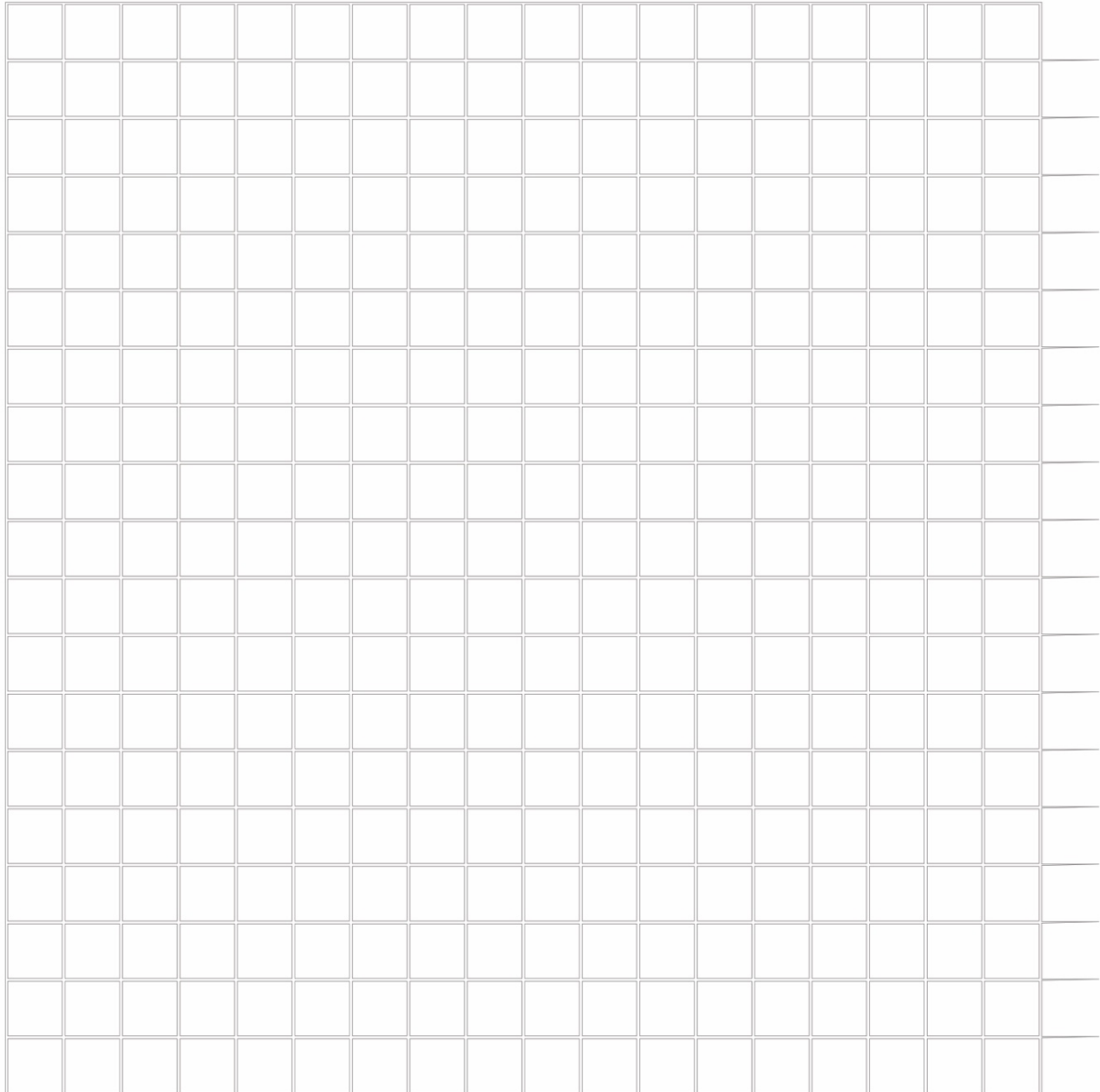
I strongly believe that my generation of artists, when we went to art school, was the first to utilize the power of the Internet and its interconnectivity; photoshop and graphic software (even though the constructivists were really way ahead of us in that respect). We were very resourceful to the point that appropriation and authorship was not a real problem for us (especially on my part) but part of art making. I even believe now the Internet, machines and outsourcing are an expanded mode of art production. This is symptomatic of the current milieu and has something to do with working in a 'post-studio' approach, when you do not have or could not afford a physical studio space, do not believe in a singularly studio approach or simply do not have the time and luxury to spend hours in one because of commitments and schedules and also our increasing dependence on virtual spaces.

I am also interested in Marshall McLuhan's idea of the 'Electranascence' and his central theory of the mass media as a global extension of the human nervous system and that all the tools and engines on earth are only extensions of the human body's limbs and senses. Technological changes create new environments and a new spatial grammar for the electronic age and media is the environment or cultural ground of the 21st century life. It is a ground that is at once personal, social, global, corporate, and political.¹

These drawings are not derived from the human eye or human imagination and sensation but from electronic phenomenon and a search portal of images. The title 'or the buzz between the eardrums' alludes to things we do not see anymore but things that are ambient and a symptom of modern existence like the hum of machines and devices and the buzz of television sets, computer screens and fluorescent lights. It alludes to McLuhan and his claim 'Moving from print to electronic media we have given up an eye for an ear.'

— Jeremy Sharma, 2013

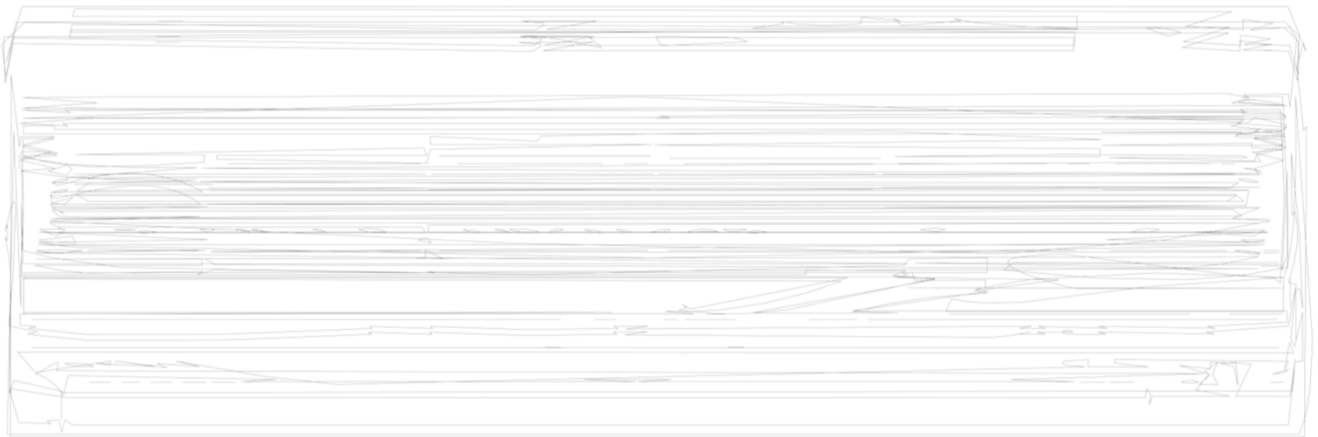
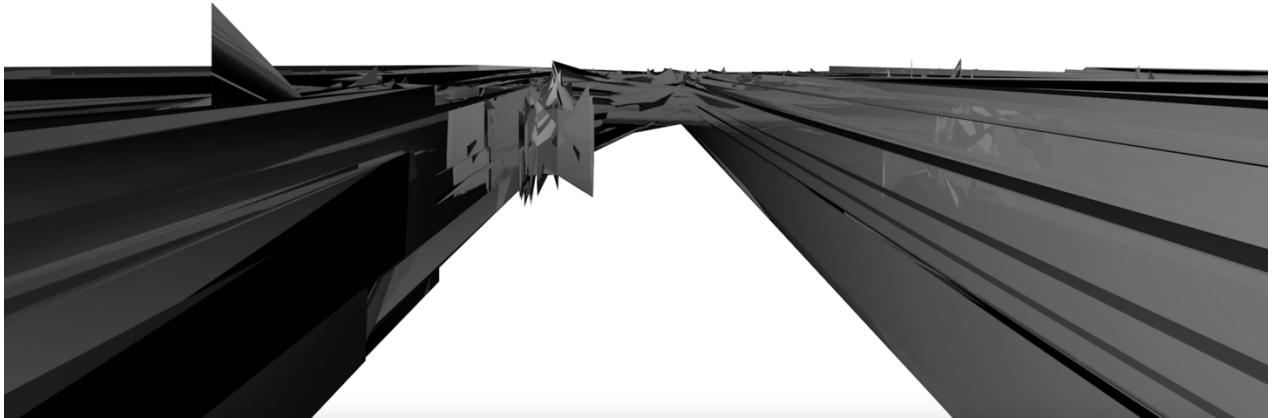
¹ Iona Miller's History of Digital Art 101,.



Jeremy Sharma
Grid, 2013
Silverpoint on Arches Paper
89.5 x 70.5 cm (framed)



Jeremy Sharma
Untitled 2 (or the buzz between the eardrums), 2013
Lambda Print on Fibre Paper
143.5 x 118 cm (framed)



Jeremy Sharma
Untitled (or the buzz between the eardrums), 2015
Digital Video (Single Channel)
Duration 2min 56sec

Ragtime Kowloon Jam (after Mondrian) & Hot on The Heels of Love (after Throbbing Gristle) “were created during the pandemic, when Sharma spent most of his time at home, looking at images of the world outside through his computer screen. The artist collected images from the news and various media sources, and layered and collaged them using Freehand software, where he processed the raw images by subtracting details so that only vague outlines of the forms remain. Sharma’s artistic intervention determines the degree of abstraction of each composite image, and in how he chooses to fill in certain areas with colour to create rhythm and suggest new forms.

The result is a composition that retains vestiges of the original images, coalescing into a new one in our mind’s eye. These works hover tantalisingly between figuration and abstraction: we can half-decipher parts of it, but full legibility eludes us, like a code that must be cracked – a visual cipher.”

Tan Siuli, 2024
excerpt from CIPHER curatorial statement



Jeremy Sharma
Ragtime Kowloon Jam (after Mondrian), 2020
Digital Print on Archival Paper
156 x 199.5 cm (framed)



Detail of Ragtime Kowloon Jam (after Mondrian), 2020



Jeremy Sharma
Hot on The Heels of Love (after Throbbing Gristle), 2020
Digital Print on Archival Paper
95.5 x 122.5 cm (framed)



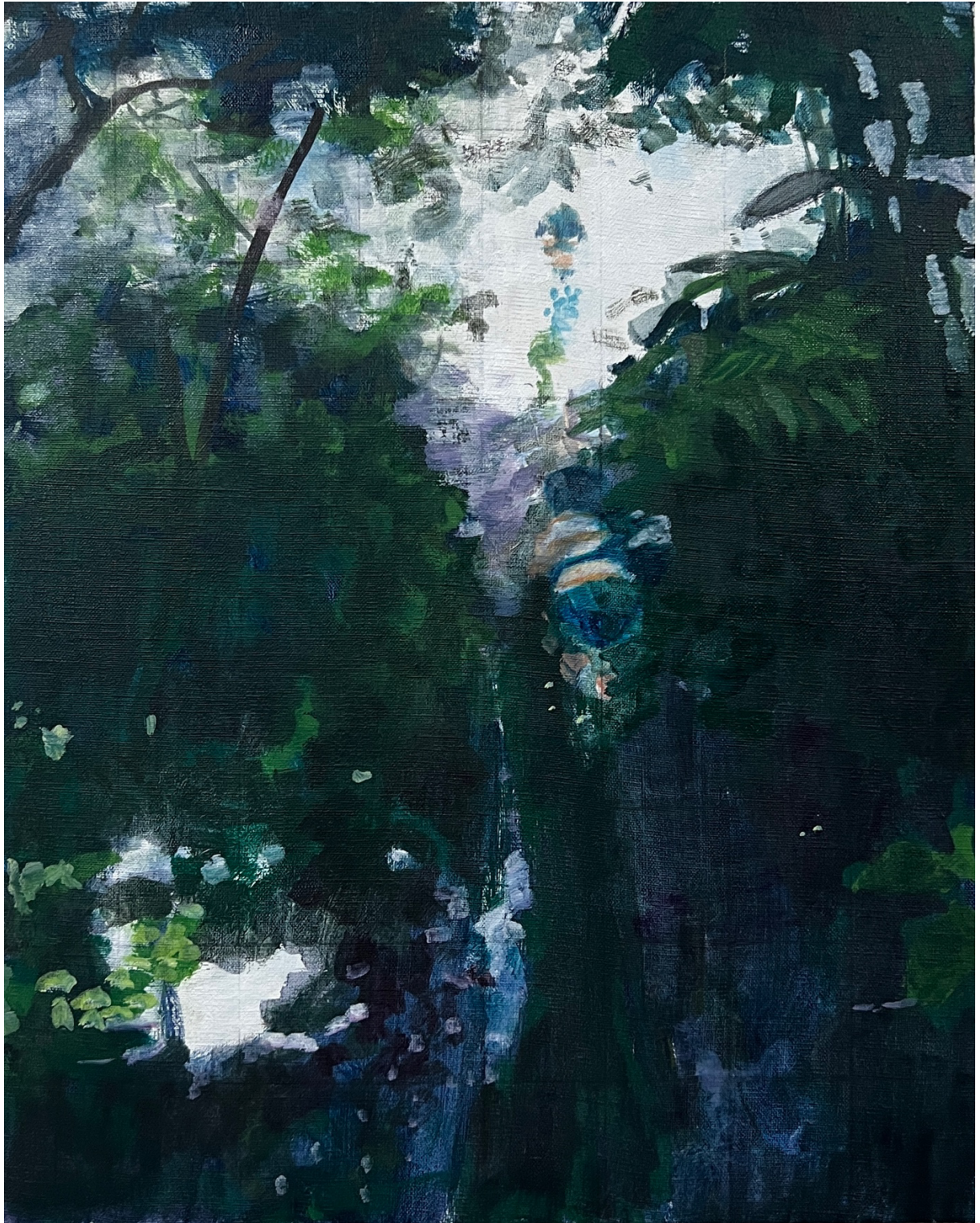
Detail of Hot on The Heels of Love (after Throbbing Gristle),

Recent Paintings

Since returning to painting towards the end of the Covid pandemic after more than ten years of absence, Jeremy Sharma has re-discovered a newfound urgency and intimacy in its representational form.

His recent body of works addresses painting's porosity to apprehend images from various sources (where digitality and screen captures have become ubiquitous), albeit belatedly, in a serial linen and stretcher format that delivers its subject from a mediated world. In selecting an image, he looks for effects, qualities and values that elicit interest to make a painting. He then acts upon them by extracting, cropping, reducing, magnifying or flattening the image for printing, to paint from.

His subject then becomes one of seeing: a painting's object and intermediality; its internal logic; its pictorial construction; its emphasis on surface and touch; and its semblance of life. However, painting here is also interested in what is not seen but thought and felt: its peripheries; its silence; and its capacity—to desire, resist, linger upon, probe and take hold of.



Jeremy Sharma
In the Forest, 2022
Oil on Linen
50 x 40 cm



Pig Farm
152 x 366 cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2018

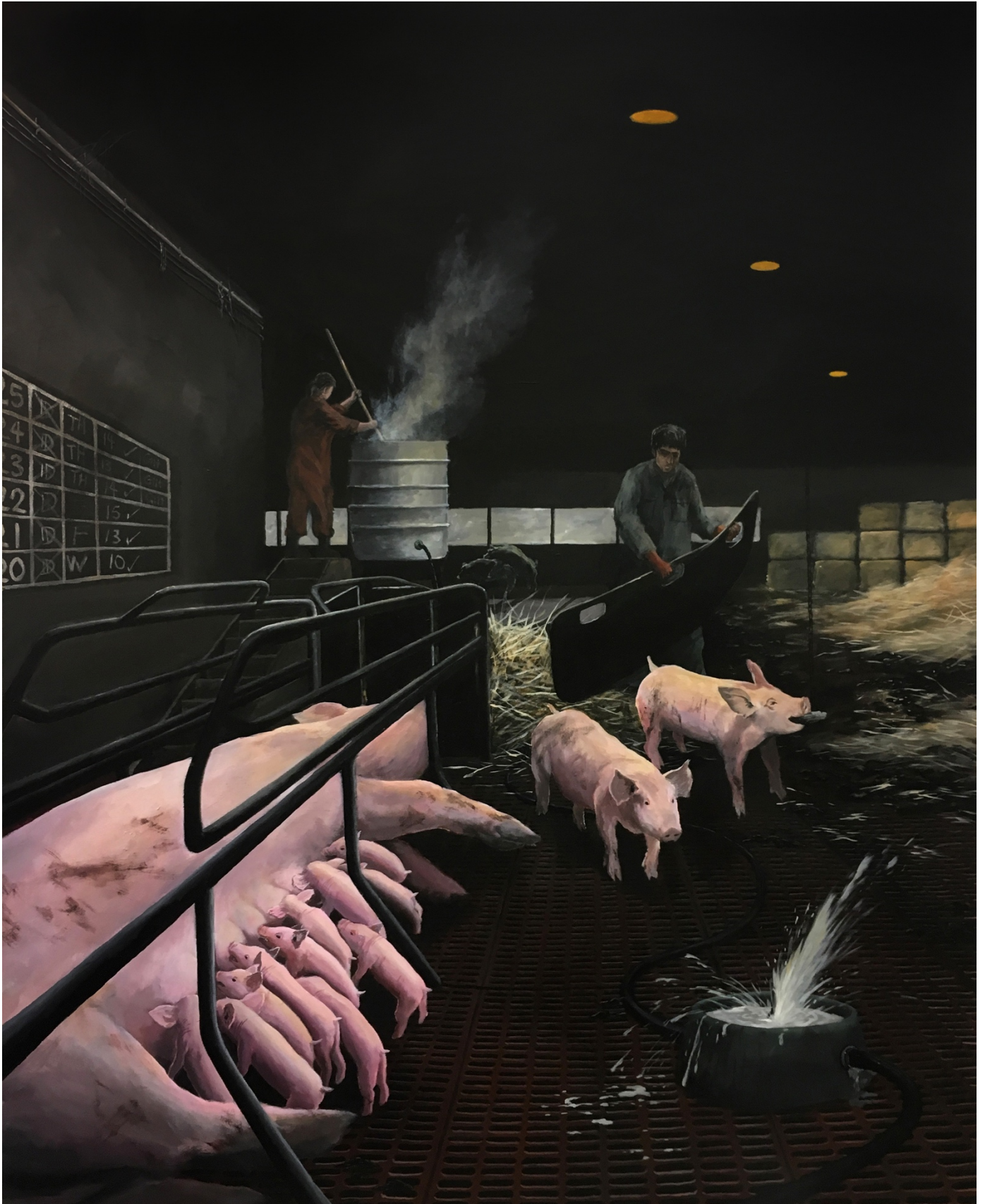
Pig Farm is a surreal triptych inspired by a brief but intense stint working on a British pig farm. Drawing from real-life observations while amplifying them with a theatrical sensibility, the work dramatises the pig's life cycle in a factory farming system – from birth to slaughter – with a blend of violence, chaos, whimsy, and absurdism.

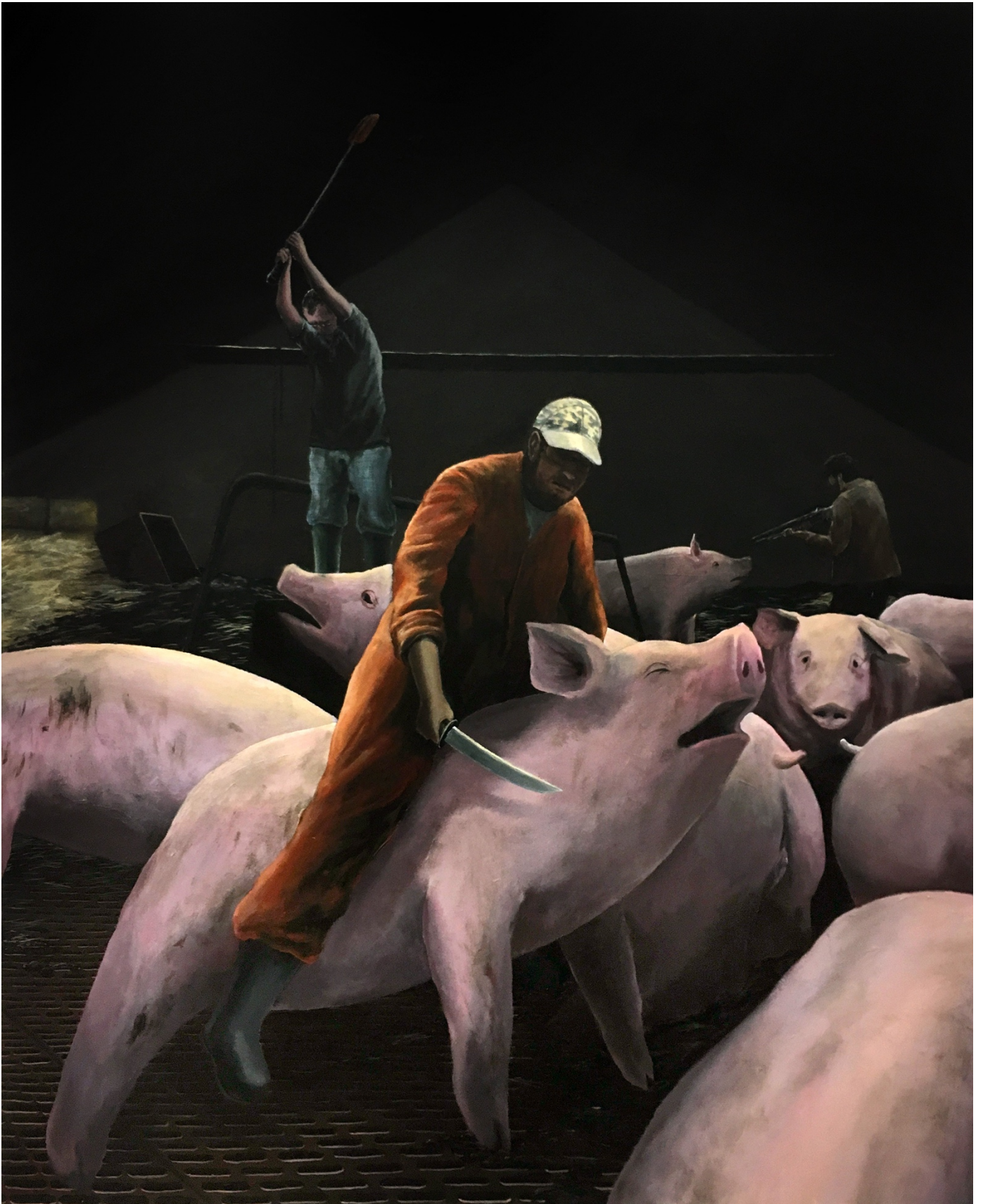
In the first panel, piglets suckle on a sow trapped in a farrowing crate, while a strange white liquid splashes from a feeding dish wired with tubes. Nearby, a worker stirs feed with a long pole, and another herds teenage pigs with a board. Details like a blackboard tracking births, looming straw stacks, and pig silhouettes mid-mating quietly underscore the mechanised reproductive cycle.

The second panel shifts to a visceral close-up: a man rides a pig, dagger in hand, as it writhes beneath him. Around them, pigs appear frozen in confusion and fear. In the background, one worker brandishes a sorting paddle, while another raises a shotgun to a pig's head in a moment of chilling stillness.

The final panel presents a stark transformation. Slaughtered pigs hang from a conveyor while a masked worker jet sprays the blood-stained floor. At the back, pigs feed calmly, oblivious to the butchery near them. In a strange twist of scale and irony, two workers struggle to carve an enormous slab of *sio bak* (Chinese roast pork).

Blurring fact and fiction, *Pig Farm* uses the language of painting to confront the industrialised processes of animal farming – not just with horror, but with a surreal edge that invites both discomfort and reflection.









Prison

152 x 122 cm

Acrylic on Canvas

2019

This painting stages a haunting tableau of incarceration, inspired by Van Gogh's *Prisoners' Round* (1890) and Gustave Doré's *Newgate – Exercise Yard* (1872). Like its predecessors, *Prison* depicts inmates pacing in an endless loop, but transposes the scene into a modern architectural concept – the panopticon. A central watch tower anchors the composition, its cold geometry surrounded by stacked rows of cells. On the tower, officers operate a spotlight that beams beyond the painting's frame, watched silently by a glowing, spectral figure who stands apart from them.

Below, prisoners in crimson jumpsuits – chained and faceless – shuffle around the tower under the gaze of a stern guard and her German Shepherd. The repetitive motion, harsh lighting, and rigid surveillance convey a sense of psychological entrapment. Time seems suspended, dominated by routine and control. In introducing the panopticon, I wanted to explore how modern surveillance systems intensify this power dynamic, rendering the prison as much a mental state as a physical space.





Escape

152 x 122 cm

Acrylic on Canvas

2021

A sequel to *Prison* (2019), *Escape* picks up the narrative at a moment of tension and urgency. Set in an open yard within the prison complex, the painting captures the inmates' desperate attempt to flee. One prisoner tips over the top of the wall via a ladder, while another, halted mid-climb, turns back to confront a prison guard on horseback. A third prisoner, cornered, raises his arms in surrender. Above them, a vivid purple flare arcs into the sky, fired by the mounted guard, as a plane looms in the distance.

A sense of chaos simmers beneath the controlled composition – beneath their feet, a hidden hole suggests an alternate escape route. In the background, a fire burns near a watch tower where the same glowing figure from *Prison* observes the scene quietly, like an otherworldly witness or conscience.

Where *Prison* spoke of confinement and routine, *Escape* wrestles with risk, confrontation, and the elusive nature of freedom. Both works question whether escape is even truly possible – or simply another illusion within the system.

