

HESSE FLATOW

Xiao Wang: *Seeing Through*

February 14 – March 15, 2025

Opening Reception: February 14, from 5-8PM

HESSE FLATOW is pleased to announce the opening of *Seeing Through*, an exhibition of paintings by New York based artist Xiao Wang, marking his first solo presentation with the gallery.

Wang's hyperrealistic paintings depicting intimate social gatherings and sumptuous still lifes combine scenes of enjoyment with the sheer pleasure of looking, inviting audiences into immersive, dream-like worlds that offer voyeuristic and vicarious indulgence. Bold, geometric patterns, lush foliage, saturated colors, and glossy surfaces add to the visual grandeur of his canvases, further anchored by stylized displays of cut fruit, a succulent roast, cocktail shakers, and candlelight. While Wang sets the stage for a night of exuberant consumption, he carefully eschews from a bacchanalian-esque narrative. By offsetting the soothing and seductive with the strange and uncanny, his compositions appeal to maximalist desires while preventing a complete state of abandon.



Operating on the logic of doubles, Wang's paintings straddle between real life and near perfect simulacrum. Embarking from a personal place, the artist enlists his friends and loved ones as protagonists alongside cherished objects that bear symbolic significance, treating the pictorial exercise of their reproduction as a form of self-reference and reflection. As viewers, we are granted access into the artist's private universe, assuming a first-person point of perspective, though Wang at times complicates this vantage point through the strategic positioning of mirrors and panes of glass. Cast in moody, bluish tones, his subjects disengage from the warm, radiant glow of their external surroundings, shown in states of melancholic introspection where contemplative and literal reflection redouble to signal proxies and alternative realms beyond the edges of the canvas.

The exhibition's title - *seeing through* – not only invokes the proverbial notion around painting as an illusionary lens or window out onto the world, but also the decisive moment of disillusion that precipitates its own reality. Wang's repeated use of mirrors and windows as pictorial devices moreover create a dichotomy between a direct and indirect mode of *seeing through*. In the same manner that art historical still lifes allegorize impermanence and mortality amidst a show of wealth and abundance, Wang's paintings similarly gesture towards the emptiness of superficial, materialistic pursuits, searching instead for a lasting form of happiness and inner peace.

Xiao Wang (b. 1990) studied at the Glasgow School of Art where he received his BFA degree in Painting and Printmaking. He continued his study at San Francisco Art Institute and earned his MFA degree in Painting. Wang has shown internationally in Europe and The United States. He has been featured in publications including *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*, *Elephant Magazine*, *Booooooom*, *Hyperallergic*, *Juxtapoz Magazine*, and *New American Paintings*. Wang's work is included in public collections such as X museum (China) and HSBC Collection (UK).