

Yan Bingqing

And Thus It Goes

Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing
May 20 – August 2, 2026
Opening: Wednesday, May 20, 2026; 4pm
The artist will be present

Galerie Urs Meile is pleased to present, *And Thus It Goes*, a solo exhibition by Yan Bingqing (b. 1983). The exhibition presents a series of works by Yan created over the course of one year, capturing the artist's emotions in a continuous stream. These paintings form a record of the artist's daily emotional states, such as anxiety, insomnia, euphoria, hesitation, and reflection, which were translated into images through direct visual expression rather than metaphorical explanation.

The gallery space is divided into small rooms, where the works are distributed and juxtaposed in a non-linear perspective. This separation emphasizes the innate emotional extensions carried through Yan's paintings, allowing subtle correspondences and narrative threads to emerge between works. Seeing is not a one-sided act. The reciprocal nature of vision allows audiences to encounter the artist's private emotions while reflecting on their own inner states. As audiences move through the rooms, they reconstruct personal narratives within the intertwining space.

Yan's work draws on minute emotions from daily life through elaborate yet fantastic depictions of faces and bodies. In his work *Chirping* (2025, tempera on wood, 50 × 60 cm), a young male lies awake in bed with two birds perched on his head—it is a reflection of insomnia, when people have trouble falling asleep, endless thoughts circle like birds twittering in the mind. Against the dark background and with a focus on the young man's melancholic face, an immediate sense of emotional tension and quiet exhaustion is strikingly directed at the audience.

Yan approaches painting as a process of concentrated self-expression. Figures in his works often have slender limbs that protrude from the torso; through this stylized treatment, he deliberately dissolves gender and age cues that might otherwise be discernible from their physiques, while the portrayal of nudity further diminishes the disturbance caused by clothing. His choice of tempera reinforces this approach. The material allows subtle adjustments and a degree of unpredictability, enabling a more precise articulation of emotional states. In Yan's practice, he continually recalibrates the work by adding and removing details to pursue an ideal emotional expression. Tempera's semi-transparent and reworkable qualities allow him to revise the composition while retaining traces of earlier states beneath the surface, which brings certain unpredictability in the process.

In the work *Cuddling* (2026, tempera on wood, 105 × 85 cm), two bodies are entwined in an intimate embrace, their limbs compressed by the surrounding bubbles, as if everything is trapped within the canvas. Devoid of specific background or narrative context, the image offers only the sensation of enclosure within a muted cyan field. The tension generated by the elongated limbs and the constricting bubbles evokes a restrained yet constricting intimacy. Through such reduction, Yan removes redundant visual information and metaphorical references associated with the external world, allowing the work to convey emotional states directly.

The hand as a subject serves as a scale to indicate the shift in emotion; at every stage of his practice, there is a work of hands that anchors the process. For this period, *Ring* (2025, tempera on wood, 41 × 31 cm) presents two hands forming the gesture of putting on a ring, with the left hand forming a ring on the right hand's finger, it becomes a quiet marker of constraining intimacy.

The exhibition also features a group of clay sculptures developed alongside Yan's tempera painting practice, offering new perspectives on his way of perceiving the world. Most of them resemble animals, inspired by motifs from daily life rather than a direct representation of reality.

This exhibition is not only a showcase of paintings, but also an exploration of perception. Each work stands independently, yet its inner connections create subtle emotional continuities across the space. After the outpouring of emotion, what remains is not merely the visible image, but the invisible correspondences between works and between the works and their viewers. Taken together, the exhibition offers a glimpse into the artist's passage through a year, hence it is titled *And Thus It Goes*.

About the Artist

Yan Bingqing was born in Shanghai in 1983. He graduated with a Master's degree from the Oil Painting Department at the China Academy of Art in 2009. He currently lives and works in Shanghai. His work is included in the collections of the China Art Museum in Shanghai and the Zhejiang Art Museum. In recent years, Yan's creations have mainly focused on tempera paintings on wooden panels. His work focuses on the modeling of the human figure, emphasizing the rhythmic dynamics and corporeal curves of nudity. Using tempera, a popular material from the late medieval to early Renaissance eras, he incorporates a nonlinear perspective to create a theatrical and metaphysical experience. Yan's portraits articulate a highly personal visual identity. He has always tried to achieve a state of "authenticity" in his paintings, facing things and oneself truthfully.