

## HACKER, SUFFERER, BEGGAR, BELIEVER

Artist	Mo Shaolong
Opening	July 2, 2023 16:00 – 19:00
Exhibition Period	July 2 – August 25, 2023
Venue	MadeIn Gallery, No.1, -1F Sunken Garden, Lane 9 Qufu Road, Jing'an District, Shanghai

MadeIn Gallery is pleased to present Mo Shaolong's first solo exhibition in China, "Hacker, Sufferer, Beggar, Believer", on July 2, 2023, featuring a curated selection of the artist's recent portraits. This is also Mo's first solo exhibition at MadeIn Gallery. Mo's paintings illustrate people in the digital age. He extracts the face, the predominant carrier of emotions, to narrate the mentality of alienation and contradiction experienced by individuals yielded to digital power. In this show, the artist selects an alignment of works on face-size canvases to initiate a ritual of gazing at human beings' status during the interaction with the real and the virtual, calling for the return of our sensual instincts.

With the iteration of 3D technology, virtual avatars aggressively act as the perfect incarnation of real individuals. Simultaneously, the body of information bred by algorithms dilutes entities, holding contemporary people hostage to perceive the world through digital parasitism. Mo seeks immediate data detoxification through progressive portrait painting practice: Undergoing dragging, distorting, and de-forming, the smooth digital surface is peeled off from the virtual bodies, replaced by an uneasy, painted flesh. An artist dwelling in the dual system of painting training and modeling software, by operating on the screen, Mo achieves a spatial deconstruction of the portraits beyond the capability of the naked eye, yet concurrently realizes that the human gene in the hands-on process of painting can barely be replaced by codes. As the characters' skin is displaced and torn in Mo's expression rehearsal, the facial glitches seemingly resulting from data malfunction indeed allude to the pulses of our perception: the pain of entangling and estranging between the aspiration for the real and the matrix of the digital. Only by feeling this incidental pain can we justify our being.

Here and now, the humanistic values of portraiture since the Classical Ages are being struck by technology. The rendering engine also attempts to create the perfect portrait through machine-learning and filtering. Hence, in this case, the "errors" in Mo's portraits tend to inherit the indictment of reality in Francis Bacon's post-war practice half a century ago. Points, edges, and polygons collide via brushstrokes to generate human figures, forming an expressionist resistance to digital violence. While the artist's hands successively interact with the software and canvas interfaces, the game between data and us unfolds.

## About Mo Shaolong

Mo Shaolong (b.1989, Henan, China) currently lives and works in Shanghai. Through his use and reflection of 3D modeling software, Mo seeks to redefine the long-standing genre of portraiture. Mo sees himself as belonging to the generation informed by globalisation, the Internet, and digital technology. In this sense, his work hints at the fact that every present-day individual is a cyborg, whose ethos exhibits a human-computer hybridity. Hence, for Mo, contemporary portraiture must capture and express the immense pain and confusion of human beings who must be equipped with digital technology. Such human-computer hybridity is merely the latest symptom of the complex and lengthy relationship between humans and technology, or in Mo's words, 'the error', and should be the starting point for our reflection on the myth of human creativity.

Recent solo exhibition include: "Spiritual Politicians", Jack Bell Gallery, London, UK, 2022; Group exhibitions include: "USB Multi-Port Linking Exhibition", MadeIn Gallery, QIAO SPACE, in the PARK, Shanghai, 2021; "Hereditary Territory", Shanghai Powerlong Museum, Shanghai, 2021; "Headlines", Slime Engine, Shanghai Plaza, Shanghai, 2020; "Ocean", Slime Engine, Shanghai, 2019; "It was a dream of a trip", SAFA Gallery, Shanghai, 2018; "Shanghai Hot the Beheaded Six", Yell Space, Shanghai, 2018; "Remote Sensing", Slime Engine, Shanghai, 2018; "Serendipitous Mission", MadeIn Gallery, Shanghai, 2017.