



C L E A R I N G

Fluffing the foliage

An exhibition of paintings by Xingzi Gu

C L E A R I N G New York

May 7 - June 21, 2025

CLEARING is pleased to present *Fluffing the foliage*, an exhibition of five new paintings by Xingzi Gu.

Working with diluted acrylic and oil-based pigment, Gu captures fleeting moments of intimacy — such as a pair of youths enjoying a nap in a polka-dotted hammock in *Light sleeper* (all works 2025), or the blurry figure of two uniformed girls cutting across *Pinwheel* on a berry-colored bicycle.

Fluffing the foliage takes inspiration from a range of references — including screenshots from coming-of-age films, 1000-year old paintings of animals by the Northern Song dynasty-era artist Yuanji Yi, portraits by the Americans Florine Stettheimer and Elizabeth Peyton, and a 1926 work by the Tokyo-born artist Tsuguharu Foujita, who emigrated to Paris and interpreted traditional Japanese figuration using techniques typically associated with canonical European styles of painting.

Adopting a more fluid approach than Foujita, Gu tempers their intense pastel and jewel-toned palette with a strong sense of realism and perspective. In *Dropping needle* (all works 2025), for example, a young man feeds a large amount of fabric through a sewing machine while another observes. There is a similar tension in *Lend me a light*, where a man and a woman hold the tips of their cigarettes together in the light of an ignited match — a common motif in Gu's oeuvre, somewhere between a handshake and a kiss.

Exceptionally, the young women in *Untitled (moon and cherry)* — who are wearing matching going-out jackets over their vibrant clubwear and heels, and gaze out from the canvas as if posing for an imaginary camera, or the real-life viewer, or for Gu — are the only subjects depicted engaging beyond their immediate surroundings.

The innocent phrase — “fluffing the foliage” — refers to an exaggerated experience of the quotidian here and now.

Xingzi Gu (born 1995 in Nantong, CN) lives and works in New York. They received their BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2018, and their MFA from New York University in 2023.

Solo and two-person exhibitions of their work have been held at Lubov, New York; 80WSE Gallery, New York; Extra Projects, Chicago; gallery no one, Chicago, and Siragusa Gallery, Chicago, USA.

Their work has been included in group exhibitions at The Drawing Center, New York; White Columns, New York; C L E A R I N G, New York; Anonymous Gallery, New York; Stilllife, New York; Island Gallery, New York; Loft 121, New York; 80WSE Gallery, New York; Latitude Gallery, New York; O’Flaherty’s, New York; Zhou B Art Center, Chicago, USA; and Keyi Art Museum, Nanjing, China, among others.