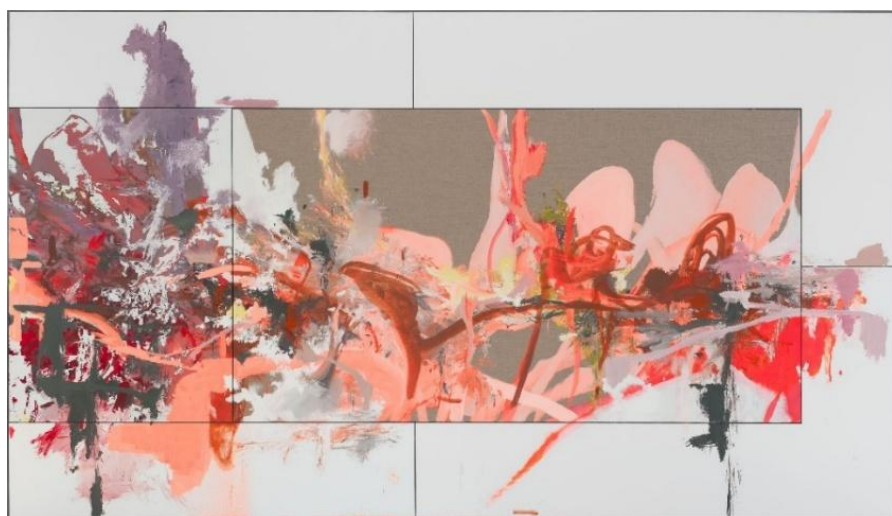


Michael Müller: Thinking about Painting

14 August to 4 October 2025

Venue: gdm (Galerie du Monde), 390 Ruiguang Road, Neihu, Taipei

gdm Taipei is pleased to present “Michael Müller: Thinking about Painting”, featuring the artist’s newest series of paintings bearing the same title in German. *Thinking about Painting* reflects an **introspective process**: one that questions **intentions and interpretations**. Through a diverse array of painterly techniques, Müller investigates the friction between the painted image and the physical limits of the canvas, to challenge long-held assumptions about what a painting is—and what it can become.



*Die Sache selbst als selbst
Erscheinende, 2021*
(en: The Thing in Itself)
Acrylic, Gesso and Lacquer
on Belgian Linen and
Printed Alu-dibond
320.1 x 560 x 5 cm

After a period of 20 years devoted to drawing, Michael Müller’s return to painting in 2014 was inspired by an indomitable urge to counteract the conventional idea of framing. The material sensitivity, large dimensions and irregular forms of his drawings required special framing for protection. It is precisely this restriction that drew Müller back into painting, to question new possibilities of shaping a relationship between the image and the space surrounding it. In 2017, the artist began experimenting with painting on layers of glass atop a base of canvas or aluminum in his series *Vor und hinter dem Glas* (en: In Front of and Behind the Glass), **transforming the material from a passive protective layer into an active painting surface, allowing, guiding, and blocking the viewer’s gaze**. This multi-layered approach produces both a virtual depth through color and form, as well as a physical one, generated by the reflections of the glass, the shadows of the brushstrokes, and the viewer’s own positioning in relationship to the work. *Thinking about Painting* takes this approach one step further.

Each work in *Thinking about Painting* consists of one or two canvases encircled by alu-dibond panels, meticulously cut out to resemble ‘passe-partouts’, completed with aluminum frames. Traditionally the passe-partout, a mediating structure between image and frame, serves to cover the edge of an image, where decisions, repairs, uncertainties, or the materiality of the image support becomes visible. In *Thinking about Painting*, **this boundary becomes a site for activation**; Müller intentionally supersedes the framing edge to construct an ‘open image architecture’, in which the border does not mean disappearance, but form.

The central canvases, layered with painterly brushstrokes and gestures, seem to continue the legacy of Jackson Pollock, and other Abstract Expressionist ‘action painters’ whose spontaneous, non-figurative markmaking conveyed their inner impulses directly onto the canvas, but in *Thinking about Painting* it is the complete opposite, everything follows a well-calculated and planned conceptual intention. To Müller,

abstraction, or rather, the “non-representational,” is not a site of chance, or the absence of a narrative, but instead its transformation.

Conceptually, the creative process in *Thinking about Painting* begins with the canvases that are composed and painted by the artist. The resulting paintings are photographed and printed on A3 or A4 paper, not filling the sheet but leaving white space. The artist notes there his thoughts on the respective work, as well as questions that occurred to him while painting, to integrate this introspection into the work through writing and painting. The paramount question is where a painting begins and where it ends, whether it finds its uncrossable boundary at the edge of the canvas.

Schriftstück, 2022-2025

(en: Document)

Acrylic, Pencil, Gesso and Lacquer on
Printed Belgian Linen and Alu-dibond
240 x 170 cm



In the following step, the canvases are placed in a frame along with the alu-dibond panels. In *Einwirkung* (en: Impact) (2021), the artist then transfers his notes word-for-word with a pencil to the white alu-dibond panels, whereby an imprint of the canvas has been applied to the right-hand panel as an acetone transfer print, so that the work “quotes” itself. In *Die Sache selbst* (en: The Essence) (2021), by contrast, the left canvas had been printed with elements from earlier painted works and then partially covered with paint. Only in the uncovered areas where the unpainted canvas remains visible is the printing recognizable. The artist simulates the forms resulting from these uncovered areas on the right-hand canvas, reversing them into the negative.

In *Die Sache selbst als selbst Erscheinende* (en: The Thing in Itself) (2021), Müller uses a computer to collage and modify a photographic reproduction of the painted canvas, emphasizing single elements and overlapping others. The result of this digital manipulation is largely printed on the left-hand alu-dibond panel. Whereas *Die Sache selbst* negotiates previously created works, *Die Sache selbst als selbst Erscheinende*'s visual language is a commentary on the canvas painting belonging to the finished work of art itself.

Thinking about Painting represents the effort to eliminate post hoc a predetermined delimitation and restriction of the artistic process of painting—namely, the size of the canvas—by extending the image and painting surface and turning the ‘passe-partout’ itself, which actually frames and delimits the picture area, into the painting’s ground, raising the fundamental question of the finiteness and infiniteness of painting. What decisions does the artist make in the limited space of a canvas, which painterly possibilities or alternatives did he decide against, what did he discard in order to be able to realize others and bring them visually into the painting—and in what form are the absences still present in the finished work?

Central to Müller’s practice is an investigation into the fundamental role of the artist, and the intrinsic element of interpretation to understanding a work of art. This topic is broached in one of his earliest work series, *K4* (2000-), where Müller translates Robert Musil’s novel *The Man Without Qualities* into a language of his own making. Effectively rendering the text illegible, Müller prioritizes the presence of the artist or author, over the work’s content. He partakes in a ritual, highlighting the process of creation, a notion that pervades all dimensions of his practice at large. In the artist’s 2018 solo exhibition at gdm Hong Kong, *An Exhibition as a Copy*, he continues this exploration by juxtaposing original works with 3D printed copies, negotiating the artworks’ relationship as active or passive objects.

Müller’s commitment to questioning new possibilities of artistic authorship extends to his painting practice. In *Schriftstück* (en: Document) (2022-2025), the black rectangle to the right of center of the painting is not an autonomous design, but rather a distorted photographic reproduction. For those

familiar with Müller's oeuvre, the image may resemble the entrance of his large format installation *XI. Gesang* (At the Backside of a Gas Station in the Plain of Lethe) (2010-2011), an early exploration into Greek mythology and symbolism. Here, the image is decoupled from its context and transferred to another medium. Through this multitude of transformative processes Müller questions the fundamental role of the artist. Does the artist always have to speak, or is there art that can do without?

Thinking about Painting is Müller's most recent exercise in his ongoing process of artistic searching. Through these paintings that seek to transcend predefined limitations imposed by the shape and size of the canvas, he metaphorically embodies the desire to go beyond—the systems we have been brought up in, the perspectives that we find ourselves chained to; our understandings of ourselves. What would the painting have looked like if the canvas had no edges, or limits? What would be lost from the composition if the artwork was not extended beyond the constraints of its physical borders? This radical rethinking of materially circumscribed boundaries is a core tenant of Müller's practice, which strives to push existing norms to their limits. **As Müller explains, “In painting, I search for what cannot be seen. An artist discovers what is initially invisible. Painting is about making that visible.”**

About the artist



Michael Müller (b. 1970, Ingelheim am Rhein, Germany) is a multimedia visual artist working across painting, text, works on paper, sculpture, found objects, music, and performance. Müller's work interrogates the boundaries of existing historical narratives, scientific methods, social norms, and linguistic systems, pushing them to their limits through transformation, variation, and fictional modifications. His ability to manipulate and transform these systems results in powerful expressions that provoke doubt, disrupt accepted truths, and create a distinct artistic language that reflects his deep engagement with both the material and conceptual aspects of human experience.

In 2022, Müller's monumental work “The Given Day” was exhibited at the Städel Museum in Frankfurt, touring to the Neues Museum in 2025, for the exhibition “Dioscuri – The Given Day” in Berlin as part of the 200th anniversary celebration of the Museum Island. His works can be found in key collections worldwide, including the Städel Museum (Frankfurt), Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), Kunsthalle Mannheim (Mannheim), Kunstmuseum Bonn (Bonn), among others.

Michael Müller studied sculpting and fine arts at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. From 2015 to 2018, he was a professor at the Berlin University of the Arts. He was nominated for the Kunstpreis der Böttcherstraße, Bremen. Müller lives in Berlin.

Artist website: studiomichaelmueller.com

About the gallery

gdm is a Hong Kong-based art gallery founded by Fred Scholle in 1974. Originally opened as Galerie du Monde, gdm represents more than twenty artists, nurturing a diverse roster of artists at all stages of their creative practices with a global perspective. The gallery has been acclaimed for its ground-breaking work in championing artists of postwar and contemporary movements such as Hong Kong's Circle Art Group, and Taiwan's Fifth Moon.

Fostering collaborations with curators and institutions worldwide — gdm operates a dynamic program that encourages imagination and risk-taking, driven to provide opportunities for artists to amplify their voices within their communities, and across platforms in the international contemporary art world.

To celebrate 50 years (1974-2024), gdm opened a new space in Taipei in 2024. With its opening, gdm Taipei will launch “Siōng Tshinn,” a special program that focuses on spotlighting emerging local talent, providing a platform for young, unrepresented Taiwanese artists to showcase their works. Through “Siōng Tshinn,” gdm hopes to plant meaningful and lasting roots in the local art community.

邁克爾·穆勒《關於繪畫的思考》

Michael Müller: Thinking about Painting

2025 年 8 月 14 日至 10 月 4 日

地點：gdm 燦樂畫廊（Galerie du Monde）台北市內湖區瑞光路 390 號一樓

gdm 燦樂畫廊（曾用名：世界畫廊）台北空間欣然呈現《關於繪畫的思考》，展出邁克爾·穆勒（Michael Müller）從 2021 年至 2025 年創作的全新大型繪畫作品。穆勒試圖透過這些超越畫布形制和尺寸預設限制的繪畫，引領觀眾從因果關係開始，切換到不同的框架，打破傳統思維模式，促使人們尋找新的可能性。

如果畫布沒有邊緣或界限，繪畫將會呈現何種樣貌？如果藝術品沒有延伸超越其物理邊界的限制，構圖中又會失去什麼？這種對物質性限定邊界的激進反思是穆勒藝術實踐的核心，旨在將現有規範推向極限。



《Die Sache selbst als selbst
Erscheinende》
（中譯：本質）
2021 年
丙烯、石膏底料和亮漆、
比利時亞麻布和印刷鋁塑複
合板，320.1 x 560 x 6 cm

在長達二十年專注於素描創作後，穆勒於 2014 年重返繪畫，動機源自一股對抗傳統裝裱框架觀念的渴望。其尺寸大幅與不規則形態的素描作品需要用特製畫框裝裱以作保護。正是這種限制促使穆勒重新挑戰繪畫語言，探討圖像與其周圍空間的關係及可能性。2017 年，穆勒開始在其系列《In Front of and Behind the Glass》（中譯：玻璃的兩面）中嘗試於帆布或鋁板上堆疊玻璃層作畫——將材料從被動的保護層轉變為主動的繪畫載體，既能引導，亦能阻隔觀者視線。這種多層次手法不僅透過色彩和形構營造出虛擬的深度，也藉由玻璃的反光、筆觸的陰影以及觀者與作品間相對的位置，產生實體的深度感知。《關於繪畫的思考》正是將此創作方法推向更極端的探索。

《關於繪畫的思考》中的每件作品均由一至兩塊畫布構成，周圍環繞著精心切割以模仿「襯卡」（passe-partout）的鋁塑複合板，並配以鋁框完成整體結構。傳統上，作為圖像與畫框之間的中介結構，襯卡用作於遮蓋圖像邊緣或支撐圖像位置的工具。而在《關於繪畫的思考》系列中，穆勒將襯卡化為「激活物」——穆勒刻意超越裝裱的物理限制，構建一種「開放式圖像建築」，使邊緣不再意味著消逝，而是建構形狀的開端。

透過延伸圖像與繪畫表面，將原本用於界定畫面範圍的「襯卡」轉化為繪畫基底，從而對繪畫的有限性與無限性提出質疑：藝術家如何在畫布的有限空間內做出抉擇？繪畫的過程中藝術家會捨

棄哪些可能性或替代方案？為了實現某些視覺效果，有哪些元素必須被剔除，而這些被剔除的元素又會以什麼形式隱現於完成品中？

位於作品中央的畫布上佈滿富有張力的筆觸，貌似延續了傑克遜·波洛克（Jackson Pollock）及其他抽象表現主義「行動繪畫藝術家」的傳統，他們透過身體行動表達內在，直接刻於畫布之上。然而穆勒的《關於繪畫的思考》卻完全相反——每一處筆觸皆遵循精密計算與預先規劃的概念意圖。對穆勒而言，抽象，或者更確切地說「非具像」，並非偶然性的場域或是失去了敘事，而是一種敘事的轉變。

就概念而言，《關於繪畫的思考》的創作過程始於藝術家構思與繪製於畫布上的痕跡。完成後的畫作被拍攝，並印刷於 A3 或 A4 尺寸的紙本，但並不填滿整個紙面，而是刻意保留空白處。藝術家在這些留白處記錄他對該作品的思考，以及作畫過程中浮現的疑問，藉此將自我反思的過程透過書寫與繪畫的方式雙重形式融入作品。最核心的提問是：一幅畫作始於何處？又止於何處？畫布的邊緣是否真能構成不可逾越的界線？

穆勒對於「界線」的思考，延伸至藝術家的主體和客體性。此議題在他《K4》（2000 年）作品系列中已觸及。穆勒將羅伯特·穆齊爾（Robert Musil）的小說《沒有個性的人》（The Man Without Qualities）翻譯成他自創的語言。穆勒透過使文本喪失可讀性，將藝術家或作者的主體置於作品內容之上，確立為作品的本體核心。通過這種帶有儀式感的創作方式，藝術家強調創作的過程本身的重要性，此概念亦貫穿穆勒藝術實踐的各個層面。2018 年於燦樂香港的個展《作為拷貝的展覽》中，穆勒將原作與 3D 列印的複製品並置，探討藝術品作為「主動」或「被動」對象的動態關係。

在《Schriftstück》（中譯：記載）（2022-2025 年）中，畫作中心偏右的黑色矩形並非獨立構圖，而是一幅變形的攝影。對於熟悉穆勒作品的人而言，這個圖像原圖來自其大型裝置作品《XI. Gesang (At the Backside of a Gas Station in the Plain of Lethe)》（中譯：十一。格桑 [遺忘河加油站後方]）（2010-2011 年）的入口，那是他對希臘神話與象徵主義探索的早期作品。在此，圖像與其脈絡分離，並被轉移到另一種媒介上。透過這種轉變過程，穆勒質疑藝術家的角色：藝術家是否需要持續以話語呈現他們的存在感，以及藝術創作是否可能獨立於藝術家之外？



《Schriftstück》（中譯：記載）
2022-2025 年
丙烯、鉛筆、石膏底料和亮漆、
印刷比利時亞麻布和鋁塑複合板
240 x 170 cm

關於藝術家



邁克爾·穆勒（Michael Müller）是一位跨媒體視覺藝術家，創作媒介涵蓋繪畫、文本、紙上作品、雕塑、現成物、音樂及行為藝術。1970 年出生於德國，擁有四分之一印度血統的穆勒自幼便在東西文化之間穿梭，由此激發了其透過藝術創作來追尋個人身份及集體意識的認同。

穆勒的作品審視歷史敘事、科學方法、社會規範及語言體系的邊界，通過轉化、衍生與虛構再造將這些體系推向極限。他操縱並轉化這些體系的能力，催生出極具衝擊力的藝術表現——這些創作質疑固有認知、顛覆公認真理，並建構出一套獨樹一幟的藝術語言，深刻映射其對於人類經驗中物質與觀念層面的雙重探索。

2022 年至 2023 年，穆勒的二十四屏巨著《The Given Day》於法蘭克福施泰德藝術博物館出，2025 年巡展至柏林新博物館《Dioscuri – The Given Day》，作為柏林博物館島 200 周年慶典的重要項目。穆勒的作品獲重要國際機構收藏，其中包括法蘭克福施泰德美術館、洛杉磯當代藝術博物館、Kunsthalle Mannheim（曼海姆）、Kunstmuseum Bonn（波恩）等。

邁克爾·穆勒在杜塞爾多夫藝術學院主修雕塑與繪畫，2015 年至 2018 年擔任柏林藝術大學教授，曾獲 Kunstpreis der Böttcherstraße 藝術獎提名，現生活於柏林。

藝術家網址 studiomichaelmueller.com

關於燦樂畫廊

燦樂畫廊（gdm）於 1974 年由 Fred Scholle 在香港創辦，遂以世界畫廊（Galerie du Monde）開始舉辦展覽至今。畫廊致力培育及支持藝術家的長期藝術實踐，目前代理了二十多位藝術家。gdm 以其開創性的戰後華人藝術項目而受到國際讚譽，其中包括香港“中元畫會”，台灣“五月畫會”等。

2008 年，gdm 邁進新的里程碑，以當代藝術為重心，致力支持新銳、中生代和亞裔離散藝術家的藝術實踐。推進與策展人和全球機構的合作，為藝術家提供更多元的實驗平台和展覽機會，讓藝術家在本地社區以及國際當代藝術界的舞台上保持活躍，並以最大限度展現他們的理念，發揮當代藝術作為社會參與性論述的潛能。

為慶祝畫廊成立 50 周年（1974-2024），燦樂畫廊於 2024 年底在台北設立新空間，並發布全新“上青”項目，專門發掘本地年輕藝術家，為年輕、未被代理的藝術家提供發表作品的平台，希望透過該項目根植本地藝術社群。