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Who Is the Circus For?

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An artist who addresses social issues through a witty visual language has arrived in Korea: the South American artist Starsky Brines.

His universe is filled with strange beings. Clowns, dogs, cats and characters whose forms cannot quite be identified appear. Who is staging this circus, and for whom? The artist behind these works is the Venezuelan Starsky Brines.

His exhibition takes place at G Gallery in Cheongdam-dong, Seoul. Running from March 7 to April 6, it is titled CIRCUS. Its subject is animal abuse, a worldwide issue. Starsky has frequently connected personal experiences with contemporary social and cultural concerns, and this exhibition continues that approach. Even so, it is lively, energetic and at times seemingly endearing—qualities that seem connected to his witty visual language.

That language also emerges from his working method. Before beginning a work, he does not draw up a detailed plan; he follows the brush across the canvas. His strokes are therefore direct, dynamic and full of speed. At the same time, they breathe life into the characters in his paintings.

For Starsky, violence is a human instinct. While many people hide it away, he deliberately seeks it out and keeps it visible. He reveals the opposing dimensions of humanity and violence without hesitation. The wild and absurd behaviour of his characters gives expression to this.

What remains after looking at several works in this exhibition? Loving and hating; being loved and being hated. One senses the recurring distortions of feeling between humans and animals, or between people, and the reality that accompanies them.

Recent exhibitions in Korea have often favoured photography, architecture and sculpture over painting. Starsky Brines's exhibition offers an opportunity to experience the power of painting once again.