

Simon Cooper

## **Artist Statement**

My work balances the classical and modern world, the figurative and the abstract. The work is a collaboration with the past, bringing historic ideas and imagery into a contemporary lens through paintings, collage and works on paper. Blending elements from across Western art history, I draw inspiration from Medieval illuminated manuscripts, Renaissance tapestries, classical antiquity, and Flemish genre painting. I use the compositional structure within these references as a framework for abstraction. Bacchanalia, feasts and gatherings are themes I regularly revisit within my practice.

Through abstraction, I seek to find the essence and movement within these scenes such as the hand gestures of an intense conversation or the chaotic scene of a spilled glass of wine. This focus on social gatherings and human interaction comes as a response to a rising antisocial presence within the world today that is fueled by social media, ecommerce, and remote work. Inspired by artists such as Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Jan Steen, I recognize the importance of community and society visible in their work and I aim to promote those same values in my work today.