

Stephen Friedman Gallery

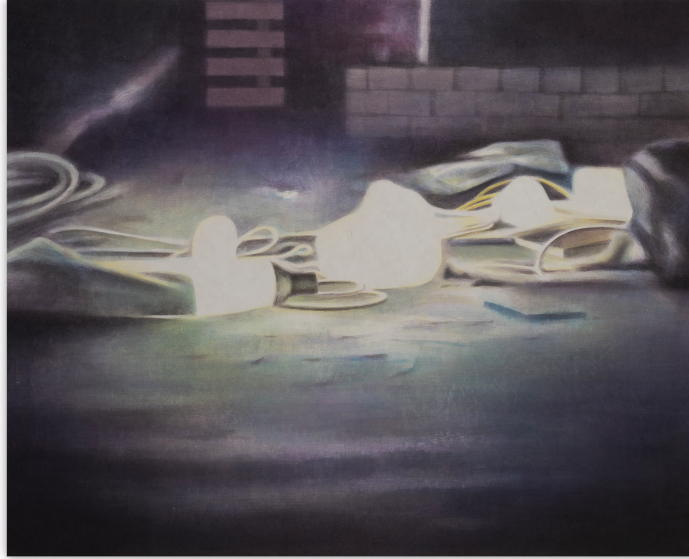
Yooyun Yang: *Uncommon Sight*

**54 Franklin St
New York
10013**

Thursday May 29 – Friday July
18 2025

Opening: Thursday May 29,
6–8 pm

Gallery hours:
Tuesday–Friday, 10am–6pm
Saturday 12–6pm



Stephen Friedman Gallery, New York is pleased to present *Uncommon Sight*, an exhibition of new paintings by Korean artist **Yooyun Yang**. This is the artist's first solo exhibition in New York, following her ambitious US debut in the 58th Carnegie International in 2022.

Yang's paintings depict the space between the real, the imagined and what she describes as the 'visual error' experienced when something is not as it first appears. Working from snapshots, Yang creates enigmatic visual narratives that delve into the corners of contemporary life and the fleeting moments that are frequently overlooked. The artist's technique of building up multiple thin layers of acrylic paint on absorbent Jangji paper - handmade Korean paper made from mulberry tree bark - combined with her soft muted palette coalesce to form a hazy cinematic effect reminiscent of film noir.

Yang's new body of work was inspired by a painting made in 2022, titled *The Site*. While walking through a desolate building in Seoul, she encountered a collection of stage lights which had been abandoned on the floor. At first glance, the pooling of light resembled a luminescent body and it took Yang a moment to register the innocuous reality of what she was seeing. It is this glitch, this moment before our brain has distinguished between the real and the invented, that sparked the artist's imagination. The scene from *The Site* is recreated on a larger scale in Yang's new painting *Visual error*, in which wires from lights tangle like illuminated limbs.

This experience of pareidolia is embodied throughout the exhibition in unexpected, often uncanny encounters. Innocuous objects become anthropomorphic beings with sinister intentions; a metal pole morphs into a neck gripped by fabric, the cord of a window blind resembles a noose. As Yang states, "I am drawn to moments where familiarity and novelty collide, making us feel estranged from mundane subject matters."

Yang similarly explores 'visual error' in her series of close-up portraits. Using cropping and compositional devices to create distance between the subject and the viewer, she conveys the isolation felt in what she describes as the 'age of anxiety' in which we live. Movement in the image reinforces this distance; the subjects' faces are blurred as though they have been captured by a shaky camera. This is achieved through Yang's use of straight brushstrokes, a deliberate departure from the curved lines that typically portray the human form. The viewer has to do the work here, filling in the gaps to create a coherence and stability in an unsteady image. In *Split glitch*, Yang paints a cropped face, the porosity of the Jangji paper lending itself to the subtleties and nuances of skin tone. The subject's gaze is fixed beyond the viewer, their glasses distorted by a glare of light. Yang replicates a kind of double vision in the painting, encouraging the viewer's mind to resolve the image into its true form.

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Contact Us

For press enquiries please contact:
press@stephenfriedman.com

For sales enquiries please contact:
sales@stephenfriedman.com

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info@stephenfriedman.com

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There is an ephemerality to all the works in the exhibition; the sense that we are viewing something fleeting, like the moment just after a snow globe has been shaken, before the particles have settled and the true image is revealed. As curator and writer Hayoung Chun writes of Yang's work, referencing John Berger, 'Perspective establishes a single observer in a specific space-time, organizing all images of reality as if they were definitive. But the lens of the camera reveals, as seen in Yang's images, that there is actually no single center.' Yang's paintings invite us to consider the tricks our minds play on us and the individuality of perception, ever warping within an uneasy world.

Yooyun Yang

Yooyun Yang lives and works in Seoul, Korea. Born in 1985, Yang studied Oriental Painting at Sungshin Women's University in Seoul. The artist has had multiple solo exhibitions in Seoul including at Chapter II; Amado Art Space/Lab; Gallerylux; OCI Museum of Art and Ccot+Incubator. She has also had solo exhibitions at Gallery Bundo in Deagu and Gallery SoSo in Paju.

Yang had a solo exhibition at Blindspot Gallery in Hong Kong in 2024 and was included in group exhibitions at Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York and Thaddaeus Ropac Seoul. She was also selected as one of KAMS' 'Korean Artists Today 2024' and featured in the publication 'Hidden Realms: Korean Artists Today' by ArtAsiaPacific.

In 2023 the artist was included in the Taipei Biennial, Taipei and had solo exhibitions at Primary Practice, Seoul; Night Gallery, Los Angeles; and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. She was also featured in a group exhibition at Ulsan Art Museum, Ulsan. Yang was included in the 58th Carnegie International at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh in 2022 and in the 8th Chongkundang Yesuljisang at Sejong Museum of Art, Seoul in 2021. The artist has also been included in group exhibitions at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Cheongju and Arko Art Center, Seoul. She has carried out residencies at Korea National University of Arts, Seoul; Chapter II, Seoul; Studio White Block, Cheonan; Gyeonggi Creation Center, Ansan-si and Incheon Art Platform, Incheon.

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Stephen Friedman Gallery is a contemporary art gallery that was founded in 1995 with a focus on representing exceptional artists from around the world. Since its inauguration, the gallery has been based in Mayfair, London. In October 2023, the gallery expanded and relocated to Cork Street. In November 2023, the gallery opened its first location outside the UK at 54 Franklin Street in Tribeca, New York.