

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Yooyun Yang

Yooyun Yang's atmospheric and enigmatic paintings are cloaked in darkness and explore the emotional states of people; with scenes conveying existential thoughts and feelings of solitude. Yang frequently conceals faces and subtly captures intimate moments. By using shadow and composition to create distance between the viewer and the subject, the artist articulates a sense of isolation in what she describes as this 'age of anxiety'.

Objects are fundamental to Yang's practice, with motifs of blinds, curtains and railings frequently appearing. By repositioning them through her otherworldly gaze, objects appear increasingly foreign. A hazy, cinematic quality pervades the work and suggests the paintings' photographic origins. Yang takes her own photographs and from them maps out her compositions. The artist paints on hanji paper, traditional Korean handmade paper made from mulberry tree bark. Yang builds up layers of diluted acrylic to control the intensity of the colour. Speaking of her paintings, Yang said 'I want my works to be like a thorn in your mind that pricks from time to time, or like a very gentle fever.'

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 Primary Practice; 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. In 2024 Yang was included in a group exhibition at Thaddaeus Ropac, Seoul. 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 included in a group exhibition at Ulsan Art Museum, Ulsan. In 2022 Yang was included in the 58th Carnegie International at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh and in 2021 in the 8th Chongkundang Yesuljisang at Sejong Museum of Art, Seoul. 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.