

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 Jangji 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. Yang's solo exhibition *Uncommon Sight* at Stephen Friedman Gallery, New York opened in May 2025. This is her first solo presentation in the US since her inclusion in the 58th Carnegie International at the Carnegie Museum of Art in 2022 and follows solo exhibitions at Blindspot Gallery, Hong Kong; Night Gallery, Los Angeles; and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. 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 selected as one of KAMS' 'Korean Artists Today' and featured in the publication 'Hidden Realms: Korean Artists Today' by ArtAsiaPacific. A profile of the artist was also published in The Art Newspaper.

Notable group exhibitions include 'Eighteen Painters', Andrew Kreps, New York (2024); 'Nostalgics on Realities', Thaddaeus Ropac, Seoul (2024); Small World: Taipei Biennial 2023, Taipei (2023); Semi Art Community Project: Boogie Woogie Art Museum, Ulsan Art Museum, Ulsan (2023); '8th Chongkundang Yesuljisang', Sejong Museum of Art, Seoul (2021); 'The Adventures of Korean Painting: I Will Go Away All by Myself', National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Cheongju (2019); and 'October', Arko Art Center, Seoul (2017). Yang has also 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.