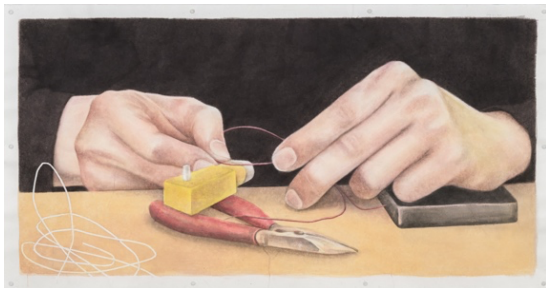


For Immediate Release**Yooyun Yang: With Hands** | 4 June – 13 July 2024

Venue: Blindspot Gallery (15/F, Po Chai Industrial Building, 28 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong)
Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 10:30am – 6:30pm (Sunday and Monday, by appointment only); closed on public holidays

Blindspot Gallery is pleased to present "**Yooyun Yang: With Hands**", the South Korean artist's debut solo exhibition in Hong Kong. With a background in Korean ink wash painting, Yang paints and builds up layers of diluted acrylic on Korean traditional paper, Jangji. Yang's realist paintings of cropped close-ups of people, places and objects are like disjointed excerpts unveiling fragments of a narrative. Incorporating light and shadow to conjure enigma, Yang's paintings which stem from found images and personal snapshots evoke *jamais vu*, turning the mundane into visceral and uncanny tableaux.

"With Hands" presents a new body of work that spotlights labor and its palpable traces in hands and objects. The paintings isolate the hands, heightening a sense of solitude in the menial and repetitive task performed by their owner. Hands are synonymous with manual labor, something that is undervalued and overshadowed in an era governed by digital technology. These paintings are a shift from her earlier works which portray hands with physical wounds, a result of resistance and nonconformity. "With Hands" also features Yang's paintings of worn and discarded objects which display the vestiges of labor, like things that are outlived and have become redundant.

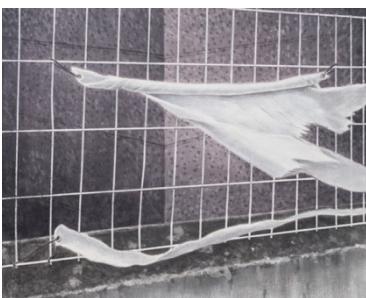


Yang's close-up on the hands accentuates their gestures, movements, and marks which display the traces of labor. Through the use of Jangji, which has a fibrous and skin-like texture, the hands become tactile and evoke a sense of tenderness and intimacy. This texture also captures the state of isolation and concentration that comes with performing repetitive and monotonous tasks.

With Hands is an elongated blow-up of a pair of hands carefully working with a spool of metallic thread, preparing to assemble an appliance. The right-hand sits atop a black electric component which doubles as a hand rest to ease the meticulous and repetitive task. Contrastingly, **A Short Break** captures a moment of respite as a worker takes a break from painting, holding a cigarette between his paint-splattered fingers.



From Early Evening frames in on a hand holding up a lamp to illuminate a dark space, perhaps a symbol of the tireless work that continues even into the night. In **Night Workers**, the legs and hands of the laborers are captured under a glaring light during the nocturnal hours. The shadow cast from beneath the feet of the worker runs beyond the picture frame, positioning us viewers as if we are peering into the scene from a close distance.



Objects become imbued with the remnants of labor, disposed and abandoned because they have outlasted their functionalities and usefulness. Yang analogizes these neglected artefacts with laborers whose value have become undermined. **Trace 1** depicts tattered banners drifting in the wind, forgotten in the corner. They hang merely on two metallic wires hooked onto the drying rack. A sense of melancholy is evoked in the object, the image of the cloth lingering in one's mind. **Net** is a chiaroscuro spotlighting a hole in a net, hinting at a space for potential escape or breakthrough.

Departing from focus on labor, Yang's *Agitation*, *Reflector*, and the *Afterglow in Between* explore the surreality and otherworldliness of nocturnal cityscapes. These works, shrouded in darkness and shaped by light, offer abstract and mysterious imageries. In *Reflector*, the shadow of a stranger is cast upon the shard of mirror, revealing a deserted street with only a single railing. *Afterglow in Between* depicts the silhouette of a folded chair, backlit by an unseen light source. *Agitation* is an intimate diptych that captures the anxious motions of hands, overlaid with a shadowy depiction of skin, creating a sense of unease.

"With Hands" is a continuation of Yang's works which are derived from her observations of the world and scenes which appeal to her emotions. Yang writes that she feels a different sentiment when creating works about labor, with laborers' rights being an issue in modern day society. She parallels laborers struggling and fighting to protect their rights to objects that are worn and torn, like commodities that are no longer relevant. Through this series of paintings, Yang seeks to convey that labor is not merely the execution of a plan and task, but is itself a daily and repetitive practice that requires autonomy and agency, necessary in the day to day.

About Yooyun Yang

Yooyun Yang (b. 1985, Seoul) transforms overlooked crevices of urban contemporary life into fragmented excerpts, often depicting cropped close-ups of people and places with disorienting perspectives. Yang who was trained in traditional Korean ink wash painting creates works by painting layers of diluted acrylic on Jangji paper. With her distinct sensitivity, fleetingly mundane scenes become otherworldly and surreal. Her works which stem from photographs have a hazy and porous texture; juxtaposed with her use of chiaroscuro, the paintings are imbued with a cinematic ambience. Her recent paintings focus on hands displaying the palpable traces of manual labor, conveying the way labor has been undermined in an ultra-technological era. Yang's solo exhibitions were showcased in Primary Practice (Seoul, 2023), Night Gallery (Los Angeles, 2023), Stephen Friedman Gallery (London, 2023), CHAPTER II (Seoul, 2022), Amado Art Space/Lab (Seoul, 2019) and OCI Museum of Art (Seoul, 2014). Her works have also been exhibited at Taipei Biennial 2023 (Taipei, 2023), Ulsan Art Museum (Ulsan, 2023), "58th Carnegie International" in Carnegie Museum of Art (Pittsburgh, 2022), "8th Chongkundang Yesuljisang" in Sejong Museum of Art 1 (Seoul, 2021), Seongnam Cube Art Museum (Seongnam, 2019), and National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Cheongju, 2019), among others. Yang currently lives and works in Seoul.

About Blindspot Gallery

Set up in 2010, Blindspot Gallery is a contemporary art gallery based in Hong Kong. The gallery features diverse contemporary art practices, by emerging and established artists mainly from Asia but also beyond.

For enquiries and media interviews, please contact Ms. Helena Halim at 2517 6238 or by email at helena@blindspotgallery.com

Image Captions:

Yooyun Yang, *With Hands*, 2024, Acrylic on Korean paper (Jangji), 75 x 142.5 cm

Yooyun Yang, *A Short Break*, 2024, Acrylic on Korean paper (Jangji) mounted on panel, 73 x 91 x 2.7 cm

Yooyun Yang, *Trace 1*, 2024, Acrylic on Korean paper (Jangji) mounted on panel, 73 x 91 x 2.7 cm

(Images courtesy of artist, Blindspot Gallery, Hong Kong, and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London and New York.)