



Simon Ko

*Dreams Apart*

January 10 - February 15, 2025

127 Elizabeth Street

New York, NY 10013

Nathalie Karg Gallery is pleased to present Simon Ko's exhibition *Dreams Apart*, on view from January 10 through February 15, 2025 at 127 Elizabeth Street. Ko's new paintings explore the complexity of human relationships, desire, and the space between the self and others. *Dreams Apart* examines the unspoken emotional distance and yearning that often skulks beneath the surface of our interactions.

In *Dreams Apart*, Ko invites viewers into a world where fictional characters dream of desires unmet and unknown to those around them. *Dreams Apart* evokes the sense of longing for something different, something more, while also alluding to the literal and figurative distance between two people. The artist questions the boundaries of relationships, both external and internal, and the ongoing tension between connection and isolation.

The works in *Dreams Apart* reflect a layered artistic process. Some paintings begin with personal observations, while others develop from scattered notes that evolve into scenes, sketches, and narratives. Drawing inspiration from theater, Ko describes the process as an improvisational act, where the outline is ever-shifting, and the final form takes shape through instinct and exploration.

One painting in particular, *Nasty Habits*, captures the aftermath of a disaster, where a woman stands with a fire extinguisher while a man holds a piece of burning paper from a hole in the ground. The scene remains unresolved, leaving the viewer to ponder the cause and consequences. This piece, like many others in the show, touches on the theme of emotional distance—characters caught in moments of unbearable patience and silence, unaware of each other's presence, but united in their longing.

The artist's approach to the formal elements of the paintings emphasizes bold, vivid colors, varied textures, and an intentional looseness in the application of paint. Each work conveys a sense of motion, as if the scene were coming to life before the viewer's eyes. The colors are intense, and the brushstrokes are dynamic, implying different speeds of time and emotion.

A integral source of inspiration for the exhibition comes from a passage in Jorge Luis Borges' short story *Everything and Nothing*, which speaks to the fluid nature of identity and the interplay between dreams and reality: "...history adds that before or after dying, he found himself in the presence of God and told him: 'I who have been so many men in vain want to be one myself.' The voice of the Lord answered from a whirlwind: 'Neither am I anyone; I have dreamt the world as you have dreamt your work, my Shakespeare, and among the forms in my dream are you, who, like myself, are many and no one.'"

Ko reflects on the idea of characters as both many and no one, much like the world itself, which is dreamt into being. This philosophical inquiry informs the entire exhibition, inviting the viewer to contemplate the tension between creation, identity, and the unspoken desires that define us. *Dreams Apart* is an act of questioning—an attempt to explore, through beauty and symbolism, the constant yearning that defines human existence.