

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Julien Nguyen

May 9 to June 28, 2025

Opening: Thursday, May 8, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Julien Nguyen**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 526 West 22nd Street. The exhibition includes twenty new paintings.

Julien Nguyen draws inspiration from disparate historical periods and cultural traditions, collapsing time and distance to create new worlds. Nguyen embodies this approach not only in the content of his work, which references art history, science fiction, contemporary subjects, and the artist's personal life, but also in his materials, which draw from Medieval, Renaissance, and traditional Japanese painting practices. This exhibition presents the artist's first paintings made directly on copper panels, a painting technique first developed during the Middle Ages and later popularized by Old Masters such as Rembrandt and Jan Brueghel the Elder.

Three self-portraits are among the new works on view. In *Anagnorisis*, Nguyen draws from Dieric Bouts's 15th century painting *The Annunciation* but removes Gabriel and Mary from the composition. In their place, Nguyen appears leaning against the back wall, gazing at the now empty room. The title comes from the Greek word for "recognition," used in the context of ancient theatre to describe a protagonist's moment of critical discovery. *Self-Portrait After Gainsborough*, in which Nguyen is seen in an 18th century tricorne hat, is modeled after the work of British painter Thomas Gainsborough.

The exhibition also presents recurring portraits of Nikos, which stem from Nguyen's interest in the conceptual framework of the muse. In these works, based on private moments captured on the artist's cellphone, Nikos is seen smoking, reclining in a chair, and on a balcony against the New York City skyline.

Also on view is a new body of work, in which Nguyen continues an exploration of Los Angeles, in a series of intimate, ten-inch landscapes. An airy skyscape titled *Mt. Olympus* is named for the neighborhood in Los Angeles known for its semi-classical architecture and mythological street names. "I put these things in my paintings as hooks and barbs," Nguyen has said. "It's a constant dance of what is known and what isn't. That is a very fascinating question for me—how do certain images affect us, where do they come from, and how do they exist out of context, in a kind of confused state."

Julien Nguyen (b. 1990) lives and works in Los Angeles. His work was included in the 2017 Whitney Biennial and has been the subject of one-person exhibitions at the Swiss Institute in New York, the Kunstverein München in Munich, and the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati.

Julien Nguyen will be on view at 526 West 22nd Street from May 9 to June 28, 2025, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information please call 212-243-0200 or email inquiries@matthewmarks.com.