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Upstairs Gallery:

The Sleepwalker's Garden: Helia Chitsazan & Ho Jae Kim

May 3 - June 21, 2025

Opening Reception: Friday, May 3, 6 - 8pm



Uffner & Liu is pleased to present *The Sleepwalker's Garden*, a two-person exhibition in the Upstairs Gallery featuring new works by Helia Chitsazan and Ho Jae Kim. The exhibition will be on view from May 3 through June 21, 2025. An opening reception will take place on May 3rd from 6–8pm.

Drawing from dreams, myth, and memory, both artists conjure suspended worlds where narrative and symbolism are teased but never fully unravelled. Their shared visual language – of theatrical lighting, liminal spaces, and surreal mise-en-scènes – creates a hauntingly resonant show that oscillates between waking and dreaming, reality and artifice.

Helia Chitsazan's paintings are rooted in both personal history and diasporic memory. Born and raised in Iran, Chitsazan moved to New York to pursue her MFA. Many of her works originate from dreams: masked parties, unfamiliar interiors, chandelier-lit gatherings where something feels eerily off, as if reflecting her own fractured sense of identity. Her characters often appear mid-gesture, lit by spectral glow, caught in emotionally loaded moments that evoke both alienation and intimacy.

In Chitsazan's paintings, spatial disorientation becomes a metaphor for emotional dislocation. Figures are seen through thresholds, caught in reflection, or fragmented by lighting and composition. These are the scenes that linger after the dream ends—enigmatic, unresolved, and strangely seductive.

Ho Jae Kim's paintings unfold in worlds entirely separate from this one, worlds that he constructs intricately using 3D modeling software. Inspired by the mathematical precision of Piero della Francesca, Kim begins each work by creating digital blueprints of imagined scenes that are then translated into layered inkjet transfers on canvas. Despite this calculated process, Kim's work retains a sense of otherworldly ambiguity – figures drift, architecture dissolves, and time folds in on itself.

Carousel Dream depicts a deserted carnival where two empty carousels revolve in opposing directions – each horse orbiting away from the other in a choreography of longing tension, like an asymptote that never touches the curve. At the center lies a sleeping figure, perhaps the dreamer from whom this vision emanates. In another painting, inspired by the story of Pinocchio, two wooden boys are shaped by anonymous sculptors as their noses grow into twisting branches, overtaking the apple grove around them. Inspired by the composition of Botticelli's *Primavera*, the painting speaks to a fertile cycle of transformation, where falsehoods feed the ecosystem of imagination.

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Together, *The Sleepwalker's Garden* invite viewers into a space where images unfold like the fragments of a half-remembered dream. Rather than offering linear narratives, the works present tableaux rich with metaphor and suggestion: untouchable suns, faceless musicians, shadows in the mirror, gestures caught mid-thought. In this space of disorientation and beauty, meaning is not prescribed but discovered – glimmering, elusive, and deeply felt.

Helia Chitsazan (b. 1995, Tehran, Iran) received her MFA from the School of Visual Arts in 2023 and her BFA in Painting from the Tehran University of Art in 2020. Chitsazan's recent solo exhibitions include *Forces of Change and Memory*, Fou Gallery, New York, NY (2024) and *After Midnight*, Fou Gallery, New York, NY (2023). Her recent group exhibitions include *True Alchemy*, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York, NY (2023); *Take a Break*, Fou Gallery, New York, NY (2023); *CHIMERA*, la Beast Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2023); *All of Our Puny Sorrows*, Pablo's Birthday, New York, NY (2023); and *Cocoon*, New Collectors Gallery, New York, NY (2021). Chitsazan lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Ho Jae Kim (b. 1993, Seoul, South Korea) received his BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2016. His recent solo exhibitions include *Castaway*, Harper's, East Hampton, NY (2024); *Castaway*, GANA art, Seoul, KR (2024); *Ode to Joy*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2023); *Carousel*, Harper's, New York, NY (2023); and *Butterfly Dream*, Harper's, New York, NY (2021). Kim's recent group exhibitions include *Alien*, David Castillo Gallery, Miami, FL (2024); *Arcus*, Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York, NY (2024); *Crescent Heights*, Harper's, Los Angeles, CA (2024); *Dwelling*, Canal Projects, New York, NY (2023); *Evening Shadow*, Make Room, Los Angeles, CA (2023); *RIPE*, Harper's, Los Angeles, CA (2023); and *DISEMBODIED*, Nicodim, New York, NY (2023). Ho Jae Kim's work is included in public art collections such as the JPMorgan Chase Art Collection, New York, NY; the Morgan Stanley Art Collection, New York, NY; and the X Museum, Beijing, China. Kim lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Image: Helia Chitsazan, *Baba (Dad)*, 2025, oil on linen, 24 x 36 in (61 x 91.4 cm)

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