



Anna Jung Seo

O love, how did you get here?

Anna Jung Seo is first and foremost a painter of life, both real and imagined. Seo primarily approaches her subjects in one of two ways: painting from observation or from literary sources. Life and its mysteries are abiding questions. Her compositions are always non-photographic, but based on the imprint of memory, and principally, on the act of painting itself. By stressing substance over verisimilitude, Seo allows multiple narratives to inhabit her work simultaneously. Colour and shape fold into environment, dancing amid the density of freely applied oil paint. The resulting paintings often have a sense of sensual wildness, as if Seo is wrestling with the messiness of life. Anything becomes possible: a moment of freedom, a break from the given rules, of a possible surrender.

Each painting is a riddle. Through the process of painting, Seo poses an intimate query and posits a possible answer. In her second solo exhibition at Project Native Informant, titled *O love, how did you get here?*, Seo revisits the same riddle through a number of paintings made over an extended period of time, asking if time itself changes perspective. In the series *Your Nakedness* (2025), the artist came across some trees with oddly shaped humps and knots while walking in London; she was intrigued by their shape and how, over time, memory transforms what she actually saw. Certain curves or undulations are emphasised, while the texture and tone of the undulating branches shift as the memory recedes in time. The metaphor of tree as life is pressed, as well as how we are shaped over time and space.

Seo deploys a wide-ranging vocabulary of colour, tone and mark-making to delineate psychological interludes at once familiar and uncanny but uniquely her own. The double act of the *Old painter's Nightmare* and the *Old painter's sweet dream* (2025) are loosely based on reading Emile Zola's *The Masterpiece* (1886). A storey of an old painter's passion for painting and strong drive for success mixed with fear of failure, the image is rendered twice. His eyes are closed, the legs exposed up top crotch level, and a blanket over his chest and arms is rendered in soft cream or pink. The viewpoint is from above, suggestive of both spectator and nurse, while the background is indicative of emotional vulnerability. Here Seo's mastery in her craft is displayed in a whirlwind of indigos and magentas. Figures and other lifeforms stir and recede into aqueous grounds of patterned colour. Foreground and background, negative and positive space, work in tandem to create two arresting images.

In the series *Touching and suckling* (2025), the snail is a frail and vulnerable character, hiding amongst the luscious bounty of nature, bulbs filled with nectar overflowing. Seo also shows us the true nature of the beast, eager and devouring on the flowers. Snails play a surprising and extensive part in art: Dali used them as images of impotence, while medieval painters included them in paintings of the Virgin Mary to refer to her modesty. Seo's snails are secretive succubi, as if hiding from fear and shame of their desirous consumption of the flowers. She likens the snails to the desires of babies suckling on their mothers' breasts, at once innocent and voracious. The bulbs are rendered in majestic greens, purples and reds, overlaid on top of cascading streams of blues, oranges and yellows. They are painted without context of place and time, as if the dance between snail and flower is eternal.

Anna Jung Seo (b. 1964, Seoul, South Korea) lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions include Uffner & Liu Gallery, New York in 2024 and Project Native Informant, London in 2023.

List of Works

Clockwise From Entrance

Old painter's sweet dream, 2025

Oil on paper on board

18 × 26 cm (7 1/8 × 10 1/4 in)

Old painter's Nightmare, 2025

Oil on paper on board

18 × 26 cm (7 1/8 × 10 1/4 in)

With fireflies caress (Purple), 2025

Oil on linen

66 × 84 cm (26 × 33 1/8 in)

With fireflies caress (Blue), 2023–2024

Oil on linen

40 × 51 cm (15 3/4 × 20 1/8 in)

Encounter (Ménage à trois), 2025

Oil on linen

30 × 38 cm (11 3/4 × 15 in)

Touching and suckling (Blue), 2025

Oil on paper on board

18 × 26 cm (7 1/8 × 10 1/4 in)

Touching and suckling (Orange), 2025

Oil on canvas

18 × 26 cm (7 1/8 × 10 1/4 in)

Touching and suckling (Yellow/Green), 2025

Oil on canvas

23 × 16 cm (9 × 6 1/4 in)

Touching and suckling (Yellow/Pink), 2025

Oil on paper on board

26 × 18 cm (10 1/4 × 7 1/8 in)

We belong to each other (Greek lessons by Han Kang),
2025

Oil on canvas

21 × 33.5 cm (8 1/4 × 13 1/4 in)

Old man at Akumal beach (Green), 2025

Oil on linen

41 × 51 cm (16 1/8 × 20 1/8 in)

Old man at Akumal beach (Purple), 2025

Oil on linen

51 × 40.5 cm (20 1/8 × 16 in)

After all I am alive only by accident (Pink), 2025

Oil on linen

30 × 38 cm (11 3/4 × 15 in)

After all I am alive only by accident (Green), 2025

Oil on linen

28 × 36 cm (11 × 14 1/8 in)

Hunger angels, 2025

Oil on linen

50 × 64 cm (19 3/4 × 25 1/4 in)

Never let me go, 2025

Oil on canvas

16 × 22.5 cm (6 1/4 × 8 7/8 in)

Your Nakedness (Yellow), 2025

Oil on linen

51 × 41 cm (20 1/8 × 16 1/8 in)

Your Nakedness (Orange), 2024

Oil on linen

61 × 46 cm (24 × 18 1/8 in)

Your Nakedness (Green), 2024

Oil on canvas

26 × 18 cm (10 1/4 × 7 1/8 in)

Your Nakedness (Dark), 2024

Oil on paper on board

26 × 18 cm (10 1/4 × 7 1/8 in)