



Xie Nanxing
Eight Dreams

April 17 – May 23, 2025
520 W 25th Street

Petzel



Eight Dreams

The premise is simple enough: eight paintings, all in the same format, all relating to the artist's dreams. The paintings themselves, however, are less straightforward. Xie's practice is underpinned by a desire to bring figurative painting into new territory, while at the same time questioning the validity of the medium. It is to this end that his dreams have been *exploited*, not interpreted or illustrated, as he turns to the language of the unconscious both as a challenge and for support.



Xie Nanxing
Exploited Dream No. 8
2023

Oil on canvas
78 3/4 x 94 1/2 in
200 x 240 cm
(XN 23/005)



Xie Nanxing
Exploited Dream No. 3
2023

Oil on canvas
78 3/4 x 94 1/2 in
200 x 240 cm
(XN 22/024)



Xie Nanxing
Exploited Dream No. 4
2023

Oil on canvas
78 3/4 x 94 1/2 in
200 x 240 cm
(XN 22/027)

Xie has often used a “canvas print” technique inspired by the process of Chinese ink painting. He paints figuratively on a second unstretched canvas that has been laid on top of the work’s surface, so that when it is removed, only the traces that have seeped through are left behind. As we begin to make sense of the work in front of us, we are reminded that there is another layer of meaning that remains hidden.





Xie Nanxing
Exploited Dream No. 2
2023

Oil on canvas
78 3/4 x 94 1/2 in
200 x 240 cm
(XN 22/026)



Xie Nanxing
Exploited Dream No. 5
2023

Oil on canvas
78 3/4 x 94 1/2 in
200 x 240 cm
(XN 23/001)



Xie Nanxing
Exploited Dream No. 6
2023

Oil on canvas
78 3/4 x 94 1/2 in
200 x 240 cm
(XN 23/002)





Xie Nanxing
Exploited Dream No. 7
2023

Oil on canvas
78 3/4 x 94 1/2 in
200 x 240 cm
(XN 23/003)



Xie Nanxing
Exploited Dream No. 1
2023

Oil on canvas
78 3/4 x 94 1/2 in
200 x 240 cm
(XN 22/010)



Xie's paintings seem both to encourage and resist interpretation. It is this fleeting, elusive quality that Xie seeks to capture. The viewer is confronted with an experience that is often more like trying to piece together a dream, of which only hazy memories remain.



About Xie Nanxing

Xie Nanxing (b. 1970, Chongqing, China) lives and works in Beijing and Chengdu, China. Over the past three decades, Xie has developed a singular practice that draws from both Chinese and Western traditions, exploring and expanding the psychological and formal possibilities of figurative painting. He first drew international attention at the 48th Venice Biennale (1999) where he presented a series of quasi-photorealist self-portraits and male nudes in vulnerable, wounded states. In the early 2000s, Xie began to use blurred photographs and increasingly mediated source imagery to create large-scale paintings that verged on abstraction, three of which were exhibited at Documenta in 2007. He has since introduced a wider range of approaches into his practice, notably including a “canvas print” technique in which he paints onto a second canvas such that only the traces that have seeped through to the base canvas remain on the completed work.

Xie has exhibited widely internationally with solo exhibitions at Capitain Petzel, Berlin (2024); Petzel, New York (2022); Galerie Urs Meile, Beijing (2024, 2020, 2015); Thomas Dane Gallery, London (2023, 2019); Pingshan Art Museum, Shenzhen (2021); Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2018); Kunstverein Hamburger Bahnhof, Hamburg (2005); Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester (2003); and Pulitzer Gallery, Amsterdam (1998).