

Dabin Ahn

Nocturne

March 27 – June 6, 2026

DOCUMENT is delighted to present *Nocturne*, Dabin Ahn's first solo exhibition with the gallery, opening on Friday, March 27.

Ahn creates paintings that occupy the space between image and object. Working from a vocabulary of ceramic vessels, stones, candles, and personal effects—subjects he understands as stand-ins for the self—he builds meticulously rendered scenes that draw on 20th-century painting history and Joseon dynasty porcelain traditions. He constructs his own frames and panels, shaping and painting over the canvas edge to extend each composition into physical space.

The Four Seasons introduces video into Ahn's practice for the first time. This painting incorporates a functioning screen, showing fragments of videos recorded by the artist over three years of travel and daily life: cityscapes, birds in flight, fireworks, the moon. The footage plays forward then loops backward in an infinite cycle. Made in a period of personal loss, the work turns on the question of what it means to hold time, to move through it in both directions at once, to find in its passage something other than finality. The motif of time is also present in the freestanding wood work *Ephemeral (Sculpture)*, which presents a pair of butterflies and a candle painted on small, fractured stones that rest on brass rods, recalling museum displays of archeological fragments and small artifacts.

Night is the dominant atmosphere of the exhibition: crescent moons, darkened treelines, lone lit windows, sky caught between last light and full dark. Mother of pearl inlay recurs throughout as a material gesture, moons that glow from within the painted surface. *Torso (Nocturne)* takes the silhouette of an armless, headless ancient sculpture of Venus, filling it with red sky giving way to a deep blue, starry night, and shows a small house with lit windows just visible through the trees. In *Homesick*, a diagonal slash of charred wood bark divides the picture plane: a crescent moon on one side, a dark apartment building with a single glowing window on the other. Small paintings like *Nocturne* and *Nocturne II* also share this quality of suspended time, landscapes caught at the precise moment between one condition and the next. Against this nocturnal backdrop, the candle, threaded through broken stone fragments on brass rods, its flame bisected yet burning, becomes the exhibition's central figure.

Dabin Ahn (b. 1988, Seoul, Korea) lives and works in Chicago, IL. Ahn received a BFA and MFA in Painting from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Recent solo exhibitions include *Golden Days*, François Ghebaly, Los Angeles (2026); *Good Things Take Time*, Harper's, New York (2024); *Silent Whisper*, 1969 Gallery, New York (2024); *Staged*, OCHI, Los Angeles (2023); and *One-Off*, Shatto Gallery, Los Angeles (2022). Selected group exhibitions include *I Go To Seek A Great Perhaps*, Make Room, Los Angeles (2024); *36 Paintings*, Harper's, East Hampton (2024) and *Storage Wars*, The Hole, Los Angeles (2023). His work is held in the permanent collections of the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA and X Museum, Beijing, China.

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