

Artsy
“5 Artists on Our Radar This January”
Sarah Dotson
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Recent Columbia MFA grad Mark Yang’s career might just be beginning, but his colorful, swirling canvases of wrestlers have already been exhibited at galleries in New York and Los Angeles. In his work, Yang reimagines and reconsiders two art historical tropes: the idealized nude and depictions of great strength. Much like the grand marble wrestlers sculpted in Hellenistic Greece or George Bellows’s frenetic paintings of New York’s underground boxing scene, Yang’s work contemplates masculinity and explores the act of imbuing movement in a static image. His wrestlers show softness and strength, tangled in front of dazzling planes of color and dreamlike landscapes.

Yang’s grad school experience, like many others, took an unexpected turn with the onset of COVID-19. While many 2020 graduates worried about the fate of their thesis exhibitions, Yang and his classmates at Columbia had the chance to mount an online show, “Alone Together,” with Steve Turner after Turner connected with Yang’s fellow classmate Susan M B Chen. In 2021, Yang’s postponed thesis exhibition will go up at Columbia’s Wallach Art Gallery.

—Sarah Dotson

