



ob, *Eat and Become One*, 2025. Colored pencil, oil pastel, and oil on canvas. 39 1/2 x 28 11/16 x 2 3/8 inches. ©2025 ob/Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Courtesy Perrotin.



ob, *Emotional Time Lag*, 2025. Colored pencil, oil pastel, and oil on canvas. 63 15/16 x 38 3/16 x 2 1/2 inches. ©2025 ob/Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Courtesy Perrotin.

## OB PHANTOM TALES

January 16 - February 21, 2026

Perrotin New York is pleased to present *Phantom Tales*, an exhibition of new paintings and drawings by Japanese artist ob. Belonging to a generation that grew up immersed in online worlds, ob's work explores how imagination can blur and merge with reality.

In ob's paintings, familiar objects become tangible representations of intangible ideas—time, emotion, and memory. Her hazy atmospheres are in contrast with rigid forms, such as smartphones or toys, creating a feeling akin to a lucid dream. Inspired by *nui-dori*, a Japanese hobby of taking photos of stuffed toys in everyday life, the objects in her paintings carry their own stories. Globally recognizable icons that have transcended cultural and generational boundaries—Pikachu, Hello Kitty, Kirby—become symbols of the emotional nourishment that can be drawn from shared experiences.

The title of the exhibition, *Phantom Tales*, references a ghostly presence, or a story that lingers between fiction and reality, life and death. ob's recurring motifs—water, glass, and mirrors—welcome uncertainty, often containing faint silhouettes within their boundaries that suggest otherworldly presence. Whether interpreted as imaginary friends or projections of the subconscious, they reveal ob's interest in forms of connection that reach beyond the physical and temporal worlds - much like stories that persist through generations, offering solace, reflection, and inspiration.

In the exhibition, ob explores the power of imagination, both to heal and distort. As technology becomes increasingly intertwined with daily life, it's easier to retreat into our own minds rather than engage with the world around us. In *Phantom Reflection*, the viewer sees the reflection of a girl captivated by her phone, immersed in the digital realm and unaware of her surroundings. In *Separate Selves*, dual versions of the same figures appear in one frame, leaving the viewer uncertain of which are real and which are phantoms. Her paintings suggest that when we rely on systems that reinforce our preconceptions rather than seek truth, authentic connection becomes fleeting.

ob has described her figures as young people who are “wandering through adolescence full of uncertainty.” She believes that as we go through life, each experience becomes a memory that shapes our identity. The motifs in ob's work allow for multiple readings, inviting viewers to insert their own experiences. In recent work, the central figures are often accompanied by small dolls, perhaps a projection of their inner selves. Adorned with all-seeing eyes yet painted without mouths, ob's figures embody the tension between awareness and silence—reflecting the elusive complexity of the mind. Interested in the idea that a single moment can be experienced differently by each person, and yet shared through collective memory, ob leaves us with a final question: where do stories come from, and why do certain stories endure?