



Hilma's wing, 2025, paint skin and metal,
25 x 31 x 23 in., (63.5 x 78.7 x 58.4 cm).

48 WALKER ST | APR 5 – MAY 10, 2025

Kennedy Yanko

Epithets

James Cohan is pleased to present *Epithets*, an exhibition of new work by Kennedy Yanko, on view from April 5 - May 10, 2025, at 48 Walker Street. This is Yanko's first exhibition with the gallery. James Cohan will host a conversation between Kennedy Yanko and Dario Calmese at 5pm on April 5th. This will be directly followed by an opening reception from 6 - 8 PM. *Epithets* is presented in collaboration with Salon 94, where a concurrent major presentation of work by the artist is accompanied by an exhibition curated by Yanko.

Steeped in modernist visual languages—from Abstract Expressionism to Arte Povera—Yanko's works occupy the generative space between abstraction and figuration, the surreal and the earthbound. Precisely calibrated interplays between soft and hard elements, between found materials and constructed components, establish a unique visual syntax that speaks to both sculptural traditions and painterly concerns. Yanko's sculptures embody expressive gestures—their folds and curves perform as brushstrokes or voluminous pours made solid, transforming the ephemeral movement of the painter's hand into permanent spatial configurations. In pieces such as *Lost lagoon*, 2024 and *Church hat*, 2024, color becomes form itself—an actualization of chromatic ideas through deftly manipulated skins of paint. The vibrating hues on contorted, folded steel and painted surfaces reference both contemporary industrial products and the luminous colors employed by 20th-century masters such as Helen Frankenthaler, Sam Gilliam, and Anne Truitt.

For nearly a decade, Yanko has focused on how color, form, and substance coalesce to create both physical and psychological presence. With a view towards the latter, *Epithets* represents the next chapter in Yanko's unflinching exploration of the mind's hidden landscapes. According to Yanko: "*for the first time in a long time, the work is guttural. I dropped down into the dark place within me and dared to look under the hood, at what I knew was seething there but couldn't bear to confront for fear of what might ooze out and stick...I can't separate myself from my shadow, and the metal and paint skin can't seem to escape each other...*" Like artifacts unearthed from the psyche, these works stand as raw testimonies to untamed elements—not seeking resolution, but standing as witnesses.

Through this investigation of the Jungian shadow—those repressed aspects of self—Yanko's latest body of work employs a spectrum of obsidian and ebony tones paired with gleaming chrome and duskily patinated metals. Yanko's assertive use of black functions not merely as absence but also as material presence—a gravitational force that both absorbs light and defines spatial relationships. Accented with strategic flashes of vibrant color, the sculptures on view function simultaneously as three-dimensional paintings and extrasensorily activated objects appearing weightless – as if they were on the verge of taking flight or drawing breath.

Wall-mounted sculptures such as *Cowboy, gangster, politician*, 2024 and *Trembling down*, 2024 playfully defy the established geometric rigor typically prescribed to sculptural practice, giving the illusion of folding and drooping in response to gravity. The matte finishes render the steel seemingly malleable, and the folds operate in tension with their perceived lightness, confounding the limits of perception. In Yanko's sculptures, the performative aspects of both making and viewing come together as the viewer's movement around the works completes the circuit begun by the artist's physical manipulation of her materials, creating an immersive experience defined by energetic color and flourishing forms.

Kennedy Yanko (b. 1988, St. Louis, MO) has been included in significant exhibitions at the Albertina Modern (2024); Brooklyn Museum (2022; 2024); CFHill (2022); Parrish Art Museum (2022); Rubell Museum (2021), where she was the 2021-2022 Artist in Residence and first sculptor to hold the residency; and the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (2019). Yanko's work is held in major private and institutional collections such as Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; Bunker Artspace, West Palm Beach, FL; Espacio Tacuari, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Firestorm Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden; Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Boston, MA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL; Pérez Art Museum Miami, FL; Rubell Museum, Miami, FL; Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC; Ståhl Collection, Norrköping, Sweden; and Stora Väsby Sculpture Park, Upplands Väsby, Sweden.

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