

KUKJE GALLERY

Kyung Jeon · Eemyun Kang



August 23 –September 23, 2012

Exhibition Information

Artist: Kyung Jeon (Korean-American, b.1975), Eemyun Kang (Korean, b.1981)

Exhibition Dates: August 23 –September 23, 2012

Exhibition Space: Kukje Gallery K1

Website: www.kukjegallery.com

About the Exhibition

Kukje Gallery is pleased to announce a two-person exhibition of Kyung Jeon and Eemyun Kang. Known for their unique idiosyncratic approach to painting, the artists are widely celebrated for playing with symbolic vocabularies and formal approaches to painting. Jeon and Kang will both exhibit new works made specifically for the exhibition.

Based in the US, Kyung Jeon's work is founded on the artist's keen interest in creating psychological narratives, many of which directly reference her experiences growing up as a first generation Korean American. Eemyung Kang lives and works in London. Receiving attention since her studies at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, Kang has developed a recognizable style that explores core themes of nature and the myth of metamorphosis.

Kyung Jeon (Korean-American, b.1975)

Kyung Jeon's work draws on influences as diverse as children's fairy tales, traditional Korean genre paintings, and modern canonical paintings. Her playful and often dark stories are based on a combination of personal and historical references that upturn static themes of childhood and innocence. Known for her subtle application of traditional and contemporary painting styles, Jeon paints on rice paper mounted to canvas. Exploiting the rice paper's traditional reference to Korean folk painting alongside her own funny and uncanny themes the artist is able to explore the intersection of past and present.

Jeon's paintings are immediately inviting, presenting a light-hearted and innocent world depicted in pastel-toned images of semi-nude girls and cheeky little boys. However, upon closer look, the works reveal an alternate reality brimming with acts of violence and earthly pleasures. The artist is adept at weaving these dark and light themes together in dynamic compositions that draw the viewer in and allow them to reconsider their own nostalgic reality.



Waterlilies Whirlpool, 2012

For her exhibition at Kukje, Jeon will exhibit a new series of mural-sized works titled *Waterlilies*. Her *Waterlilies* capture an arcadian world inspired by Claude Monet's seminal series *Water Lilies*. The gentle setting is framed as a paradisaical microcosm for children only to slowly betray its more sinister identity as a place for wickedness, from swimming and playing to spying and drowning. Numerous disparate stories are presented together in a complex web that has no beginning or end. The works in this new series engage the artist's on-going exploration of storytelling by a means of filling-in, reinventing, and re-sorting gaps in history.

Kyung Jeon will also exhibit a selection of recent paintings. Each of these smaller vignettes frame an isolated story, depicting a world defined by a complex marriage of childhood memories such as fear, trauma, and conflict as well as grown-up experiences, such as emotional maturity and wisdom. The characters in these works are sometimes referential of her own life. According to Jeon, “the characters evolve from an interpretation of my personal experiences, which are transformed into fantasy”.

About the Artist

Kyung Jeon was born in 1975 in Jersey City, New Jersey. She studied art and philosophy in Boston College and received her MFA from the School of Visual Arts, NY. Jeon is the recipient of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2009) and was the Associate Artist in Residence at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, funded by the Joan Mitchell Foundation (2009). She has held numerous solo exhibitions including Savannah College of Art and Design, and participated in group exhibitions in museums and galleries in Asia, U.S.A., Europe and South America, including Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul. Jeon lives and works in NYC.

Eemyun Kang (Korean, b.1981)

Eemyun Kang's exquisite paintings depict her fascination with nature and the process of morphology. Aply translating organic forms into lush abstractions, Kang creates complex worlds marked by energetic and fluid brush strokes.

For the exhibition at Kukje Gallery, Kang takes the changing seasons as a central motif. In addition she has combined a disparate group of literary sources as inspiration including Alaskan Inuit myths, a poem *A year of thinking / thinking of a year* by artist and writer Fabian Peake, written in response to and inspired by Kang's paintings, and the Biblical story of Jonah and the whale. These three sources form the basis for the narratives contained in Kang's new paintings.



Valley of the Rorqual, 2012

The artist defines myth as a tool for understanding nature and events in the real world. For Kang, “Myth is a tool that operates through the creative imagination. Myth as traditional tales, legends and folklores are also linked with use of myth in my paintings as a starting point for creating a narrative of events.”

The ideas behind these stories are not illustrated figuratively or in a linear narrative but are intended to be read by the viewer intuitively. The stories allude to simple pictorial references including whales, fungi,

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snow, wind, moon, forests and valleys. These elements shift and combine, allowing for transformation to take place on a metaphorical level and formally in complex layers of paint on canvas.

Alternating between abstract and figurative registers, Kang creates imagined hybrid worlds or mystic landscapes. In Kang's paintings, the paint and canvas constitute transformative elements that mediate between subject and object, subconsciousness and consciousness, abstraction and figuration. Kang is also known to leave the canvas appear unfinished, a decision that activates the canvas and mirrors nature's infinite process of change and transformation.

About the Artist

Eemyun Kang was born in 1981 in Busan, Korea. She obtained her BA from The Slade School of Fine Art and completed her postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Arts, where she was awarded the school's prestigious Gold Medal upon graduation in 2009. She will also receive her doctorate degree from University of East London in November this year. Kang's work has been exhibited widely in the UK as well as internationally, including group shows at the Seoul Arts Center, and the Korean Culture Center in London. She has a solo exhibition forthcoming in 2012 at the Trondheim Museum of Art, Norway. Eemyun Kang currently lives and works in London.

Exhibition Images & Captions

Use of images **must** clearly credit the artist and other relevant parties.



Kyung Jeon (Korean-American, b.1975)

Waterlilies Whirlpool

2012

Watercolor, gouache, pencil on rice paper on canvas

151.1 x 274.3 cm

Courtesy the artist and Kukje Gallery



Kyung Jeon (Korean-American, b.1975)

Waterlilies Gliding Parachutes

2012

Watercolor, gouache, pencil on rice paper on canvas

151.1 x 274.3 cm

Courtesy the artist and Kukje Gallery

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Eemyun Kang (Korean, b.1981)
Valley of the Rorqual
2012
oil on canvas
170 x 250 cm
Courtesy the artist and Kukje Gallery



Eemyun Kang (Korean, b.1981)
Whalescape
2012
oil on canvas
170 x 250 cm
Courtesy the artist and Kukje Gallery