

Never Ending Stories

Nov. 20. 2018 - Jan.12. 2019

Part 1: Nov. 20 – Dec. 15

Part 2: Dec.18 – Jan. 12. 2019

Opening Reception: Tuesday, Nov. 27. 2018 6 – 8 pm

Artists: Tae Kyu Yim, Young Mi Kim, Sung Won Kang, Young Sook Hong, Lee So

Gallery JSA

214 W 39th street New York 10018

For Immediate Release:

Gallery JSA is pleased to present '*Never Ending Stories*' as our inaugural exhibition to the art world, a series of two exhibitions of five Korean artists--**Tae Kyu Yim, Young Mi Kim, Sung Won Kang, Young Sook Hong, and Lee So**. This inaugural exhibition marks the beginning of Gallery JSA as an exhibition space for the Arts. Gallery JSA will offer an environment for outstanding exhibitions, lectures, and special projects. It will provide a platform to introduce under-recognized artists to the audience in New York and international art world in addition to cooperating with cultural institutions and other galleries.

Never Ending Stories will run from November 20, 2018, to January 12, 2019, with an opening reception held on Tuesday, November 27 from 6 - 8 pm at 214 West 39th Street, New York, NY 10018. This exhibition is divided into two sections; in Part 1, the artist Tae Kyu Yim will have a first solo presentation of his old and recent body of works in the United States; in Part 2, a group of four painters will showcase their multivalent forms of painting, both figurative and abstract, in various media.

An art critic Robert C. Morgan mentioned in an essay written for the exhibition catalog the artists' works are "expressing something vivid and alive to discover forms that possess elasticity and strength, and to evoke new ideas through the medium of painting." While the artists communicate their ideas through their individual focus on the medium of painting, the visually expressive forms suggest viewers with various backgrounds an opportunity to engage in Korean culture and its recent history. While all five artists have their respective experiences with Korean identity, the artists collectively underwent the same eras where the radical socio-economic and political evolution progressed in Korea. The artists allude to the audience their personal accounts of the radically changing times from the 80s to present while unfolding the narratives through painting, be it their techniques derived from Korean tradition or the subject matter.

Viewers can easily notice a child-like whimsical quality in Tae Kyu Yim's works. Growing up in Korea in the 80s and 90s, Yim witnessed the chaos created by the adults and clashing of values in the society. In his own right, he rejects the social notion of burdening individuals with complication and responsibilities as an adult. He then started his art practice based on this experience and creates anonymous characters that are neither adults nor children, also known as "Kidults." By dousing his uncanny yet humorous characters with bright colors and bold outlines Yim seemingly attempts to ease the unrecognized tension we burdened ourselves with. In his most notable and substantial work *Erehwon*, which name is nowhere spelled backward, is an eccentric work of approximately 30 feet wide that depicts a utopia of Kidults harmoniously living and playing together that applies methods inspired by Korean traditional painting techniques.

Young Mi Kim captures the physical and emotional movement of the human body, a practice solidified by her continuous focus on croquis and Korean ink painting. The results of her uniquely developed practice is a moderately fragmented and distorted images of human figures with often simplified backgrounds and vivid colors. Her subjects' facial expressions and contorted movements cannot be easily interpreted whether they are in pain or rapture. It is hard not to draw attention to her hardships with clashing moral

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values brought after the challenging times of post-Korean war. With her early experience in distorted moral and family values, Kim continues to question the human identity and empathy with her studio practice.

Sung Wong Kang's decades of focus on the Asian painting is obvious in not only in his techniques and use of materials but also in his subjects. He was one of the early pioneers who studied abroad in China at Beijing Central Academy of Fine Arts after majoring in Asian painting in Korea. Although Korea's liberalization of international travels in the early 1990s led to a major influx of new media and Western contemporary art, Kang continued his practice in traditional Asian painting additionally by taking an apprenticeship under Jong Sang Lee, a nationally recognized traditional Korean painter. In the face of artistic upheaval, Kang finds original approaches to the tradition as he turns to Goguryeo tomb murals and folk paintings for answers.

Young Sook Hong's natural aptitude in liberal expression in art changed suddenly from her early 20s due to the unstable Korean political situation. It led her to study abroad in the United States and the intense experience of confusion in her identity continued for 20 years since. Hong says this disabled her from capturing the reality of social experience. Instead, she has devoted her studio practice to abstraction art for many years inspired by sensual aesthetics and logical reasoning.

Lee So introduces *Belle Époque*, a series of paintings created with a particular method called engraving painting. She creates concentric circles and places natural subjects such as trees. Lee So, to some extent, is skeptical of the fast-paced, ubiquitous technology the contemporary society lives with and turn to nature as an ideal mental state. By utilizing modern chemical material to depict a natural subject, Lee So juxtaposes the irony of the contemporary human condition.

About the artists:

Tae Kyu Yim was born in 1976 in Seoul. He currently lives and works in Beijing. Tae Kyu Yim received a BFA degree in Asian Painting at Seoul National University in 2000. A contemporary artist with a background in oriental painting, Yim has developed an original approach to classical Asian painting techniques with layers of paper and ink, in conjunction with other materials. His works frequently narrate and juxtapose the reality of cultural and social issues, as well as his personal struggles as a man. Yim has held a number of solo exhibitions and group exhibitions internationally. His paintings were auctioned at Christie's Hong Kong and his work is part of the main collections of the KUMHO Museum and the Song Eun Art & Culture Foundation in Seoul, South Korea.

Young Mi Kim lives and works in Seoul. She earned her BA in Korean Painting at Wonkwang University and her MFA degree at Hongik University. Since the 1990s, Kim consistently pushed herself in the medium of painting - both in traditional Asian and in figurative oil painting. She has been exhibited internationally, most notably in Katholisch-Sozialen Institut der Erzdiözese in Köln, Germany and National Contemporary Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea.

Sung Won Kang lives and works in Seoul. He received his MA from Beijing Central Academy of Fine Arts, China and BA in Asian Painting from Seoul National University, Korea. Kang has mastered the techniques used in traditional Asian paintings in both Korea and China and applied it to a series of paintings with brilliant folk-style interpretations of symbolic figures and animals.

Young Sook Hong was born in 1964 in Seoul, where she currently lives and works. She received her MFA degree from Brooklyn College and BFA from University of California, Los Angeles. She subsequently studied Computer Graphics and Interactive Media at the Pratt Institute, where she received another MFA degree. Unfolding her personal and emotional narratives through art, her work embodies a strong mystical sensibility and refer to icons in art history for inspiration.

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Lee So lives and works in Seoul. She received BFA and MFA from the 8th University of Paris, France. Leeso's approach to painting differs from the traditional sense of application of color and shapes. Instead, she builds chromatic bas-relief surfaces on her canvas to create rhythmical landscapes and organic shapes of the nature.

About Gallery JSA:

JSA is an acronym for the Joint Security Area. The Joint Security Area is the only portion of the Korean Demilitarized Zone where South and North Korean forces stood face-to-face and as of April 2018, it has become a symbol of peace and reconciliation to many people of Korea. Gallery JSA envisions an art space accommodates diverse art and culture.

For further information, please contact Inkook Choi at gallery@galleryjsa.com.