

MIRU KIM

CV + Ausstellungsübersicht

CV

Born 1981, Stoneham, MA, USA)

Lives and works in New York

2006 M.F.A, Painting, Pratt Institute, New York, NY.

2003 B.A, French and Romance Philology, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Austellungsübersicht (Auswahl)

Solo exhibitions

- 2014 The Camel's Way, Trunk Gallery, Seoul, Korea.
2013 The Camel's Way, The Pier-2 Art Center, Kaohsiung, Taiwan.
2012 The Pig That Therefore I Am, Trunk Gallery, Seoul, Korea.
The Pig That Therefore I Am, DOOSAN Gallery New York, New York, NY.
2010 Naked City Spleen: Istanbul, SODA Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey.
2009 Miru Kim: Naked City Spleen, Gallery HYUNDAI Gangnam, Seoul, Korea
(catalogue essay by Richard Vine, Art In America).
Naked City Spleen and Blind Door, The Cell Theatre, New York, NY.
2008 Naked City Spleen, Gestarc Gallery, Brooklyn, NY.

Group exhibitions

- 2017 *A Sustaining Life*, Waterfall Gallery and Mansion, 170 E 80th St, New York, NY.
2016 *As the Moon Waxes and Wanes*, MMCA Gwacheon 30 Year Anniversary Special
Exhibition, The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea.
2015 *60 Americans*, curated by Terrence Sanders and Noah Becker,
Elga Wimmer PCC, New York, NY.
Body and Freedom Festival, Biel/Bienne, Switzerland.
2012 *The Body in Languages*, New York-Berlin Exchange Exhibition,
Korean Cultural Service NY, Korean Cultural Center Berlin.
Les Mangeurs, Orange, the Contemporary Art Event of Sain-Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada
Modus Vivendi, Pierogi Gallery, Brooklyn, NY.
"How to Catch an Eel" performance, *To the Stars on the Wings of an Eel*,
Gowanus Ballroom, Brooklyn, NY.
Urban Wild, Snap! Orlando, a project of The Lucie Foundation, Orlando, FL.
2011 "I Like Pigs and Pigs Like Me (104 hours)" performance,
Here Lies Georges Wildenstein, Primary Projects, Miami, FL.
2011 *Winter Salon*, curated by Björn Ressle and Hee Yuen Chun, Elga Wimmer PCC, New York, NY.
2010 *Sueño, Amor y Paz*, National Museum of Visual Art, Montevideo, Uruguay.
Fokus Łódź Biennale 2010, Poland.
The Moment, 63 Sky Art, 63 Building, Seoul, Korea.
Artist's Body, Coreana Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea.
2009 *Faces & Facts: Korean Contemporary Art in New York*, Queens Museum of Art, Queens, NY.

- 2008 *Secret Spaces: Cecily Kahn, Rachel Burgess, Miru Kim*, Jonathan Frost Gallery, Rockland, ME.
2005 *Post Production Dialogue*, Arttransponder e.V., Berlin, Germany.
Objects of Comfort, Werketage Saarbrücker Strasse e.V., Berlin, Germany.
Spontaneous Generation, Ars Subterranea, New York, NY.

Texte

Miru Kim is a New York-based artist and explorer. Her first photography series that put herself in various urban ruins and infrastructure was featured in the New York Times, and the Best and Brightest Issue of Esquire Magazine in 2008, which led her to do a TED talk. She then went onto her next series "The Pig That Therefore I Am," which was featured in countless international media, and juxtaposed her skin against the pig's skin in industrial hog farms to explore the changing relationship between humans and animals. Her third series has followed her journey in deserts around the world, where she lived with nomads and slept in caves, and photographed herself with camels. She has now begun her new series on edible larvae in tropical and subtropical regions. Miru's work is now in various public collections including the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Korea, Seoul Museum of Art, The Museum of Photography Seoul, Leeum Samsung Museum of Art, Borusan Contemporary Turkey, and Addison Gallery of American Art.

Statement

The artist's body functions as a sensory window into the space depicted within the image frame. The primal human element is a direct way for the audience to imagine and feel the texture and the scale. They are usually places that are difficult to access - urban ruins and infrastructure, massive industrial hog farms, vast exotic deserts, and the deep jungles. I am increasingly interested in the underlying theme of environmental awareness, the relationship between humans and animals, and the use of natural resources, especially food. The ongoing work will also comment on the portrayal of exotic women in art history.

Longer Statement

My past photography series have included an underlying theme of environmental awareness, more specific to the relationship between humans and animals. Especially in "The Pig That Therefore I Am," where I mingle my body amongst pigs in industrial hog farms, the visual poetry is heavily laden with critique on the modern vision of animals as raw material for mass commodity production. Then, for the next series "The Camel's Way," I raised the question, "would human cultures even exist in deserts without the domestication of camels?" The primary reason why I went to search for desert nomads around the world was because they still heavily rely on animals like how our ancestors did, before the industrialization. After having immersed myself in their cultures and spending three years of my life in different deserts around the world, I came up with a poetic exploration of the relation between humans and camels, again using myself as a focal human figure in its natural form, in this case, emphasizing the vulnerability.

Miru Kim

Recent Article / August 2018

Miru Kim's wanderlust

A Korean art photographer taking nude camel selfies speaks from her solar-powered cave

7 August 2013

Text: [Marie Tae McDermott](#)





The daughter of one of Korea's most famous contemporary philosophers, [Miru Kim](#) was once slated to become a doctor. Instead she set out for the unknown, trespassing into abandoned urban spaces and photographing herself in the nude for her project Naked City Spleen. Later she lived in a glass-enclosed room for 4 days with a pair of pigs for a performance at Art Basel. I recently received an email from Miru that started out, "I am traveling today from Tanzania to Jordan. I have been living in Jordan now because of my new project and in general my love for camels and the desert..." For the time being, she is stationed in the middle of the desert near the border of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and when I caught up with her she seemed to fully embrace the solace provided by the world's most desolate atmosphere.



White Desert, Egypt, Sahara 1Photography by Miru Kim

Dazed Digital: Can you start by telling me a little about your early life?

Miru Kim: I was born in America but grew up from age zero to thirteen in Korea. I came back to Massachusetts for high school at Andover, which was really difficult for me and gave me some typical teenage issues. I fantasized about living in a cosmopolitan city at the time, so I went to college in New York City and later got an MFA for painting in Brooklyn. My decision to move at a young age, to get out of Korea and live in the US says something about my character and how my life was shaped. I still have a constant itch to assimilate myself into different cultures and situations.

DD: Your father Do-ol is one of the leading contemporary philosophers in Korea. Has he shaped your outlook on life?

He always taught us kids about Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, and sometimes we would go to temples and learn about meditation. We were also made very aware of environmentalism. I didn't always listen to his lectures, but somehow what he taught me as a kid is ingrained in me. Although I sometimes rebelled against my parents, they have always been amazingly supportive, and I feel very lucky to have such awesome parents.

DD: What do you enjoy about desolate places?

Miru Kim: When you experience total solitude, freedom from surveillance, and city noises in general, it's a kind of catharsis that lets you go back to your daily city life again feeling refreshed and recharged. For Naked City Spleen I was going to abandoned urban spaces a lot when I felt depressed from feelings of anxiety and alienation living in New York. I choose to name the series after Baudelaire's Paris Spleen. Naked City is one of the nicknames for New York too, in case you didn't know.



Rajasthan, India, Thar, Desert 1Photography by Miru Kim

DD: Did you have to sneak illegally into those places?

Miru Kim: Sometimes I had permission to enter, although the person who gave me access risked losing their job.

DD: In The Pig That Therefore I Am, you were photographed naked, surrounded by hogs in a pig pen. What was that process like?

Miru Kim: It was close to impossible to get access to these factory farms. After many months of trying I finally got permission and when I flew to Iowa to shoot, I snuck into some other large-scale corporate farms. That was probably the scariest thing I have ever done in my life...somehow even scarier than going into a desert alone with Tuareg tribesmen in Mali, where some terrorists might have been operating.

An average person cannot imagine the noise level, the smell, and everything about these hog farms not conveyed by mere visuals. It took a lot to get the smell out. Imagine crawling naked in pretty much toxic concentrations of fecal waste... I tried vinegar, toothpaste, hydrogen peroxide and scrubbed my feet red. It took two or three days to completely get rid of the smell on my feet and it took about three months until I could no longer smell the hogs on my camera. Pigs do not smell like that in nature. I ultimately wanted to connect with them on a more equal level, to feel their lives created and exploited by humans, at least momentarily, by mingling with them without physical barriers.

DD: What are you doing in the Middle East right now?

Miru Kim: I came to various deserts in the region--Jordan and Egypt mostly, and fell in love with the desert and the life here, so I decided to pack my things and move to Amman, Jordan for a while and also learn Arabic. I am actually writing this right now from my hiding place on a desert rock mountain, in the south of Jordan near Saudi Arabia. This is a place I can really contemplate and focus on writing! I have set up my own little studio here consisting of a desk and a chair and portable solar energy for my laptop. It's a whole project on its own, but I'm not ready to share with the public yet.



Wadi Rum, Jordan, Arabian Desert 1Photography by Miru Kim

DD: Why did you choose to be photographed with camels?

Miru Kim: Camels are the only large mammals that can survive like they do in the desert. When I heard that the reason camels evolved as desert animals was because of their lack of defense against predators I was very impressed. Camels became a symbol for peace in my mind. They simply traveled away to deserted lands and adapted themselves, instead of fighting back or constantly fleeing in fear.

DD: Have you encountered any strange reactions from people when you disrobe in public? I imagine it can be quite thrilling.

Miru Kim: I don't see it as thrilling. I used to get nervous if anyone was present, but after some repetition it became pretty ordinary. When I'm shooting I have a friend or someone to help with the camera shutter--it's a professional atmosphere, and I rarely get strange reactions. The strangest things came from French men--twice that they disrobed and took pictures of themselves on the same spot after I was finished with my shoot.