

Huw Davies Gallery
2nd - 27th November, 2021

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A Surface Appearance

Eunie Kim

Kim presents a series of darkroom prints created using 'Liquid Light' photographic emulsion painted onto varied papers. Exploring her experience of migration – of having to reconcile multiple identities – the artist brings materials and subjects from her current Australian life into conversation with the traditional aesthetics of her Korean heritage.

Through beautifully realised works focused on simple motifs, Kim challenges the meaning of how things, how people appear, suggesting that all surfaces express layers of difference and hybridity.

A Surface Appearance presents outcomes from Kim's PhotoAccess 2021 *Wide Angle* residency. This annual residency is awarded to a graduate of the Canberra Institute of Technology's Photography and Photo-Imaging Diploma program.



Eunie Kim, *Cells*, 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on watercolour paper

Navigating through photography: a portrait

Eunie Kim has had a longtime fascination with visual storytelling, an interest that led her to study cinematography and to work in the film industry in Seoul. But it was the very act of creating images – a process that could be done independently, at one's own pace, with complete creative freedom – that inspired her to pursue photography as an artist. Her first encounter with the photographic process was at university in Korea, where she came across an old, abandoned enlarger and taught herself the basic darkroom techniques. 'I loved it so much!!' Kim expressed to me, a remark of exhilaration for when a whole new world of seeing and making is suddenly revealed and made available to you.

Kim moved to Australia in 2016 as an adult, a migration not without its challenges when English is not your first language. In our email correspondences, she emphasises not being a 'good verbal communicator,' disclosing her limited English vocabulary and how she found language itself to be limiting. In this restrictive and confronting space of a new environment, unfamiliar culture and foreign language, Kim employs photography as a tool for confident self-expression. She states, 'holding a camera made me feel like a different person,' a declaration reflecting an empowering shift where the visual language of photography was one she knew, embraced, and had command of.

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In her exhibition, *A Surface Appearance*, Kim boldly leans into her visual language, creating a new body of work using the experimental process of Liquid Light. Her expressive use of this medium is evident in the layering brushstrokes of her prints, where she created photosensitive surfaces to hold her images. While the borders of these surfaces are undefined, the clean edges of the print and sharp imagery indicate how the works were made with great care, and through an intimate process engaging Kim at every step, making them deeply personal.

A Surface Appearance features images that she took in Australia, with some of Australia, where she highlights native plants in dedicated portraits such as *Banksia* and *Wattle*. These two images are amongst a small series printed on handmade paper, a fibrous and delicate material revealing Kim's artist hand. Speaking to the iterative unpredictability and patience this way of working demanded, she expresses, 'from making paper to the finished work, I felt like it was a process of my life metaphorically... I made mistakes, regretted, figured out how it worked with me and took chances.'

In these carefully printed works on paper, Kim sought to explore her experience of migration, which revolved around recognising the dualities of cultures. This is exemplified in the large-scale triptych of *Hwa-jo-do*, *Flowery Path* and *Cho-chung-do*, where the vertical compositions reference Korean traditional folk paintings, *minhwa*. *Hwa-jo-do* and *cho-chung-do* are both popular genre paintings in the theme of flowers and birds, and flowers and insects, which Kim has followed using her own photographic elements from Australia. The magpie in her *Hwa-jo-do* is a particular motif, as an intelligent yet frighteningly territorial bird in Australia with a swooping season to watch out for, but also as a symbol of hope and new beginnings. In Korea, magpies represent good news and welcome guests and bring fortune.

The figure in the central panel of *Flowery Path* is Kim herself, with her back to the viewer. Kim's silhouette, profile and features also appear in *Hiding*, *Saving Face* and *Void*, but her full face remains concealed in the series. These three works and their titles seem avoidant and retreating, reflecting on the more complicated experiences of reconciling different identities. Kim explained how the works in her exhibition 'can't be apart from myself', suggesting an inherently autobiographical nature in all the images she's produced and reproduced, whether she's visible or not.

A Surface Appearance is ultimately an expansive self-portrait as Kim continues to navigate her experience as a Korean migrant in Australia. Photography has become her language to articulate the complex motions of the everyday and to make sense of her surroundings. The camera and the photographic process has a way of drawing – even offering – necessary distance between one and its subjects. And it is perhaps in this space that we draw where we can seek to understand ourselves better.

Annette An-Jen Liu

Annette is a Taiwanese curator and writer based between Taipei, New York, and Canberra.

She holds a Masters in Art Curating from the University of Sydney and is fascinated by culture - its development, flux and its influence on shaping collective, national identities.

List of Works

8	Eunie Kim, <i>Cells</i> , captured in 2015, recreated in 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on watercolour paper, 29.7m x42cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$670 framed / \$520 unframed
9	Eunie Kim, <i>Hiding</i> , captured in 2015, recreated in 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on handmade paper from recycled materials, 25cm x 35cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$670 framed / \$520 unframed
10	Eunie Kim, <i>Saving Face</i> , 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on watercolour paper, 29.7m x42cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$670 framed / \$520 unframed
11	Eunie Kim, <i>Void</i> , 2021 silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on canvas paper, 29.7m x42cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$670 framed / \$520 unframed
12	Eunie Kim, <i>Nude</i> , 2021 silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on canvas paper, 29.7m x42cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$670 framed / \$520 unframed
13	Eunie Kim, <i>Banksia</i> , 2021, Silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on handmade paper from recycled materials, 26cm x 36cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$480 framed / \$360 unframed
14	Eunie Kim, <i>Blossoms</i> , 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on handmade paper from recycled materials, 26cm x 36cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$480 framed / \$360 unframed
15	Eunie Kim, <i>Wattle</i> , 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on handmade paper from recycled materials, 26cm x 36cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$480 framed / \$360 unframed
16	Eunie Kim, <i>Upright</i> , 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on handmade paper from recycled materials, 26cm x 36cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$480 framed / \$360 unframed
17	Eunie Kim, <i>Dreamt</i> , 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on handmade paper from recycled materials, 26cm x 36cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$480 framed / \$360 unframed
18	Eunie Kim, <i>Boundless</i> , 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on watercolour paper, 29.7m x42cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$480 framed / \$360 unframed
19	Eunie Kim, <i>Vigil II</i> , 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on watercolour paper, 29.7m x42cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$480 framed / \$360 unframed
20	Eunie Kim, <i>Vigil I</i> , 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on watercolour paper, 29.7m x42cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$480 framed / \$360 unframed
21	Eunie Kim, <i>Flowers From mud II</i> , captured in 2019, recreated in 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on watercolour paper, 29.7m x42cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$480 framed / \$360 unframed
22	Eunie Kim, <i>Flowers From Mud I</i> , captured in 2019, recreated in 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on watercolour paper, 29.7m x42cm	Edition 1 of 3	\$480 framed / \$360 unframed
23	Eunie Kim, <i>Growth</i> , 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on watercolour paper, 29.7m x42cm	Edition 1 of 1	\$590 framed / \$470 unframed
24	Eunie Kim, <i>Behind and Underneath</i> , 2021, silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on watercolour paper, 29.7m x42cm	Edition 1 of 1	\$590 framed / \$470 unframed
25	Eunie Kim, <i>Hwa-jo-do</i> (화조도, 花鳥圖, <i>A Painting of Flowers and Birds</i>), 2021, Silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on sugarcane paper, 32cm x 94cm	Edition 1 of 2	\$780 framed / \$550 unframed
26	Eunie Kim, <i>Flowery Path</i> , 2021, Silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on sugarcane paper, 32cm x 94cm	Edition 1 of 2	\$780 framed / \$550 unframed
27	Eunie Kim, <i>Cho-chung-do</i> (초충도, 草蟲圖, <i>A Painting of Flowers and Insects</i>), 2021, Silver-gelatin liquid emulsion on sugarcane paper, 32cm x 94cm	Edition 1 of 2	\$780 framed / \$550 unframed

Eunie Kim | About

Eunie Kim is a Canberra-based emerging visual artist and recipient of the 2021 Wide Angle Residency. Originally from South Korea, she studied cinematography and worked in the film industry before moving to Australia and becoming a commercial photographer.

Kim's background led her to be interested in the intersection of different cultures, visual storytelling, and how this can be portrayed using mixed media. Her work explores various ways of marrying her cultural background with her contemporary perspective. She uses both digital and 35mm film with photographic emulsions, and experiments with the physical medium itself through the use of different textured paper and brushstrokes.

Artist Statement

Justice is never done to a subject by its surface appearance. There is always more underneath.

his project started with the question - what is my surface appearance and how did it come to be?

I use materials and subjects from my contemporary Australian setting to reference the aesthetic of traditional Korean painting. My work explores the immigrant experience of having to reconcile one identity with another, despite myriad differences in language, history, and culture. Even a superficially simplistic motif, a single object, landscape, or person, can manifest these differences stacked up like layers.

My work is iterative, experimental, and requires a lot of steps, time, and input on even the most minor elements. By applying photographic emulsion via brushstroke, and employing different thicknesses and textures of paper, every print can differ substantially. Through repetition and engaging in alternative print techniques I court both risk and reward. My life experience is reflected through the dogged process of learning what works, regretting and then correcting mistakes, and taking chances.

More Online

Visit www.gallery.photoaccess.org.au to learn more about *A Surface Appearance*, including works not in the gallery.