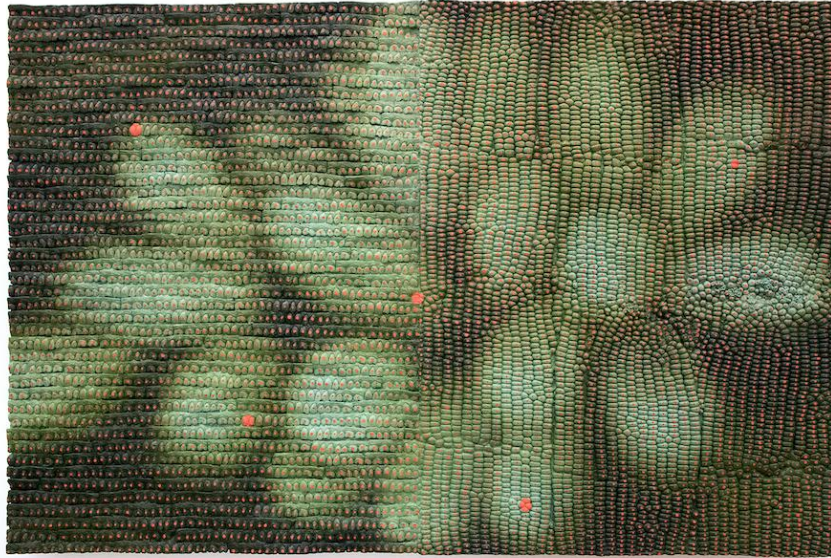


Pigment Spells
A Solo Exhibition by Lucy Kim



May 15 to June 27, 2025

Opening Reception: May 15, 2025 from 6 to 8pm

(Brookline, MA – April 15, 2025) Praise Shadows is honored to announce *Pigment Spells*, Lucy Kim's first commercial gallery solo exhibition in the Boston area. A celebrated artist, educator, and researcher, Kim has developed a suite of powerful new sculptural paintings that packs an informational and visual punch. Ranging in size from diminutive to large, the paintings emphasize hybridity while integrating Op art ideas with low relief forms cast from organic, familiar shapes – such as corn, peanuts, hands, teeth, the beach – as a way to push the retinal aspect of the work that Kim is known for as it pertains to vision, appearance, and identity.

Kim's sculptural paintings are created by applying oil paint onto resin casts of surfaces, objects, and people. This work layers different ways that visual information presents itself – from sculptural relief to painted illusion – to create a calibrated dissonance. The evolution of this process began when Kim was contending with photography's domineering authority over visual culture, specifically the role that it plays, and has played, in structuring vision. But rather than use photography directly, she opted to employ mold-making and casting as photography's extremely tactile, full contact surrogate.

Op art, and the optical illusions and retinal concepts behind it, have long fascinated Kim for the involuntary visual responses they provoke that reflect the parameters and limitations of the human visual system. These responses often involve seeing things that aren't there, such as after-images, colors, and movement. Kim considers these illusory visions as apt parallels to appearance-based social constructions, as they all require highly specific, often engineered, conditions to "work."

The largest piece in the exhibition, *Ichthyopsis 1*, is a seven foot tall painting that undulates in texture and in form. In observing the purple and white tones, specks and patterns, the viewer may immediately recognize a plant or animal, only to question their initial response. Are we seeing orchids? Or are we

observing a school of vibrant tropical fish? Perhaps it's something in between, or an entirely alien concept. We see what we know, and Kim constructs each painting to try and question the scaffolding of biases that have built our world of perception and understanding.

"In the end," says Kim, "I'm interested in vision as a tool that has the potential to internally undo the habits around how we see. The question is what might this look like? All my works are attempts at this problem, sometimes in simple more technical ways, and sometimes in more complex ways."

Kim explores this potential beyond her painting and sculpture practice. *Mutant Optics*, her recent solo exhibition at the Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, used melanin from genetically modified bacteria to create prints of vanilla plants undergoing genetic research in Florida. As Kim simultaneously develops the melanin project and the sculptural paintings, the role of pigments in nature, and how the human eye and desire interprets them, have been central in driving the work.

About the artist

Lucy Kim (b. 1978, Seoul, South Korea; based in Cambridge, MA) is an interdisciplinary artist who works across painting, sculpture, and biological media. In her hybrid works, she embraces distortion as a tool to deconstruct how we see what we see. Kim is a recipient of the 2024 Howard Foundation Fellowship, 2022 Creative Capital Award, 2019 Mass Cultural Council Grant, 2017 ICA Boston James and Audrey Foster Prize, 2014 Artadia Award, and the MacDowell Fellowship. From 2018 to 2021, she was an artist-in-residence at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. Kim has exhibited her work at the Henry Art Gallery - University of Washington, Seattle, WA; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, New York, NY; deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA; Tufts University Art Gallery, Medford, MA; Tang Teaching Museum at Skidmore, Saratoga Springs, NY, France; among others. Kim is Associate Professor of Art at Boston University.

About Praise Shadows Art Gallery

Praise Shadows Art Gallery is a contemporary art program based in the Boston area with a focus on exceptional artists working in all artistic disciplines. Our worldview is informed by the notion that the artworld's untapped and unrecognized potential is worth cultivating, supporting, and championing. Since our founding in December 2020, the gallery has placed artworks by our artists in esteemed public collections, and our exhibitions have been covered widely in major international media outlets. Our work is grounded by partnering closely with artists to develop opportunities in traditional and emerging models of creativity and entrepreneurship—exhibitions, commissions, brand partnerships, new technologies, and original concepts that no one has ever tried before. www.praiseshadows.com

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