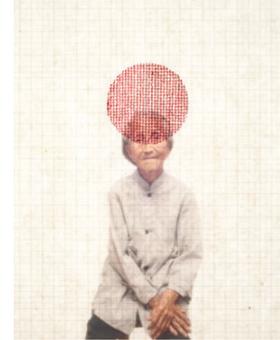


Aixia Li | Hwanhee Kim | Ji Hyun Kwon

Opening Thursday, June 6, 2013, 6–9 pm
Exhibition from June 6 to July 27, 2013

Gallery Taik Persons is thrilled to present a group exhibition of the young artists Aixia Li, Hwanhee Kim, and Ji Hyun Kwon, whose works present three different contemporary approaches to the cultural connotations of language and image.

Through her dealing with the historical phenomena of foot binding and calligraphy writing in China, Aixia Li negotiates culturally particular practices with regard to their entangled processes of cross-cultural translation. The Chinese character *chan* 缠 [“to bind”, “to weave”, “to tangle”] presents the visual key to Li’s work in which she explores the subject through three different approaches: Thirteen wooden light boxes showing one of the sequential brush strokes constituting the character *chan* when switched off, and, when switched on, revealing the portraits of some of the last women whose feet had been bound, form the first. The portraits are accompanied by a series of wooden boxes containing the personal biographies of the depicted women. In her third approach, Li overlays terms associated with aspects of foot binding in a series of four sets of collage-like paper cutouts, each set consisting of one Chinese- and one English-language version of the concurrent terms. Li’s various methods of visualizing the ‘unbinding’ of the character *chan* result in dialectical tensions: Just as we begin to believe that we can identify the facial expressions and gazes of the portrayed subjects, or decipher some of the words written in ink, they merge, or vanish, or change into an ungraspable form.



Aixia Li
Chan, 2012
Oriental paper with wooden light box, 24 x 30 cm

Hwanhee Kim's interest lies in the physicality of the artwork and the material structures, conditions, and implications of its form. She states her practice as engaged with the following hypothesis: The frame is the body of the image. Meaning the formats, functions, and parameters of size or aspect ratio through which paintings, photographs, and moving images take on their bodily existence and operate by, Kim believes that this physical output presents essential defining factors in shaping the way we see and evaluate such works as aesthetic objects of art. Their production, reception, and consumption over time undergoing transformative processes of editing, selecting, and reassembling, Kim seeks to carve out the relationality that exists between images and the language of their architecture. Among the exhibited works are her small-scale sculptures, which consist of amassed layers of photographic prints cut, arranged, and piled into three-dimensional geometrical shapes. Also shown are Kim’s frame-sculptures, likewise assemblies of personal photographs. While here, the original standard format of the prints has not been altered, the actual picture has been cut out entirely, leaving a malleable frame of empty space where once had been perceived an image of the past.



Hwanhee Kim
Triangle of Faces, 2012
Print media
3,6 x 3,6 x 1 cm

Guilt is the subject of interrogation and contemplation in Ji Hyun Kwon’s works. Her arresting portraits of *The Guilty* show individuals of different cultural and geographical background, who have written onto their faces the reasons for their personal feelings of guilt. Encoded in their respective mother tongue, “guilt” is revealed in its culturally specific as well as its universal complexity. Kwon’s interest in the subject is not only indebted to her past studies in criminal law before turning to photography. Nurtured by entrenched feelings of human compassion and moral consciousness, her profound sense of social duty, responsibility, and obligation in life is informed by an Aristotelian understanding of the human being as a communal being who may find his ultimate self-fulfillment as a constitutive element of society. In her engagement with art, the “eternal sense of guilt” is not only what “pushes [her] heart from the deepest inside”, says Kwon, it is what she achieves to bring to the visible surface of her portrayed subjects. Finding that we are not alone with the burdens of what we believe to be our wrongdoings, these portraits allow us, cautiously and yet straightforwardly, to return their gaze.



Ji Hyun Kwon
The Guilty [Maureen], 2011
Inkjet print, 120 x 100 cm