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SUNDARAM TAGORE GALLERY HONG KONG PRESENTS NEW DIGITAL PRINTS BY RISING KOREAN ARTIST KIM JOON

Exhibition dates: November 18 - December 13, 2009

Opening cocktail reception: Wednesday, November 18, 7-9 pm



Left: *Chanel*, 2009. digital print, 47 x 47 inches

Middle: *Ebony-Pink*, 2008. digital print, 43 x 69 inches

Right: *Bird land-Aerosmith*, 2008. digital print, 47 x 47 inches

Hong Kong, October 15, 2009—A fascination with tattoos lies at the core of Kim Joon's work. Having exhibited widely across the globe, this is the Korean artist's first solo exhibition in Hong Kong. Using three-dimensional computer graphics, Kim creates digital prints and videos of undulating nude bodies covered in ink. Supine figures are enveloped by bold logos and prints from luxury brands such as Ferragamo, Montblanc, and Vivienne Westwood forming a surreal landscape. Kim's tattoo imagery provokes questions about the impact of consumerism on society. The artist says, "I am interested in tattoos as a metaphor for hidden desire or a kind of compulsion engraved into human consciousness. Tattoos can reflect individual and collective reality or displaced desire."

Kim's exploration of tattoos stems from his experiences tattooing his peers while in the Korean military. In his earliest works, Kim grappled with the notion of tattoos as socially taboo in present-day Korean society. He created

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sculptures that mimicked tattooed portions of flesh. Using water-based markers, he embellished latex-coated sponges, creating vivid, anthropomorphic parts divorced from the human form.

The artist's recent work neatly overturns the negative connotations surrounding tattoos. In his hands, not only do tattoos reflect social habits and desires but they're also a vehicle for transforming the body into a highly aestheticized object. Using animation software, Kim renders three-dimensional bodies upon which he meticulously grafts photographs of human, animal, and artificially created skin. He then superimposes tattoos of colorful brand logos and patterns on the skin's surface. The close-range photographs expose skin pores and pigmentation heightening the immediacy of ink entering human flesh. Vibrantly colored, Kim's entangled tattooed figures are suggestive and sensual, fluid and erotically intimate.

Kim Joon was born in 1966 in Seoul, Korea, where he currently lives and works. He has exhibited his work at the Total Museum, Seoul, Korea; The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Kwachon, Korea; the National Taiwan Museum; Canvas International Art gallery, Amsterdam; Alexander Ochs Galleries, Berlin; Gallery Hyundai, Paris; Sabina Lee gallery, Los Angeles; Walsh Gallery, Chicago; and Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York.

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