

# RYAN LEE

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## HYPERALLERGIC

### Colorful and Immersive Experiences at the 2017 Gowanus Open Studios

It seemed very fitting that my way to Gowanus Open Studios this weekend, I rode my bike over the Gowanus Canal, where I spotted a woman, paintbrush in hand, standing on the bridge with an easel and a canvas between her and the canal. Now that the infamously polluted waterway is getting cleaned up (maybe even swimmable?) and its neighborhood namesake gentrifies, it's become worthy of a landscape painting.

Jessica Dalrymple, one of the more than 300 artists that participated in Open Studios, would likely agree. In her series of verdant panoramic paintings of Gowanus, she said she imagined a melding of the past, present, and future of the area.

Just upstairs from Dalrymple's studio, Tamara Staples divulged the very personal story behind her installation of textiles, furniture, and pillows, all containing an at-times subtle design of pharmaceutical pills. When her sister—who suffered from bipolar disorder—died, the artist collected all of her leftover pills, creating designs she would then photograph and transfer onto fabric, using it to create otherworldly installations.

Speaking of otherworldly, I had a very unique experience literally sticking my head inside a work at Bobby Anspach's studio. Laying down face-up on a mattress on the floor, my head surrounded by a half-dome of fuzzy crafting pompoms lit up and changing gradually colors, I listened to a calming composition while staring at my own eyes in a mirror hanging from the top of the dome. To say it was a surreal experience would be a great understatement.

On the opposite side of the Gowanus Canal, the art studios on the third floor of Treasure Island Storage—in what might technically be Red Hook—was a goldmine in artistic talent. (To be fair, with over 70 total, this was also the venue with the most artists in one place.)

There were a lot of great ceramicists throughout, but I was particularly struck by two sculptors, who share a studio space and both work with wood, Craig Kath's and Jacob Farber. While Kath's carves wooden replicas of music and recording studio equipment—complete with cords upon cords upon cords connecting everything—Farber has a giant roughly carved wooden hand hanging from his ceiling. He says he's trying to figure out a way to transform it into a puppet, but it's taking a while, as the mechanics of all the movements of a hand are much more complex than he had imagined.

Down the hall from Kath's and Farber, Kakyong Lee creates thoughtful videos of the drawing process that reminded me of the works of William Kentridge. On the opposite side, Barry Rust makes fully functional ukuleles, banjos, and fiddles out of old coffee tins and cigar boxes. Across the wall from Rust, we come full circle with Janice McDonnell's industrial landscape paintings

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of the Gowanus Canal. I'm sure it helps that she has a giant window facing it.

*Gowanus Open Studios 2017, of which Hyperallergic is a media sponsor, took place October 21 and 22.*

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## Art in Print



Kakyoung Lee, *Walk* (2010).

### Kakyoung Lee

*Walk* (2010)  
Black-and-white animated HD video with recorded sound (1 min. loop) and 198 drypoint prints on Hahnemühle Copperplate bright white paper, images: 6 3/4 x 10 3/8 inches each, paper: 11 1/4 x 15 1/4 inches, edition of 2, printed by the artist, published by Michael Steinberg Editions, New York. available through Mary Ryan Gallery, New York.

Kakyoung Lee's mesmerizing installations, comprised of stop-action animation accompanied by the drawings or prints used to make the video, call attention to the daily rituals of street life—those formless periods of time in which we absent-mindedly travel from one place to the next. In *Walk*, a diligent mother pushes her two children in a stroller across a flagstone surface—the surface is identifiable by the rumbling of plastic wheels in the soundtrack—in a setting that is otherwise devoid of description. In both the video and its accompanying

series of drypoints, the family begins on the horizon at the upper left and zigzags through the empty white space to the foreground at lower right. The sound of the wheels intensifies as they draw near. The group eventually passes directly before us and then exits unceremoniously. Lee's generalized treatment of this decidedly humble subject infers universal experience—the activity is common to many cultures, and familiar to individual viewers on either a personal or vicarious level.

Lee's process mirrors and supports her purpose. Beginning with a sound recording of an activity (in the case of *Walk*, a mother pushing her children in a stroller), Lee returns to the studio to draw and/or print images to accompany it. When working in drypoint, she begins by incising the figure group on the plate, which she then prints in one or more impressions (in this case, two) and then scans the printed image into the computer. The next "cell" is drawn on the same plate and printed in the same manner. This is repeated as often as necessary to complete the intended animation, 198 times for *Walk*. As the process continues, earlier drypoint lines fade away under the pressure of the press, emphasizing the illusion of space as the prior marks recede, leaving a trace of the group's trajectory. The subtle variations in shading (a natural result of the printing process) lend a shimmering and human quality to the video, reminiscent of William Kentridge's animated works. Once all the images are complete, the digital files are then strung together with video-editing software and coupled with the soundtrack.

For the installation, the video is displayed on a flat-screen with the prints arranged in sequence around it. The multiplicative aspect of the works on paper—a yawning stretch of the same figures on an endless march—emphasizes the bodily rhythms, repetitive sounds, and cumulative nature of such familiar activity. ■

—Sarah Kirk Hanley

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## Review: Elastic medium of printmaking takes center stage at Get This! and Chastain

Catherine Fox - Feb 3, 2011 in ART+DESIGN



Atlanta artist Jiha Moon has assembled a national exhibition of prints at Get This! Gallery under the vague rubric “Life Iconic.” The glue connecting these works is not thematic, however. Together they speak to the elasticity of the printmaking medium in the hands of inventive artists. It’s on view through March 6.

Many of the artists blur boundaries and upend expectations. Tim Eads, who makes sculptures, prints, drawings and installations, merges media in “Thank You and Have a Nice Day” (left), a unique sculpture made with screen-printed found material, otherwise known as plastic bags. He presses layers of them to create a wall-hung form that hovers between hard and soft. The

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words “thank you” printed in red on each bag peek through the translucent white plastic. In fact they glow, thanks to a light behind them. With wit and resourcefulness, the Philadelphia artist has transformed the bags — eco-outcasts stamped with fake retail gratitude — into a strangely compelling piece

Peregrine Honig’s “Father Gander,” a suite of six lithographs with chine-collé, plays against type. Following the format for storybook illustrations, the Kansas City artist recasts familiar fairy tales as contemporary adult morality plays and sociological scenarios. Rapunzel, a semi-nude nymphet with fashionably shorn tresses, incarnates parental fear of a daughter’s sexuality. “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” (below) becomes a tale of date rape: the image depicts Papa Bear carrying her off, and the rhyme reads, “Goldilocks, Goldilocks, what were you thinking — looking for love when you’d been drinking.”

Honig often couches frank sexuality in delicate lines and soft washes, so the storybook theme is a perfect avenue for her. What might come off as button-pushing in other pieces works especially well here, particularly if you buy Freud and Bettelheim: Honig’s sexualizing of fairy tales only brings forward the subtexts (right down to the forest setting — here a snow-globe-shaped abstraction — as the symbol of the lawless territory of the id) that were already there.

The exhibition includes four of the 156 etchings that Kakyoun Lee made and then used for the accompanying animation, “Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn.” The proportions make reference to Asian scrolls, an old-fangled vehicle to depict movement in time and space. You could say that the New York artist, who recently received a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant, vivifies her line drawings of the crowds that pass through the plaza — skipping children, bicycle riders, clumps of people in overcoats hurrying across the space — in her animation, but the reverse is also true. Though simply limned, the etchings have a life of their own.

Also on view: more than 60 pieces in the Atlanta Printmakers Studio’s Atlanta Juried Printmaking Exhibition, at the newly revived Chastain Arts Center and Gallery through February 11. Juried by High Museum curator Carol Thompson, it is a veritable encyclopedia of printmaking techniques. Among the notable images are two large-scale portraits by young Atlantan Omar Richardson, who also has a piece in “Movers & Shakers” at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia. His layered compositions combine a photograph of a young African-American and a woodcut of a figure in African dress (left), which hovers like a ghost, and a little like a tattoo, on the contemporary portrait: a deconstruction of the term “African-American.”

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## HUFFPOST

### Street Art Revisited : Drawings in Motion in New York City

by Anne Couillaud

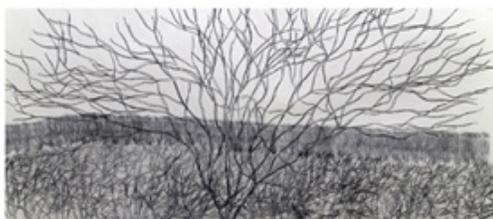
January 19, 2011



Walking by 200 Lafayette Street (between Broome and Kenmare) in Soho, you come across a beautiful — though partly hidden by a scaffolding — projection of videos in the window of an abandoned store, a nice surprise of a different kind of street art in a neighborhood where art used to be so prominent.



The five handmade drawings in motion presented here are moving in the largest sense possible.



Brent Green's take on Santa Claus is quite humorous, personal and darkly poetic. You do not see often a Santa in despair putting together an awkward bunch of presents, among them a dead crow.

Equally poignant is Tala Madani's solo dancer who silently progresses in a changing dark background before disappearing.

Kakyoung Lee, *Walk-2009*, 2009. Still from Moving Image (Graphite on Paper), 3min., B/W, Sound. Courtesy of the Artist — The Drawing Center.

Susi Jirkuff's *Travel Stained*, brings to life a musician coming back home while his soul continues to wander in the tour he just ended.

he mundane is also depicted and elevated in Kakyoung Lee's dry point Animation *Walk-2009* where a naked walker becomes a back packer walking on an ocean of bushes that becomes stairs and then a single tree.

These poetic and existential works undoubtedly reveal and challenge questions such as culture, identity and how we relate (or not) to our surroundings.

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The opening night, a woman was shocked that Raymond Pettibon's powerful video showed a needle going into a man's arm. I was not. It felt just right and like each of the scenes and stories depicted in these five animations, it felt subtly connected to (street) life and its protagonists.

So we hope the show's curators, Rachel Liebowitz and Joanna Kleinberg, both from the Drawing Center, as well as the not-for-profit SmartSpaces will bring us more of these animated graffitis in the windows of the vacant spaces of New York City and elsewhere.

## Information

The Drawing Center  
Drawings in Motion - until January 24, 2011  
[www.drawingcenter.org](http://www.drawingcenter.org)  
[www.SmartSpaces.org](http://www.SmartSpaces.org)

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## PRINT-INTERESTING

### STUDIO VISIT: KAKYOUNG LEE

Yoonmi Nam

December 1, 2013



Kakyoung Lee is a Korean artist based in Brooklyn, New York. I have known her since we were both first-year college students in the printmaking department at Hong-Ik University in Seoul, Korea. 20 years later, somehow we both ended up in the US, and are still making prints. I admit, I am getting a bit nostalgic, and even though Kakyoung and I both live in the US, it had been years since I saw her. So, when I recently made a trip to New York City for a few days, I called her up and spent an afternoon with Kakyoung in her studio in the Red Hook area of Brooklyn.

Kakyoung's cozy studio space is filled with stacks of prints, small video installations, and set-ups for works in progress. Below are two small temporary installations in Kakyoung's studio. The one on the right, titled *Window View* is a projection onto a window drawn on the wall with graphite. Close up, you can see crowds of people, busily walking in Grand Central Terminal.

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Kakyoung first captures everyday, mundane events in video. She then deconstructs them into stills and laboriously translates them into drypoint prints or drawings, which are reconstructed into short animated videos.

I was delighted to see one of her newest works in progress titled *Hana's Ride*. The process of this work began with video footage taken of Kakyoung's daughter, Hana, learning to ride a bike. This video footage had been broken down into several sequences of moments in preparation for tracing. Using drypoint, each frame of *Hana's Ride* is scratched onto a thick sheet of Plexi and then printed, resulting in 327 prints.

All of her animated prints require several hundred printed images in order to make an animation that lasts a minute or two. Her videos are often installed alongside of the actual prints that made the animations. I got to have a little private viewing of her animated prints, and here are some of my favorites!

This piece titled *Dance, Dance, Dance* is a collaboration with sound artist Natacha Diels. It was also made into a beautiful portfolio, which includes a selection of prints from the animation and a DVD.

Another drypoint animation titled *Walk* featuring Kakyoung and her two young daughters. It was also cleverly made into a beautiful flip book!

Some of her animations are made using graphite drawings, such as this one titled *The Crossing Series*. Layers and layers of graphite drawings and erasings capture a brief moment as crowds of people wait to cross a street. Then people flood towards each other, and their movements create a web of drawn lines as they try to navigate through the crowd.

Kakyoung continuously explores and presents these moments in thoughtful and interesting ways.

In this video, Kakyoung features her own family. Using images of herself along with her two little girls and the voice of her husband, she portrays a family trying to take a photograph. It is both intimate and endearing.

Finally, in another corner of Kakyoung's studio, there is a set up for a new project in process. On the left wall, you can see photos and sketches for the planned animation, and the small spotlighted area on the right is where Kakyoung is repeatedly drawing and erasing sequences of images of people hiking up a mountain.

There are many more videos on Kakyoung's Vimeo site [here](#), and more prints, drawings, and installations can be seen on her website [here](#). Kakyoung is represented by Ryan Lee Gallery in New York.

Thanks for a wonderful afternoon, Kakyoung!

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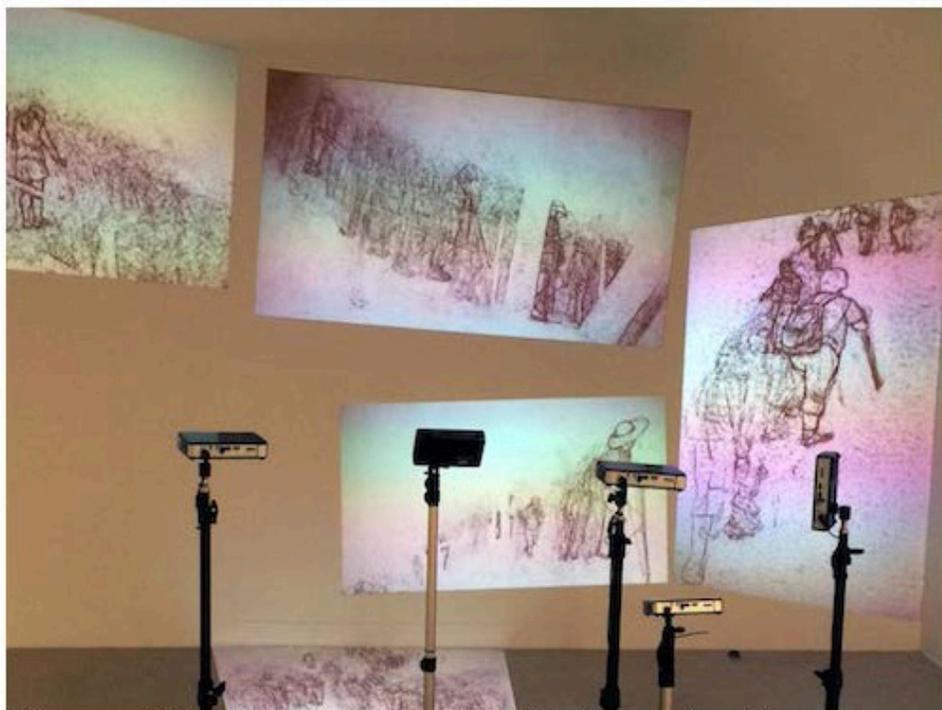


Nov 25, 2014

|By: [Life & Times](#)

## Everydayness Animated

By Tanya Silverman



*Palgongsan Series* playing at *The Lineage of Vision: Progress through Persistence*. Courtesy of Kakyoun Lee and RYAN LEE, New York.

Kakyoun Lee's [moving images](#) explore the essence of daily life's seemingly uneventful events: crossing the street, riding a bike, and pushing a stroller.

*Jamaic a Station*. By Kakyoun Lee. 2011. Courtesy of Kakyoun Lee and RYAN LEE, New York.

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A Korean-American [artist](#) living in New York City, Lee begins such projects by filming videos of her surroundings--capturing commonplace scenes like pedestrians strolling across Brooklyn's Grand Army Plaza or commuters rushing around Queens' Jamaica Station. She then uses the footage as a base for "tracing and overlapping thousands of graphite hand drawings on the same paper" little by little to reconstruct the "layers of everydayness".

The rigorous, repetitive tracing [method](#) is crucial in Lee's mission to maintain an "objective" and "nonfiction" approach. Each piece takes about two and a half years to finish, and the artist compares the tedious process to everyday life: "tiring, boring, but sometimes meditating."

*Walk. By Kakyong Lee. 2010. Courtesy of Kakyong Lee, RYAN LEE, New York, and Mary Ryan Gallery.*

The completed moving images play on concepts of time in a [manner](#) that's similar to William Kentridge's metamorphic animations. Figures that Lee draws appear to walk linearly, but are shadowed by a series of sketchy outlines, then possibly surrounded by other forms that transform into and out of other residual entanglements. At times, figures fade, others erase, or all morph into a collective, rhythmic blur.

*Palgongsan Series* is Lee's most recent animation, one that the artist began three years ago after her grandmother passed away. Palgongsan is a mountain outside Daegu, South Korea, the artist's hometown, where her elder ritualistically trekked through the trails to pray for the family at the summit.

As an installation, five projectors face a wall, playing a busy autumn scene of various hikers ascending the trails of Palgongsan to pray for their families. Apposite to Lee's style, the residual, metamorphic pattern is seen on the figures' climb, as they repeat the motions of the continuous ritual.

Lee created a slightly more fictional animation by using a very everyday item as her medium.

"I was curious how the leftover coffee in my studio could make interesting trace and [how] the color gets darker as time passes," the artist recalls. "I drew a tiny figure walking repetitively and slowly in a circle with coffee on my studio wall."

The 360-degree result of the experimental pacing tract, [Coffee Circle](#), resembles a ticking clock.

Whether we consider time as cyclical or linear, ephemeral or eternal, Lee's layered moving images symbolize the myriad of its complexities.

*Kakyong Lee's 'Palgongsan Series' will be on display at NYC's Korean Cultural Service until Dec 17 as part of the exhibit, 'Lineage of Vision: Progress through Persistence'.*