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Lotus L. Kang: *Already*

April 11-June 7, 2025
52 Walker Street, New York



Lotus L. Kang, Documentation, '*49 Echoes*', 2025
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52 Walker is pleased to announce its fifteenth exhibition, *Already*, featuring work by Canadian-born, New York-based artist Lotus L. Kang. Kang's multidisciplinary practice includes sculpture, photography, and installation, often reflecting on ideas of impermanence, inheritance, memory, and time. In her iterative presentations, Kang realizes these thematic concerns by transforming materials like photographic paper and film whose light-sensitive surfaces implicate traces of surrounding architecture and bodies. At 52 Walker, the artist brings together a selection of discrete objects, wall works, and an installation staged within and around two greenhouses.

The exhibition title *Already* draws from an eponymous poem by Kim Hyesoon—one of forty-nine from her book *Autobiography of Death* (2019), which considers the Buddhist tradition of after-death rituals performed for forty-nine days during the intermediate period spanning death and rebirth. For Kang, who engages with Don Mee Choi's English translation from the Korean original, the word *already* implies a time and event from which a subject may be absent, a moment that precedes and arrives simultaneously, and an acknowledgment of multiple temporalities that exist—as if cinematically—in tandem. The exhibition is a microcosm of this indeterminate state of being, and a consideration of poetry as an embodied and malleable document of history.

Two modified greenhouses, respectively titled *Receiver Transmitter (49 Echoes I and II)*, prominently mirror each other across the infrastructural pillars bisecting the gallery. Regularly utilized by Kang in outdoor environments as a process tool for exposing photographic film from her series *Molt*, the greenhouses at 52 Walker have been brought indoors, here envisioned as permeable, metabolic environments. Their mirrored floors pull the outside in while reflecting and doubling the structure's scaffold and the forms situated inside. In one greenhouse, forty-nine objects are

arranged in a tableau, including an enlarged aluminum-cast kelp knot, styrofoam fruit holders, construction sacks sourced from Seoul, repurposed older works, and a photograph of a mudflat, among others. The second greenhouse is derived from a ritual-performance Kang enacted by the sea: on the artist's birthday—a kind of return or cycle—she walked in a large circle forty-nine times while holding a camera out toward the horizon, carving a broad, fleeting circular trail in the sand. In the greenhouse, the captured footage from this performance is printed on 35 mm film and partially spooled around bottles of spirits; a single bare bulb rotates slowly within, proposing the incomplete trace of the performance as form. Creating spaces within spaces, these sculptures act as distant material translations of Kim Hyesoon's poem and explore the idea of vessels—containers, books, bodies—as environments of becoming.

Works titled *Mesoderm* punctuate the gallery walls, serving as abstracted indexes of Kang's ongoing research and fixations, culled from her archive of found and taken photographs or from memory. Demonstrating the artist's instinctive germination of ideas, the works collage studio residues such as tissue paper, silicone, and plastic alongside gestural line drawings made with darkroom chemicals, inks, and oil pastels. Additional wall works include unique luminograms titled *Synapse*, which are created experimentally in a color darkroom. In these works, Kang utilizes woven produce bags in lieu of a film negative, deliberately mis-balancing color to generate their visceral hues. *Synapse* tracks the artist's performance in the darkroom and the attendant movement of light, while pointing to internal neurological processes related to memory and sensation.

Molt gently unfurls from the gallery ceiling. Kang considers these photographic works as skins, referring to their exposure process as "tanning." The artist purposely exposes film—normally handled in darkened environments—to natural and artificial lights, bringing about a range of hues evoking both body and environment. Their surfaces show ghostly indexes of the objects and environments from their exposure periods, such as patterned holes from the steel joists used to build the greenhouses on view, or a stretch of aluminum-cast anchovies. Standing singularly or aggregated together across multiple steel mounts, *Molt* remains unfixed and in a state of continual change, stretching photography's conventions while foregrounding the impermanence of the body and materiality.

Tract (You are already I and II) also hang suspended from the ceiling, each comprising industrial steamer baskets and knotted lines of cast-aluminum and bronze anchovies hovering above the floor. Echoed across multiple surfaces in the exhibition, the motif of the hole—or void—is one that Kang repeatedly turns to as a means of undoing binaries: empty/full, inside/outside, holder/held. At the gallery's far end lies a floor-based sculpture with a mirrored tatami base, titled *Receiver Transmitter (Born inside death)*, which holds an arrangement of porcelain, plaster, and

aluminum- and bronze-cast baby birds—a new figure in the artist’s sculptural vocabulary. Expanding the mat as a site of horizontality, dreaming and regeneration, these vulnerable and scarcely formed creatures cry open mouthed, empty and receptive for regurgitated food, conveying the moment before a boundary is trespassed and dissolved—an intensified interval between receiving and transferring. The work’s subtitle, *Born inside death*, also lifted from Kim Hyesoon’s poem, cathartically acknowledges the contingency of being and the forebears or multitudes the body contains—a cycle of life and death already in progress.

To accompany the exhibition, the gallery is pleased to present a formative work from Kang’s recent *Azaleas* series that functions like the underbelly to *Already*. *Azaleas II* is titled after a 1925 poem by Korean modernist Kim Sowol (1902–1934). This kinetic sculpture comprises an enlarged rotary film dryer and a diaphanous length of 35 mm film depicting purple orchids that tautly wraps around its metal skeleton; the machine is placed atop a low, tatami-like base strewn with objects that reverberate within the artist’s orbit. The sculpture rotates according to a score that combines the syllabic meter of Sowol’s “Azaleas” alongside Kim Hyesoon’s “Already.” Situated in the dark and illuminated by a trio of programmed lights, the work becomes a meditation on time, emulating and expanding the cinematic experience. As with much of Kang’s work, *Azaleas II* considers presence and absence, touching everything in its midst while leaving no material trace, implicating the viewer and architecture in its enactment.

Lotus L. Kang: Already is curated by Ebony L. Haynes and presented by 52 Walker. Special thanks to Denniston Hill for their ongoing support.

Lotus L. Kang was born in Toronto in 1985. She received a BFA from Concordia University, Montreal, in 2008, and an MFA from the Milton Avery School of the Arts at Bard College, New York, in 2015.

Kang has exhibited widely in the United States and abroad. In 2023, she presented *In Cascades*, a major traveling solo exhibition co-commissioned by Chisenhale Gallery, London, and Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver. The exhibition was accompanied by an illustrated catalogue edited by Zoé Whitley and Amy Jones, the first monograph of the artist’s work. The same year, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago commissioned the artist to create a large-scale installation for the institution’s atrium. Further solo presentations have been held at Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles (2024); Franz Kaka, Toronto (2023, 2020, 2017); Helena Anrather, New York (2021); Oakville Galleries, Ontario (2019); Interstate Projects, New York (2018); and Raster Gallery, Warsaw (2015), among others.

Kang has also been included in several significant group exhibitions. Her installation *In Cascades* (2023) was featured in *Even Better Than the Real*

Thing, the 2024 iteration of the Whitney Biennial. Other group exhibitions include *Key Operators*, Kunstverein Munich (2024); *Memory Work*, Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York (2023); 2021 Triennial: *Soft Water Hard Stone*, New Museum, New York (2021); *In Practice: Total Disbelief*, SculptureCenter, New York (2020); and *The Mouth Holds the Tongue*, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto (2015).

The artist is the recipient of notable awards, including the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (2024), the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Grant (2024), the Nancy Graves Grant for Visual Artists (2024), the Sobey Art Award Longlist (2022, 2019), and the Duke and Duchess of York Prize in Photography, Canada Council for the Arts (2012).

Work by Kang is held in prominent institutional collections worldwide, including the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Cc Foundation, Shanghai; KADIST Art Foundation; Tanoto Art Foundation, Singapore; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Fondazione Sandra e Giancarlo Bonollo per l'Arte Contemporanea, Thiene, Italy; Rivoli Due Fondazione per l'Arte Contemporanea, Milan; Wrocław Contemporary Museum, Poland; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

The artist lives and works in New York. She is represented by Franz Kaka, Toronto, and Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles.

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