

Zeiba, Drew. "How Poetry Inspired Artist Lotus L. Kang's Uninhabitable Greenhouse at 52 Walker." *Interview Magazine* (May 28, 2025) [ill.] [online]

# Interview

WALK THROUGH

## How Poetry Inspired Artist Lotus L. Kang's Uninhabitable Greenhouse at 52 Walker

By [Drew Zeiba](#)

May 28, 2025



*All photographs courtesy of Lotus L. Kang and 52 Walker.*

Lotus L. Kang's images are objects, her objects are performances, and her performances are cinema—which is, of course, moving architecture. Maybe I've got that wrong: things aren't *other* than what they are, but rather matrices of mediation both social and material. "I think it's a way to deconstruct a medium, and think about the substrata as this non-neutral contributor to whatever it's holding," Kang says of her recent work in *Already*, her solo show now on view at 52 Walker in Tribeca.

The Toronto-born, New York-based artist's practice defies settled positions: draped sheets of photo paper are often left unfixed and light-sensitive, and many recent sculptures feature precisely engineered motors and symphonically composed lamps. To experience Kang's multi-material is to experience transformation itself—a process both playful and haunting.

Kang has exhibited at galleries and institutions across the world, including the traveling solo show *In Cascades* (2023–24) at the Chisenhale Gallery in London and the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver, and in the most recent Whitney Biennial. *Already* is perhaps her most expansive exhibition yet. It features greenhouses hosting cast-metal anchovies, celluloid filmstrips (lit by a rotating lamp-armature), and colorful bottles of spirits; drawings pasted with studio scraps; hidden photographs; ceramic new-born birds; and a gobsmacking kinetic sculpture-film in the gallery's basement called *Azaleas II*. That sculpture takes its title from a poem by Kim Sowol. Poetry, as I discovered while walking through the exhibition with the artist earlier this month, pervades these works.

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DREW ZEIBA: So what drew you to the greenhouse? When did you start working on them?

LOTUS KANG: Well, the first greenhouse I made was in a field outside of Toronto, where I was living at the time and where I grew up. I built it after this residency I did, which was in this massive studio filled with light, and I got to tan all this film. It was really game-changing for me. And when I came back to Toronto I was like, "How do I emulate a studio that's full of light, where I can really enact this idea of the process as the work?" And the greenhouse just came to me as an idea. So it started there in 2022. It's been a few years now of sitting with it as this tool that I use in my practice that's often invisible, and then making it visible.

ZEIBA: You have one in Catskill that you built, right?

KANG: It's in Wood-Ridge. It's on Denniston Hill's property, they've been very generous. It's this same model without this joist, obviously. But this is 13 feet, and the one at Denniston Hill is 22 feet.





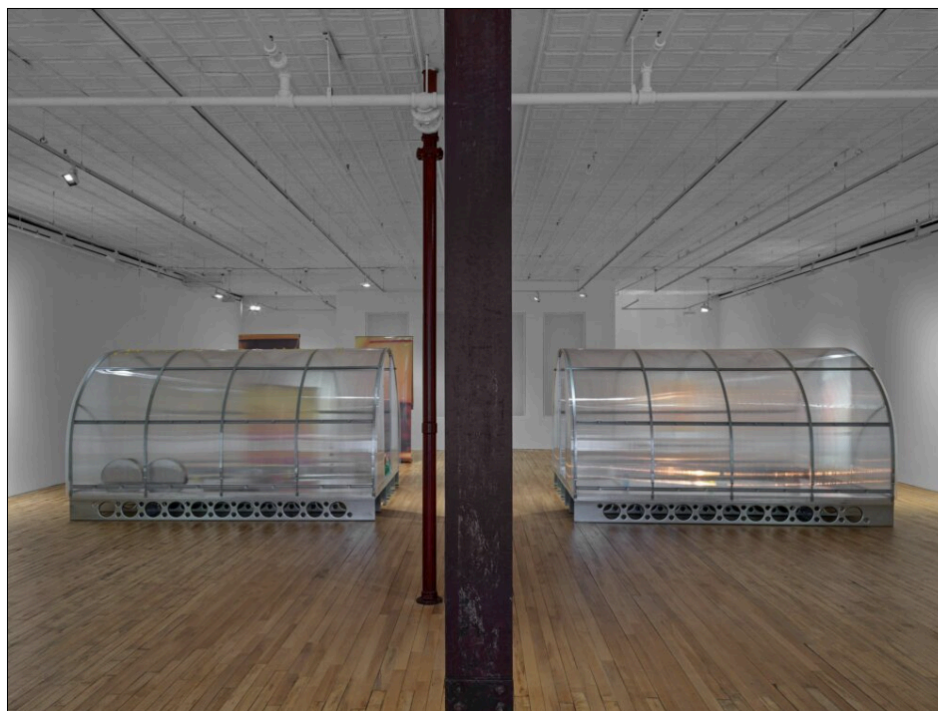
Installation view, Lotus L. Kang: *Already*, 52 Walker, New York, April 11–June 7, 2025. Courtesy 52 Walker, New York.

ZEIBA: Do you think of these as two separate objects, or as single objects?

KANG: Good question. I mean, they were definitely made in contrast to each other, because my work is so responsive. They have separate titles and materials and lists. They are listed as separate works, but to me, they came into being together, and thinking about one is full and one is quite empty, one is still and one is moving. One has these 49 objects and one translates this performance of 49 objects. So they're kind of playing with the time scales in different ways. So because I work within an installation form, for lack of a better term, it's maybe "environment making," without it being something immersive to the point of spectacular or spectacle.

ZEIBA: When you say you "work responsively," what do you mean?

KANG: I say this because "site-specific" to me has always had some kind of connotation towards a fixity. I like thinking about responsivity versus specificity, and in this particular space, it was really these pillars. That really split the space, and kind of doubled it. Building a wall here, you only get 25 feet. And it's not in one's best interests to cover up what's there. I never want to feel like I'm trying to hide a space. It's this balance of working with what's happening, and then also creating my own environment within that. So that really became the catalyst of thinking about this doubled greenhouse form. And also this distance between the pillars just ended up being just a bit wider than the greenhouses, which worked out. But I wanted them to be facing each other in this way, where it's like, "We're not trying to hide these things, they're there, and you're contending with them."



Installation view, Lotus L. Kang: *Already*, 52 Walker, New York, April 11–June 7, 2025. Courtesy 52 Walker, New York.

ZEIBA: On the theme of light, I'm thinking about the mirrors that recur here. You have the mirror platform over there, and—is this like a tatami mat, or something?

KANG: Tatami that's mirrored, yeah. The mirror is a newer form, although when I was at Bard MFA, in my thesis work, I was working with mirrors as well. I was thinking of this kind of diffracted dance studio. But the mirrors were vertically hung, and then occluded in all sorts of ways. I treated them with materials and dug holes out of them. But in a very direct way, mirrors deal with time and immediacy. They mark a presence, and yet they shift and alter, diffract or distort what is there. It has an immediate presence to it, and also has everything to do with self-recognition. But in this case, you don't see yourself right away. It also pulls the external environment in, and suspends a kind of awareness of weight and airiness. It kind of complicates the relationship to knowing something, or seeing something.

ZEIBA: You mentioned the idea of performance, and I think there's some reference to performances you've done in these greenhouses. And then I'm also like, "Are these things inside the sculptures seeing themselves?" We have these metal objects lying on a mirrored bed.

KANG: This one in particular, *Receiver Transmitter (49 Echoes I)*, is kind of like a film still to me. I wanted it to feel like there's a recent absence or a presence. Which is, in and of itself, some kind of performance, right? I've been doing a fairly deep dive on Chantal Akerman and this book that was written about her work called *Nothing Happens*. I love this idea of everything and nothing happening at once, and the mundane as a kind of performance. I wasn't thinking about that when I was making it, but it has some kind of kinship to those ideas. And under the tatami mat, there are images of another ritual performance I enacted two years ago. So that's embedded in the work, but not seen. And I feel like the works themselves have an inherently performative nature to them.





Installation view, Lotus L. Kang: *Already*, 52 Walker, New York, April 11–June 7, 2025. Courtesy 52 Walker, New York.

ZEIBA: I'm wondering a little bit about the relationship to film or moving image. How did you start playing with that?

KANG: I was always interested in going to the substrate of something. I wouldn't really call it a root layer, but somehow backing things up. To understand that we're still dealing with a material reality that has all sorts of implications within it—celluloid or film as a material form. So it's a way to deconstruct a medium, and think about the substrata as this non-neutral contributor to whatever it's holding, as well. And with film, there's an incredible opportunity to play with time stretched out, and kind of expanded, but also extremely condensed at the same time. I'm trying to layer those timescales together, because that's how we exist as bodies.

ZEIBA: I read that you came to this material, Fujiflex or Duratrans, by accident the first time?

KANG: Yes, it was an accidental encounter, which so much of my work is, like the greenhouses. It was gifted to me by a photo house when I was taking their scraps. They thought they were giving me expired paper, but it ended up being this film. That started it off, but I'm still figuring out what it's capable of. It's a highly experimental process.

ZEIBA: What's your process of experimenting with it like now?



KANG: I start in the greenhouse. The wooden pallets they sit on are a necessity. If I hang the film and it hits the floor, I put a drop sheet down because things grow in greenhouses. I elevate it on pallets because of flooding from rain or snow. The pallets started indexing themselves onto the film, which I was interested in as an index of horizontality. I'm slowly pushing things by making my own pallets that echo these holes, or bringing joists into the greenhouse. I'm starting to bring sculptural aspects into the work, like a chime I hung in front of the window. The fabric in some was out of necessity, but has become intentional. The greenhouse gets wildly hot when I'm in there, especially during summer. I go in with nitrile gloves, which make you sweat profusely, put on a cap, and I'm in there for over an hour doing semi-physical work. It's so hot that my Crocs shrank. So I'm trying to make quick decisions before I lose my mind. The fabric came out of necessity because this film is plastic, polyester. When it's this hot and the film is touching itself or other sheets, it starts to melt. I introduced the fabric as a membrane, and that necessity has now become part of the work. That's what I mean by "experiment." I'm figuring out what variables I have to makeshift. Many things in my practice feel very makeshift, and those solutions end up opening up to something.

ZEIBA: But then you have this high-polished aesthetic. It doesn't look industrial, but you use industrial elements like joists or spherical bolts. They're perfectly smoothed over parts, but you can still see that joinery. There's a push and pull.

KANG: I like that contrast, the idea that you recognize the roughness through its opposite. It heightens focal sensations. The drawings have a looseness where you can see my hand in them. I undo the imagery a lot. I start and almost throw it out, thinking it's the worst drawing I've ever made, and I have to return to it weeks later. I undo it, add layers and objects, and then it becomes this thing. But it's loose. Then I contrast it with something like a beautiful chrome frame. The precision is not done in my studio. Actually, everything there is very imprecise.



Installation view, Lotus L. Kang: *Already*, 52 Walker, New York, April 11–June 7, 2025. Courtesy 52 Walker, New York.

ZEIBA: Do you ever actually throw things away? When is it in the process that you have something you want to throw away but stop yourself?

KANG: I've been getting better at waiting longer. It takes a few years until I realize something isn't going to work out. I've moved with bins of things, bags and little objects or materials that I keep feeling I can make a work out of or that are still interesting to me. I collect things I encounter in the world, then I might source a more industrial scale of them. Like these mesh bags that are everywhere and fascinate me. This green paper is ripped-up paper that would normally hold pears in a grocery store.

ZEIBA: Should we talk about death? Death is a big part of all this, right?

KANG: It really is. Yes.

ZEIBA: The title of the show [*Already*] comes from a Kim Hyesoon poem. And it's also a reference to some Buddhist traditions around death?

KANG: Yes. The book has 49 poems, referencing the number of days a spirit is believed to roam between death and rebirth. You would make many offerings, ceremonies, and rituals. I've never practiced it, but I'm interested in it as it relates to inbetweenness, bringing supposed binaries together. I find it cathartic to think there's a guided passage between these things. The book was written in response to the Sewol Ferry disaster in South Korea, where over 300 people, mostly students, died when the ferry sank. At first the government tried to cover it up, saying everyone survived. I think she wrote it in a state of extreme grief. She's been a teacher for a long time, so she has a relationship with the youth and next generation who continue our thinking and being. But she also wrote it in a state of rage against governmental structures that have no actual care for the people, rooted in Korea's history of imperialism, neocolonialism, and colonization, especially by the US which still has a military presence there. I'm amazed at how a poem can contain these many layers of history, the way the films contain layers of time and space. One object I included, which most miss but is on the checklist, is this bottle of American Soju I found online. When I put it in the checklist, I call them "spirits," connoting both something that passes through your body and something you carry with you as an offering.

ZEIBA: That label's fucking crazy.

KANG: It's on the Taegukgi, the Korean flag. It's wild. I'm interested in found objects. I was looking for other bottles of spirits online and came across this. I knew I had to work with it, but it couldn't be regarded the same way as these.



Installation view, Lotus L. Kang: *Already*, 52 Walker, New York, April 11–June 7, 2025. Courtesy 52 Walker, New York.

ZEIBA: The American Soju bottle is a little too loud.

KANG: Yeah, but it's a way to recognize these layers of time and history as well.

ZEIBA: Are these actual ginkgo leaves?

KANG: Yes, they are actual leaves that I coated with acrylic medium. I went to Seoul last fall while working on the show, thinking it would completely inspire and change my understanding, that it would make the show. It really did not. I felt this gap everywhere I went. This was me trying to find answers in something that was never going to fulfill it. Nothing was inspiring the show. But that was important too. I thought I had no show, but there were these beautiful ginkgo leaves everywhere, like a shedding death. I painstakingly collected and pressed so many in the Airbnb I was staying in. When I got back to my studio in Dumbo, there were ginkgo leaves everywhere. It's hilarious because yes, they are from Seoul, but they could be from anywhere. I like that play between hyper specificity and ubiquity.

ZEIBA: It makes sense now that they're next to the American Soju.

KANG: And that's Kim Hyesoon's book open to the poem "Already." This old work from 2022 was once shown unfolded and now it's latent in there.

ZEIBA: Have you read her translator Don Mee Choi's book *DMZ Colony*?

KANG: Obsessed. And *Hardly War*?

ZEIBA: I haven't read that one.

KANG: That one's amazing. She wrote it during her residency in Berlin, part of a trilogy with *DMZ Colony*. In *Hardly War* she speaks through multiple times and spaces that interact and intersect. It was super inspiring for me.

ZEIBA: I should read it. Have you worked with poetry before directly in your work like this?





Installation view, Lotu L. Kang: *Already*, 52 Walker, New York, April 11–June 7, 2025. Courtesy 52 Walker, New York.

KANG: Not so directly. The first *Azaleas* work I made dealt with a historic poem. I'm relatively new to actively reading poetry in the last five years. It happens at different speeds, fast and slow. You have to read it multiple times. It's challenging, not the same satisfaction as theory or fiction. But it's evocative and haunting in ways other forms of writing can't be.

ZEIBA: Have you read this Kim Hyesoon poem, "A Floor Is Not A Floor"? I've read it so many times. The first time, it sounded like baby talk, its affect was silly or funny with all these exclamation marks. But then you realize she's talking about death. It's doing so many things at once, it's impossible to have the same reading twice, and not just because you've read it before.

KANG: Exactly, and that will change with time too. The context of that book is the condition under which it was made. It's in there, similar to the unseen performance informing the work in a deep way. Her work is very surreal, grotesque, with so much "mommy, mommy" in it.

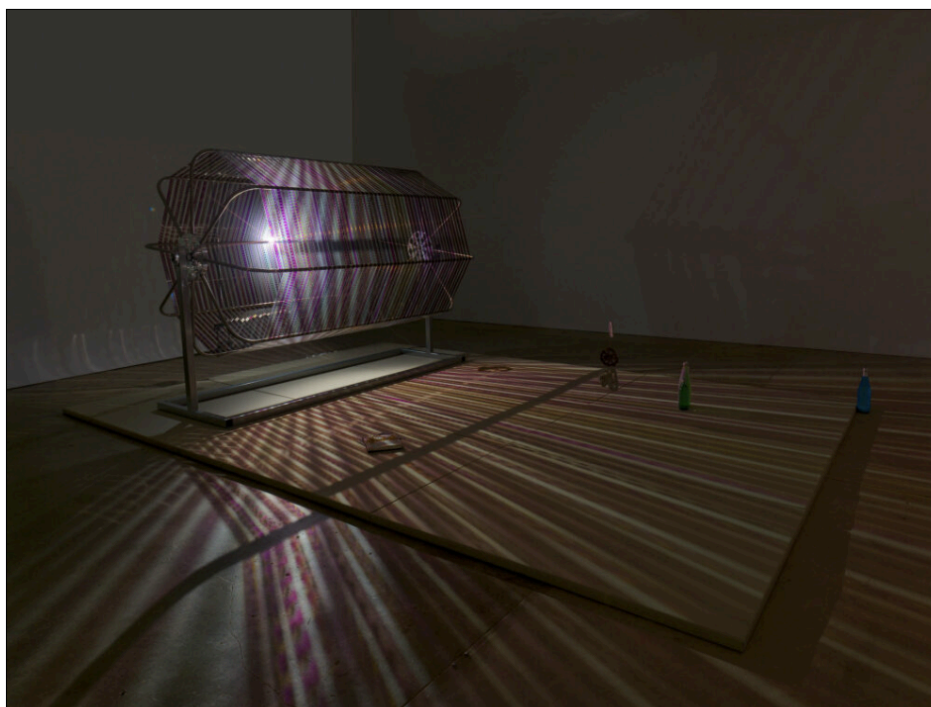
ZEIBA: Literally "mommy, mommy."

KANG: It's very intense, which is where I think the baby birds come in.

ZEIBA: Oh yeah, should we go look at them? The baby birds?

KANG: Kim Hyesoon and many other poets use a lot of bird imagery. I was initially drawn to them because I'm not a huge bird person, it's never been the animal I'm most drawn to.

ZEIBA: Have you seen that show at the Met right now with Chinese porcelain made for the European market in the 16th through 19th centuries? It's in the octagonal rotunda downstairs.



Lotus L. Kang, *Azaleas II*, 2025, installed at 52 Walker, New York. © Lotus L. Kang. Courtesy of the artist and 52 Walker, New York.

KANG: No but I can't wait to see it. Anne Anlin Cheng wrote *Ornamentalism* about surface and ornament as standing for Asian female subjectivity, or yellow woman theory. That's been on my mind for some time as a back layer, maybe less immediate but part of my draw to a material like porcelain. But the baby birds were mostly because they're these desperate things.

ZEIBA: What's crazy is these porcelains make the parent and the baby birds the same color. Most baby birds look like weird gray, abject, see-through fluff balls that can hardly hold their head up. They're not cute.

KANG: Previously I've made cast glass baby rats in an installation. Those provoke more of seeing a baby thing and being drawn to it, then inherently repulsed at the same time. This overall is a bit more tender than the rats were. These birds are always looking up and they eat barf. They're containers for holding cycles, holding other bodies in their body.

ZEIBA: It's doubling down on parenthood. "Not only have I reproduced you, now you're eating stuff from my stomach." It's this constant generational passage.

KANG: Yeah, a kind of passing of an orifice or boundary that unites them.

ZEIBA: Which is again this inside/outside, these thresholds. The fact you can't go in the greenhouse, but you can fit your head in.

KANG: I keep talking about them creating intimacy through distance. The fact that you can't enter still pulls you in. We talked about if people should be able to enter them and it was *no*. I kept thinking about how to make it immersive without sensationalism or spectacle. It has to ride that line where you are not getting an experience, I'm offering you to enact your own internal experience.

Saltz, Jerry “To Do: May 21–June 4 Our biweekly guide on what to see, hear, watch, and read..” *New York Magazine* (May 19, 2025) [ill.] [online]

NEW YORK

AGENDA

MAY 19, 2025

To Do: May 21–June 4 Our biweekly guide on what to see, hear, watch, and read.

By The Editors

SAVE COMMENT



Photo-Illustration: Vulture; Photos: Justin Downing/Netflix, Jojo Whilden/Prime, Dennis Keeley/HBO, John Shearer/Getty Images, Lorne Thomson/Redferns

Art

4. See Lotus L. Kang

Art that’s sensitive to light.

52 Walker Gallery, through June 7.

This Canadian-born artist skyrocketed to attention in the most recent Whitney Biennial with an installation of hanging sheets of photographic film and items placed on altars beneath. All the stops are pulled out for this new show, *Already*, consisting in part of greenhouse forms filled with objects and film. A formal leap is in the offing. —Jerry Saltz



Ahn, J. Cabelle. "Lotus L. Kang on Channeling Poetry, Memory, and Spirits Into Her New Work." *Artnet News* (May 21, 2025) [ill.] [online]

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
Artists

## Lotus L. Kang on Channeling Poetry, Memory, and Spirits Into Her New Work

Her new work, now on view at 52 Walker, is inspired by the writing of Korean poet Kim Hyesoon.



Lotus L. Kang photographed by Sara Cwynar for BLAU International, 2025.

J. Cabelle Ahn • May 21, 2025 •  Share This Article

Lotus L. Kang is a channeler of memories—both collective and personal. In her latest exhibition, “Already” (on view at 52 Walker through June 7, 2025), the Brooklyn-based Canadian artist layers the gallery’s loft-like space with dualities. Spanning two floors, the installation incorporates steel greenhouses, mixed-media paintings, sculpture, and found objects, guiding viewers through a diasporic memoryscape textured with hyper-specific references: oversized kelp knots, rootless flora, and soju bottles arranged like sentries.



Lotus L. Kang, Documentation, ‘49 Echoes’ (2025) © Lotus L. Kang. Courtesy the artist and 52 Walker, New York.

The exhibition takes its title from a poem in *Autobiography of Death* (2016) by celebrated Korean poet Kim Hyesoon, translated into English by Don Mee Choi in 2018. Taking inspiration from Kim’s poetry, Kang’s installation operates as a series of translations building on her ongoing investigation into the transmutative and ephemeral qualities of photography and film.

In a recent conversation, Kang spoke about the gulf between presence and absence, and how memory, like the body, moves in cycles.

*This interview has been edited for clarity and length.*

**The exhibition—and its title—is inspired by the Korean poet Kim Hyesoon’s *Autobiography of Death*. What initially drew you to her poetry?**

I’ve been reading Kim’s poetry, through the English translation, for close to three years now. I was drawn to her writing because it has this visceral, surreal, almost grotesque quality to it.

The poems respond to the 2014 Sewol Ferry disaster, which speaks to the Korean government’s failure to properly care for its society. That, in turn, connects to South Korea’s status as a neocolonial state with a continued U.S. military presence. So, the book contains many times and spaces, and I became interested in contemporary and historical Korean poetry as a way of understanding my own origins. In some ways, poetry feels like a more accurate historical document in the way that it embodies.

**As a Korean-Canadian *gyopo* myself, I’m interested in the promises—and limitations—of translation. What role does translation play in your work?**

Kim’s poetry in Korean is very rhythmic, which is lost in the English translation. That’s why the rotation pattern I made for *Azaleas II* is derived from the Korean syllabic meter. I also think of the two greenhouses upstairs as material translations of Kim’s poem “Already.”

I’ve often described my work as a “regurgitation,” but I’m now thinking of it more as a “translation-regurgitation.” Translation is always a kind of transmutation—it’s never a direct one-to-one. Being someone who doesn’t speak Korean fluently, it can feel more freeing to embrace this understanding of translation, but there are inevitably still things that are lost, and this loss itself is inscribed in the work.





Lotus L. Kang, *Azaleas II* (2025) installed at 52 Walker, New York © Lotus L. Kang. Courtesy of the artist and 52 Walker, New York

**Lately, there's been a lot of attention to translation as an artistic and creative act of resistance, especially at this moment shaped by miscommunications.**

Totally. I'm really inspired by Kim's frequent translator, Don Mee Choi. She took [Walter] Benjamin's quote "translation is a mode," and expanded it into "translation is an anti-neo-colonial mode." I think it's politically important that the act of translation and awareness of the 'who(s)' in the translator's body continues.

**The two greenhouses upstairs only allow glimpses of the objects inside, while *Azaleas II* downstairs is more immersive. Can you expand on the relationship between the two floors?**

I see both conceptual and formal relationships. One of the main aims of this show is to situate the viewer's body in a space that continually fluctuates between inside and outside.

Structurally, the greenhouse is a container of development, a space for cycles of life and death, cultivation, and permeability. In some ways, I think of the greenhouse that contains 49 echoes or objects as a film still, while the other greenhouse presents literal film stills in a static state, and a moving bulb rotating within. With *Azaleas II*, the form is based on a rotary film dryer, which is a filmmaking tool used to dry film or to bring an image into being. Downstairs, you're immersed in shadows and projections, which feels like a kind of underbelly, a motor driving it all. *Azaleas II* is a kind of root, and the works upstairs are the sprouts. My work often attempts to create something that simultaneously congeals, condenses, and disperses.



Installation view "Lotus L. Kang: Already" 52 Walker, New York, April 11–June 7, 2025. Courtesy 52 Walker, New York

**Many of the objects in the installation felt culturally evocative to me: the cast anchovies reminded me of yellow corvina drying in the countryside, while the grouping of the cast fruit, tatami mats, and liquor call to mind traditional funerary rites. How important is it for you to unpack these references for the viewer?**

In general, my work never lands in one place and stays there. I do feel that artists are channelers, and I'm often channeling something that I'm not always aware of.

Some of the things, like the bottles of spirits, are very specific. I always list them as such in the checklist to make it clear I'm playing with dual meanings: spirits as alcohol, which alters one's state, but also spirits as ancestral presences or beings we might be carrying with us.

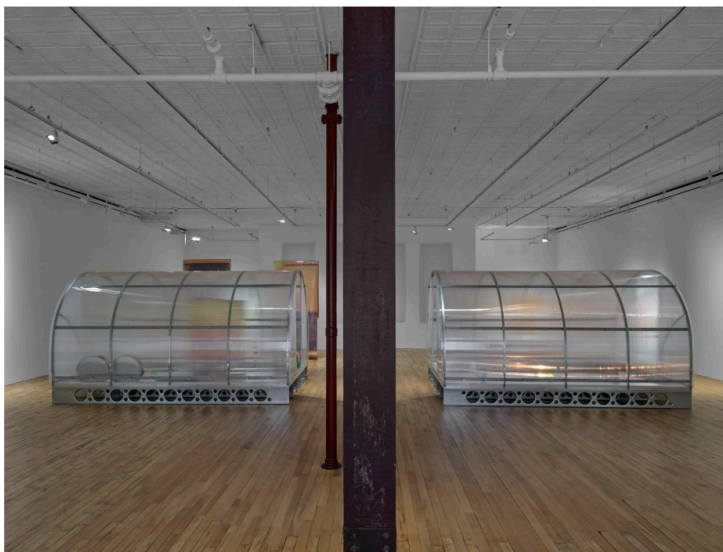
For example, there's a bottle of soju underneath one of the greenhouses that's printed with the American flag superimposed on top of the *taegukgi*, the Korean flag. That bottle is very much confronting the layered histories of being a diasporic person who was born in North America. It also points to the past and present conditions of US occupation and military presence in South Korea and so many other regions of the world. Most viewers won't see the object or reference, but it's important to me that it's there. On the checklist, I clearly demarcate it as "American Soju" rather than "spirits".

Many of the objects I use have this ability to be hyper-specific and non-specific, and they place the responsibility on the viewer to form their own embodied understanding.

**Do you see the checklist as an extension of the installation?**

I do. I almost wrote a poem for one of the greenhouses, but I don't think I'm quite there yet in my poetry journey. Still, I feel like if someone takes the time to read the checklist, there's a lot to be gleaned from it in terms of "understanding the work."





Installation view "Lotus L. Kang: Already" 52 Walker, New York, April 11–June 7, 2025. Courtesy 52 Walker, New York

**What about space? Is the work shaped by the structural and spatial limitations of the gallery itself?**

52 Walker has these very assertive pillars that bisect the gallery. For me, that became an invitation to play with mirroring and doubling, to explore binaries and then undercut them. The space between the two greenhouses is this strange non-space—you're both and neither inside and outside.

**Speaking of dualities, one theme that stands out to me is the tension between bodily presence through absence.**

One of the things I wanted from the greenhouses was this sense of recent presence—or absence. As if we just missed an activity and we're encountering its residue. I find that there's more energy in absence—you can sense the body more clearly when it's not physically present.

We often think the body is defined by the limits of the skin, but I'm interested in how the body extends on both an energetic or spiritual, and a quantum level into space and the environment.



Lotus L. Kang, *Receiver Transmitter (49 Echoes I)* (2022-2025) (detail) © Lotus L. Kang. Courtesy of the artist and 52 Walker, New York

**It feels like the installation generates a kind of potential energy that's bubbling just beneath the surface.**

Totally.

**Finally, what's next for you—in terms of new media you're exploring or ideas you're hoping to develop?**

I'm having my first major show in Seoul next year, which feels really special. I'm still thinking through poetry and trying to push the boundaries of film. There's a long-term idea I hint at throughout this installation: one of the greenhouses contains a photograph of a mudflat in South Korea, and *Azaleas II* includes another. So I'm thinking about mud and time, and these in-between spaces of tidal flats where two ecosystems overlap.

Keenan, Annabel. "7 Shows to See During Frieze New York 2025." *Frieze* (May 6, 2025) [ill.] [online]

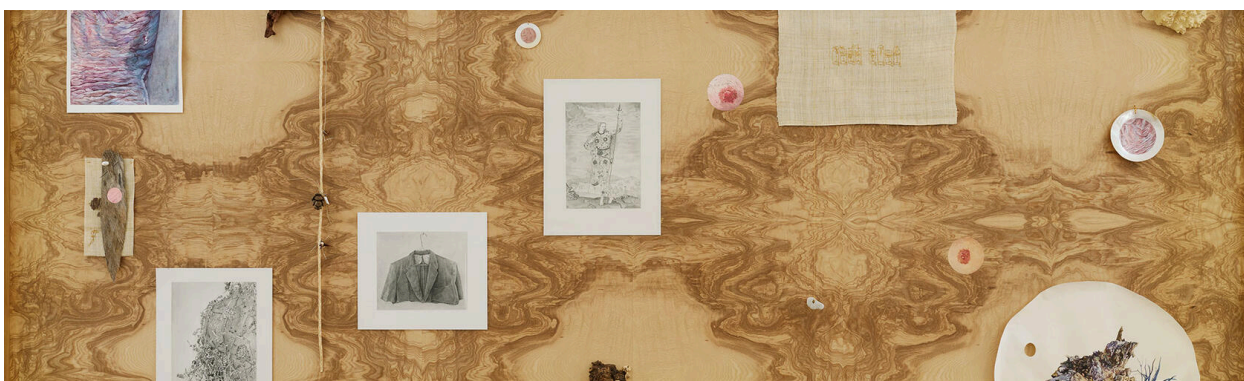
# FRIEZE

## 7 Shows to See During Frieze New York 2025

From Sam Moyer's doubleheader to Kang Seung Lee's poignant investigation of ageing, here's what to see in New York now



BY ANNABEL KEENAN IN CRITIC'S GUIDES | 06 MAY 25



Lotus L. Kang | 52 Walker | 11 April – 7 June



Lotus L. Kang, 'Already', 2025, exhibition view. Courtesy: 52 Walker, New York



Two greenhouses in Lotus L. Kang's solo show at 52 Walker, 'Already', offer a glimpse into her creative laboratory. Within these spaces, Kang exposes what she calls 'skins', referring to unfixed photographic film. A wide sheet of this film hangs inside one greenhouse, *Receiver Transmitter (49 Echoes I)* (2022–25), alongside small objects including plaster- and aluminium-cast birds and dried lotus tubers. In the artist's nearby 'Molt' series (2022–25), film cascading from the ceiling changes colour over time, recalling *In Cascades* (2023), the installation that earned her acclaim at the 2024 Whitney Biennial. Adapting to the environment, the light-sensitive material in these installations speaks to our own development as we experience the world around us, embodying themes of impermanence and transformation. You can read Simon Wu's profile of Kang for *frieze* [here](#).

Kim, Eana. "Lotus L. Kang." *Artforum* (May 5, 2025) [ill.] [online]

# ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS NEW YORK

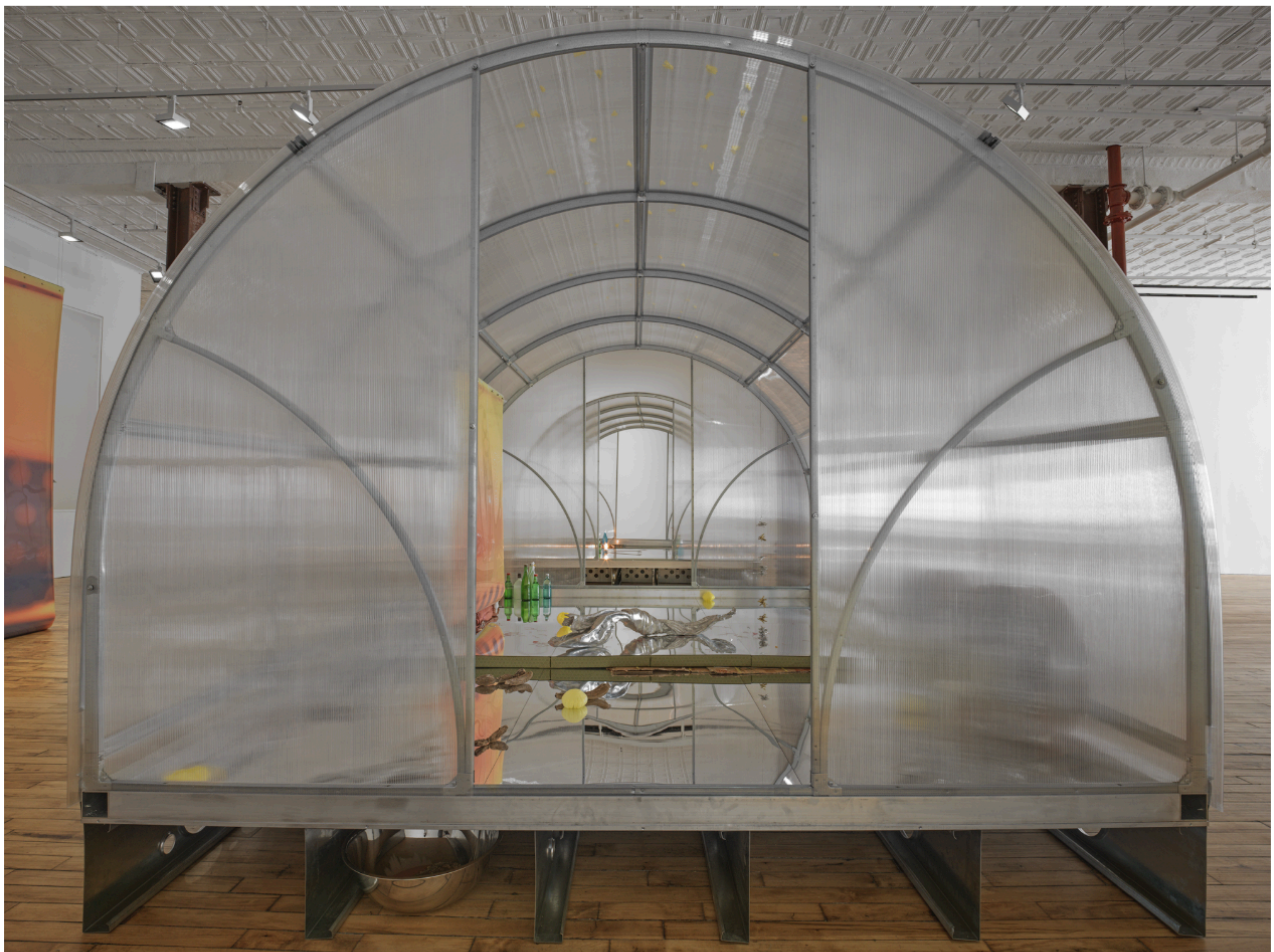
## Lotus L. Kang

52 Walker | 52 Walker

April 11, 2025 - June 7, 2025

By Eana Kim

May 5, 2025 11:04 am



View of "Lotus L. Kang: Already," 2025. Foreground: *Receiver Transmitter (49 Echoes I)*, 2022–25. Background: *Receiver Transmitter (49 Echoes II)*, 2025.

Lotus L. Kang's solo exhibition here, "Already," calls to mind an ecosystem, uncannily stilled. Its title, drawn from Kim Hyesoon's eponymous poem, reverberates throughout the exhibition like a psychic refrain: "You are already born inside death." The poet gently instructs the reader to recite the line forty-nine times, echoing the Buddhist belief that the soul lingers for that many days between death and rebirth. Kang transposes this limbo realm into spatial form: Her materials hover between fractured reflection and spectral drift.

The artist's assemblages—scorched photographic films, greenhouses built from galvanized steel, cast-aluminum anchovies, lotus tubers, kelp knots, mirrored Plexiglas—exude a tempered austerity. The installation hums with a parched quiet: no warmth, no vital fluids, only the arid traces of what once pulsed. The show is a body seared to its mineral core, reduced to smoke and evanescent memory.

Near the gallery's entrance, two stainless-steel steamers solemnly hang from the ceiling, their perforated bodies recalling the latticelike structure of the lotus root. This recurring motif—an evocation of hollowed vessels and ducts—is threaded throughout the presentation, sutured into a trembling mesh of rupture and recoil. Titled *Tract XX (You are already II)* and *Tract XIX (You are already)*, both 2025, these sculptures open into Kang's expanded corporeal field—a body without organs, where remnants of form pulse across a volatile terrain of erosion and dislocation.

Two greenhouses resembling emptied lungs, *Receiver Transmitter (49 Echoes I)*, 2022–25, and *Receiver Transmitter (49 Echoes II)*, 2025, bisect the gallery. Within and surrounding them are assorted relics and offerings—such as Styrofoam fruit holders, cut mesh bags, scrap thread, cast-bronze cabbage leaves, construction sacks, and soju bottles that might be used for *jesa*, Korean ancestral rites honoring the dead—gathered around a sheet of singed photographic film, its burnt-orange hues evoking scar tissue. These fragile residues, susceptible to distortion, degradation, and collapse, seed the exhibition's respiratory field. Downstairs is the kinetic sculpture *Azaleas II*, 2025: a rotating skeletal form wound with fragile 35-mm film, staging another deferred cycle of touch, decay, and unsettled rebirth.

In Kang's affective terrain, looking becomes a site of return: where what we face gazes back at us with unusual intimacy. Her ineffable objects, through their visceral references to the body, haunt us long after we exit the show.



Pyle, Philip. "Leaky Fractals." *Family Style* (May 2, 2025) [ill.] [online]

## FAMILY STYLE

# Leaky Fractals

There is a generative tension between preservation and destruction. With poetry as an interlocutor, Lotus L. Kang has found a new way of working through it.

*Words by Phillip Pyle*

May 2, 2025



Lotus L. Kang, *Synapse*, 15:50, 2025. Image courtesy of the artist and 52 Walker, New York.

Lotus L. Kang's work unfurls like a poem. The forms that crop up in her practice initially conjure a language of minimalism, be they greenhouses or colossal sheets of unfixed, light-sensitive film. However, like reading a poem in which discrete words and stanzas are eventually displaced by the force of an elusive whole, Kang's work pulls away as soon as it begins to come into focus.

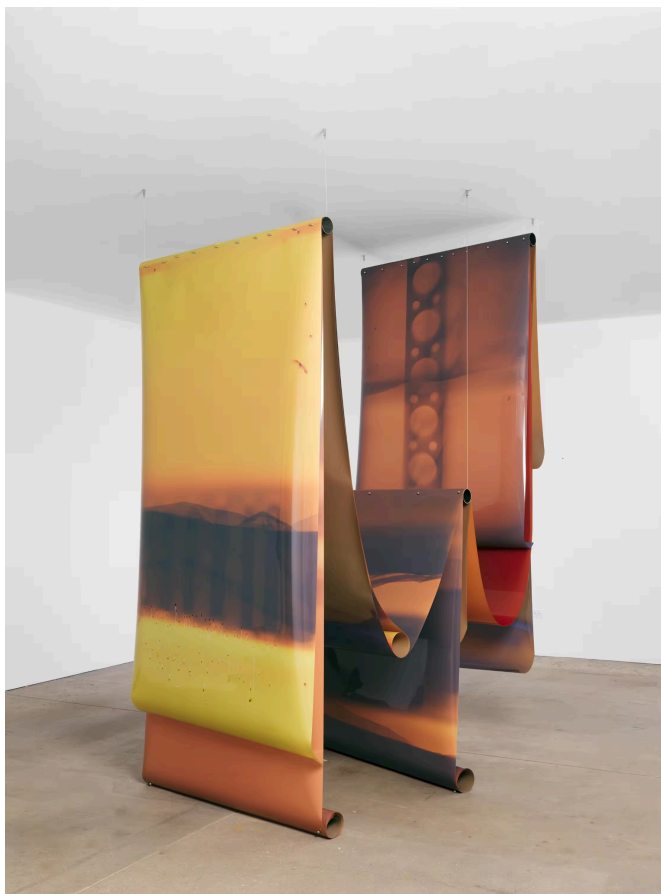
In New York, the Canadian artist explains how poetry wields language in a way that squares well with her commitment to states of liminality. "You have to grasp at what you're sensing, and there's a lot of onus on the viewer or the reader. It's a very contingent medium in that way," Kang says. "Poetry metabolizes slowly, but you can often read a poem in five seconds." For her, this effect is not merely experienced on a semantic level. Its metamorphosis is also felt in the reader's body over time.



Installation view of "Lotus L. Kang: *Receiver Transmitter (49 Echoes II)*," 2025. Image courtesy of the artist and 52 Walker, New York.

In "Already," the artist's solo show at 52 Walker, which runs through June 7, one poem in particular forms the kernel from which the artist's conceptual inquiries emanate. Across installations, sculptures, luminograms, and photograms, Kang attempts to "translate" the Korean poet Kim Hyesoon's "Already" from *Autobiography of Death*, 2018, a book in which each of the 49 poems corresponds to one of the days between death and rebirth in Buddhist rituals and tradition. At times, she translates with mathematical exactness, as with her two greenhouses, *Receiver Transmitter (49 Echoes I)*, 2022-2025, and *Receiver Transmitter (49 Echoes II)*, 2025, that symmetrically divide the gallery space. As viewers walk between or around the structures, the impermeable walls facing toward the gallery entry give way to openings on the side. The plexiglass floors mirror up toward the opening, which extends up to the viewers' knees, impeding movement as soon as it invites it.

Forty-nine objects are placed within, throughout, and on top of the first of the two steel and polycarbonate frames. Inside is a mirror-covered *tatami* mat topped by a large, aluminum-kelp knot and surrounded by bottles of American Soju, dried lotus tubers, aluminum lotus tubers, and aluminum and plaster birds. Within the fogged polycarbonate walls, Kang embeds the exhibition's hero image, a photograph of the beach she captured with her phone following her recent 40th birthday performance, where she walked 49 times in a circle on the beach while directing a camera outward. The distinctly more minimal second structure, *Receiver Transmitter (49 Echoes II)*, contains six colorful bottles of spirits arranged in a rectangle around a partially unspooled roll of 35mm film—the result of Kang's birthday ritual.

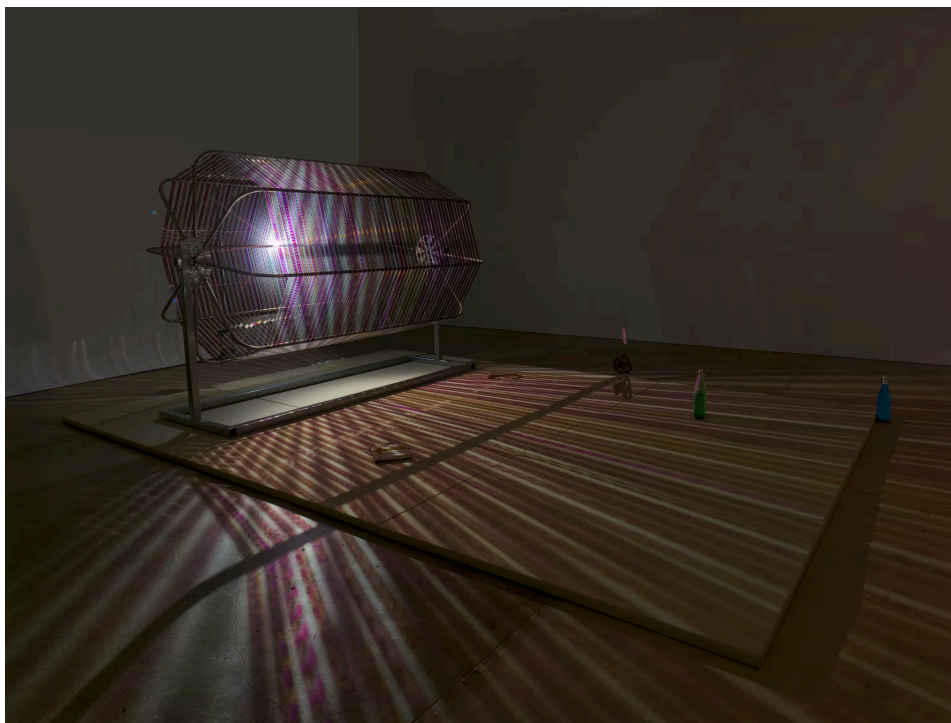


Installation view of "Lotus L. Kang: *Molt* (Toronto-Chicago-Woodridge-New York-)," 2022-2025. Image courtesy of the artist and 52 Walker, New York.

Even though Kang's hand is never overt, its trace is always there. While she routinely strews objects representing animals, plants, or natural phenomena throughout her installations, she very rarely, if ever, affords humans such direct visibility. Her oblique approach to human representation is best epitomized by her use of film as skin. "I'm interested in seeing the body as reflected as or through, or represented by what it's not—meaning what's outside of it, beyond the limit of the physical body or the containment of our skin—because that is the reality of who we are as material existences and beings in the world," she says.

Across the artist's body of work, though, the element of chance produces not only difference, but repetition. She describes her greenhouses as leaky portals into one another. "There's continuity there," she says, "but also all sorts of debris picked up along the way." Fittingly, many forms and materials from Kang's past exhibitions reappear in different configurations throughout 52 Walker. With the greenhouses, there is an echo of the structure that she uses to "tan" her film sheets, one she first explored while working with the gallery's director [Ebony L. Haynes](#) for the [2024 MOCA Toronto Triennial](#). And the same holey steel joists from which the artist suspended her "In Cascades" film sheets at last year's [Whitney Biennial](#) are repurposed as the foundation. She presents these familiar architectures only to defamiliarize them.





Installation view of "Lotus L. Kang: *Azaleas II*," 2025. Image courtesy of the artist and 52 Walker, New York.

Kang partially explains the deconstructive nature of "Already" with a quote from Trinh T. Minh-ha's "Grandma's Story," where the Vietnamese filmmaker and writer claims, "To listen carefully is to preserve. But to preserve is to burn, for understanding means creating." For Kang, the tension between preservation and destruction is essential. At times, this logic takes on a material quality, as in the bruises of purple, rust, and orange that mark both the chemical transformation of the film skins and that evoke, on an affective level, a "trauma as well as a healing." At other times, it is rendered much more abstractly in that zone between representation and non-representation.

Built atop these conceptual undercurrents, Kang's structures remain alluring yet anti-monumental. This is especially the case with *Azaleas II*, 2024, an installation housed in the basement of the gallery. First shown in her exhibition "*Azaleas*" at Commonwealth and Council in Los Angeles last year, *Azaleas II* loosely centers around a large rotary film-dryer wrapped with 35mm strips that repeat images of purple orchids. Placed atop a *tatami* mat scattered with bottles, sculptural readymades, and other objects familiar to the artist's syntax, the film-dryer rotates to a score derived from Hyesoon's "Already" and Kim Sowol's 1925 poem "Azaleas." Two lights shine on the rotating structure, casting sacred geometries of light, shadow, and color throughout the space and the bodies that mill about. The work routinely calls attention to a center (and periphery) of perception, understanding, and meaning that it just as routinely displaces. "I point to the boundary constantly, and then I disappear it at the same time," Kang says.

"Already" is on view through June 7, 2025 at 52 Walker, New York at 52 Walker Street, New York NY 10013.

Gu, Qianfan. "L. Kang Lotus." *Blau International* (Summer 2025): 128-141 [ill.] [print]

## BLAU INTERNATIONAL



If right now  
**LOTUS L. KANG**  
 is composing  
 history, it's a score  
 to be played not in  
 a major but a minor  
 key. Looking at  
 all the little things,  
 the Canadian artist  
 gives form to that  
 which is in between:  
 tubes, channels,  
 conduits—all that  
 cannot quite contain.  
 A poetic portrait  
 by *Qianfan Gu*

LOTUS L. KANG photographed in her studio in Brooklyn  
 by SARA Cwynar for BLAU International

*Opening spread:* Installation view, MOLT (NEW YORK-LETHBRIDGE-  
 LOS ANGELES-TORONTO-CHICAGO-), at MCA Chicago, 2024

When I visit Lotus L. Kang's studio in Brooklyn, she has only just recovered from a bad case of the flu. But with a major solo exhibition mere weeks away, she is already deeply immersed in her preparations. Over by the window, a long table holds an assortment of tools, small cast sculptures, and colorful coils of sewing thread. Drawings and photos are pinned to the walls, while works in progress are laid out on the floor, each at different stages of becoming. There is a lot to take in. Kang's work, centered on sculpture, installation, and photography, is intricate and expansive, dense with interwoven ideas and processes. Yet she navigates it all with an acute attentiveness, orchestrating every detail with the utmost care. There's a distinct steadiness about her—neither haughty nor overly humble but completely at ease, self-possessed in a way that is both assured and unforced.

Kang guides me, under dangling dried-fish sculptures, past readymade bird-shaped ornaments, toward the largest piece in the room—her “greenhouse” installation, a real four-meters-long greenhouse, filled with objects and design elements. Among her studio's multi-species narratives, I squat in reflection, mimicking how I imagine the artist must often crouch next to the work.

First presented last year at the Greater Toronto Art Triennial, Kang will install this second iteration of the greenhouse at 52 Walker, New York. This time around, nearly every surface of the structure is covered with mirrors, even the tatami mattress that lies within. An array of silvery items is also scattered throughout, both found objects and cast sculptures—steamers, strung-up anchovies, an enlarged kelp knot lying on the tatami, which the artist refers to as her “placeholder”—all echoing the metal purlins and trusses that frame the structure. As the elements interact under plastic UV diffuser panels, I begin to pick up on a peculiar atmosphere, one that blends sci-fi futurism with the tranquil nostalgia of the courtyard in a traditional Korean house. Hard and soft, exterior and interior, emptiness and wholeness, illusion and reality come together, fully charged. Much like Kang's signature installations, in which metal joists suspend sheets of film, hung floor to ceiling like room dividers, the greenhouse carves out a space for the most tender things—one that remains provisional, allowing fleeting transformations to unfold within the open-ended container.









REVUE

## Lotus L. Kang



BODIED II (detail), 2019, stainless steel mixing bowl, rubber, polymer clay, cast pewter  
 Left: Installation view, EARTH SURGE, at Helena Anrather, New York, 2021

**T**he notion of the container, both literally and conceptually, is something Kang returns to again and again. In Ursula K. Le Guin's renowned essay *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, published in 1986, the author celebrates journalist Elizabeth Fisher's idea that it was containers, not hunting weapons, that were humanity's first cultural tools—carrier bags rather than spears. A keen reader of Le Guin, Kang has instilled the foundational motif of the container in her work in the form of black plastic bags in her *Carrier* series (2018–19), stainless-steel mixing bowls in *Mother* (2019–20), and onion skins that cradle sand and silicone in *Glean* (2020). These are ephemeral vessels that, beyond merely storing and preserving, are constantly transmitting ideas.

In her studio, Kang turns to me and says, "I'm interested in the anti-monumental, in seeing all sorts of things that aren't doing what they're 'supposed' to do." In choosing her materials, she resists permanence, gravitating toward tubes, channels, and conduits, as well as toward porous objects that might be considered failures in their ability

to contain, such as fragile meshes, single-use food wraps, voids, holes. One particularly important element is the lotus root, which the artist calls "a nourishing tuber rhizome living in the mud." The mud, meanwhile, is "a horizontal carrier of time," which bears witness to historical upheavals: population migrations, the circulation of commercial goods, wars, pollution, and climate change.

During the summer of 2022, Kang erected a small greenhouse among the flora on a friend's farm, using it to "tan," as she puts it, her "skins"—the industrial-grade photogram film material she likes to use as a setting for her imagery. Hung in succession like bedsheets left out to dry, the lengths of film were exposed to the shifting rhythms of the day, absorbing and translating their surroundings into a language of light and shadow, growth and decay.

Having majored in photography in an undergraduate fine art program in her native Canada, the artist approaches the medium with both fresh innovation and deep understanding. "We live in a world where we now experience life through

"We live in a world where we now experience life through images and the medium of photography. It's so ubiquitous that it's beyond our conscious awareness"





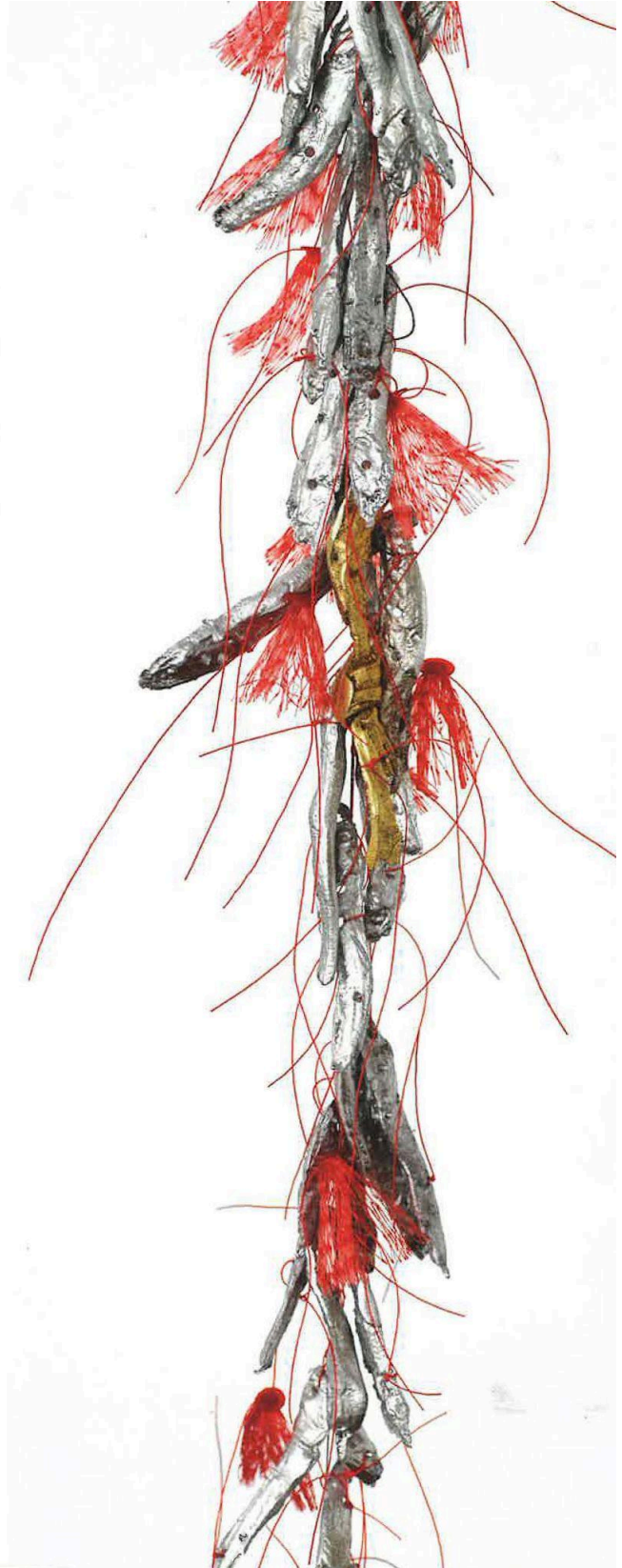
## REVUE

images and the medium of photography,” she says. “It’s so ubiquitous that it’s beyond our conscious awareness. It is the means of how we operate. There’s something political in subverting its function, in continuously challenging its ability to depict with legibility or clarity.”

Last spring, the artist installed one of her most ambitious works to date, the room-sized installation *In Cascades* (2023–24), as part of the Whitney Biennial. The scene at the time was full of hurried, overlapping crowds, their fleeting silhouettes reflected in Kang’s suspended film skins, which transformed into a blurry backdrop over the duration of the exhibition. Details gradually revealed themselves to me as I moved through the space: kelp knots, lotus-root slices, and anchovies, all cast in metal, sometimes draped alongside the skins, sometimes embedded in joists, and sometimes punctuating the open space. Then there were cast-aluminum cabbage leaves, perforated with worm holes, unfurling like tongues from a neat stack of tatami mats, almost as if they were about to speak. Their silent gestures felt like an invitation from the artist, a call for viewers to come together in a corner and whisper little secrets to each other.

**B**ack then, I didn’t realize that, hidden within the tatami, there were indeed secrets, or photos—“a photograph is a secret about a secret,” as Diane Arbus once said. The images documented Kang’s ritual performance in her studio in 2023, on her 38th birthday—a 38-minute act honoring her paternal grandmother’s daring escape from North Korea to the south at the age of 38, crossing the 38th parallel. “It was a one-time alignment that I felt called to work with,” Kang later reflected.

With this, the entire history of the Korean Peninsula’s division, tracing back to the Japanese occupation (1910–45), was delicately abstracted into the quiet folds of Japanese tatami. Along with the photos, dried goods such as beans covered the makeshift bed—a reference to the modest grain and seed shop Kang’s grandmother opened, upon arriving in the south, in a bid to make a living. Unlike the protagonist of *The Princess and the Pea*, who, despite sleeping on 20 mattresses, is still bothered by a single pea, Kang’s grandmother had to sleep among hard beans, gathered with her rough hands and cherished as the means by which she would sustain her family of seven. Her





## REVUE

## Lotus L. Kang

grandmother's past is something Kang only holds a fragmented account of—like a broken net, scattered and drifting, revealing uncertain details, yet remaining dispersed, untethered.

In contrast to the grounded horizontality of the beans and the tatami, Kang's film skins always hang from high above. Their imagery may appear elusive, even clouded, but they always carry the indelible imprint of the places to which they've been exposed. The title of *Molt* (*New York-Lethbridge-Los Angeles-Toronto-Chicago-*) (2018–23), for instance, commissioned by Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art, chronicles the journey the skins have taken through multiple cities. And due to the impressionable nature of the film lengths, the journey never stops. Remaining in a perpetual state of becoming, the material persistently gathers new light information, beginning with each unboxing and continuing throughout every exhibition.

Categorizing her film skins by color, Kang at the same time personifies them: violet blue is labeled as “raw,” pinkish purple as “bruise,” reddish brown as “blood,” and amber yellow as “bile.” She perceives the material as visceral, with a texture akin to fascia, tendons, or membranes, suggesting an interchangeability between humans and photographs. It's as if she's asking—since we're already so heavily immersed in a world flooded by photographic data—why not treat images humanely? Rather than attempting to create new monumental pictures, she delves into the formality of photography, enlarging images beyond life-size while meticulously examining their bruises and, in turn, their pain. Studying the mechanics of photography, Kang suggests, might be a way for us humans to better understand ourselves.

If it's beginning to sound like Kang's methods are clinical, it's because they are. Since the pandemic, she has been studying Chinese medicine and acupuncture, frequently referencing acupoints and meridians in her works, such as in *Great Shuttle* (2020–21), presented at the New Museum Triennial in 2021, titled after the English translation of *Dazhui*, an acupoint located on the back, and *Origin Gate* (2021), after *Guanyuan*, a point on the lower abdomen. Both pieces take on vertical forms and feature intricate shapes that evoke hook-like bones, fleshy humps, and distorted spines.

Kang tells me she sees the body as “a changing web, an ongoing constitution of both what's inside and outside of it.” Partly informed by her study of acupuncture, her perspective is further

shaped by her experience as an identical twin—“the first relationship in my life.” She says that her default state is “doubled,” or “togetherness,” while boundaries are a concept she only learned over time. As both a twin and a Korean Canadian, her sense of self has always been hybrid, complex, and imbued with layered, co-existential, leaky, and indefinable aspects. The multifaceted reflective surfaces in her work, therefore, constitute more than a mere aesthetic choice. Looking at or through them, they become portals where Self and Other meet and intertwine.

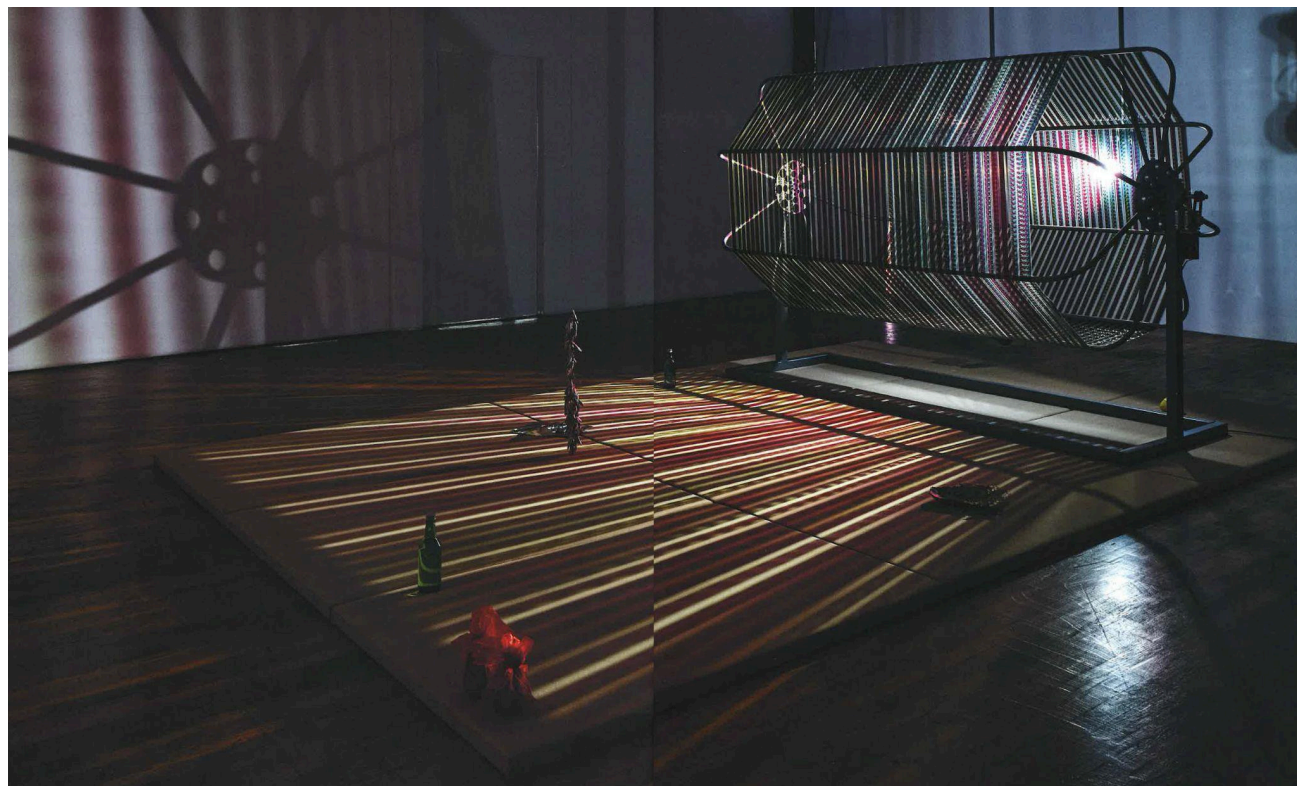
Kang wholeheartedly embraces the fluid, ever-evolving nature of her identity. Born as Hanju—a beautiful Korean name that proved difficult for English speakers to pronounce—she first adopted “Laurie” after Laura, the name her mother chose for herself. Then, a few years ago, “Lotus” sprang to mind, marking yet another chapter of selfhood. Looking back, it's hard for Kang to pinpoint which came first: the lotus as a visual metaphor, or as a name that crystallized her artistic identity. “It's something that happened inside of me,” she says. “As an artist, your work is you—more you than you think it is—because it's often already ahead of you in time.” The lotus appears in countless forms in her art: dried, cast, sliced, dispersed, lined up, strung up like wind chimes, in tubes, imprinted on film skins like tattoos, hidden in cracks like coins, drawn on photographic paper in the style of literati painting, or enlarged as if belonging to the non-human realm. The lotus serves as a signifier, an abstract self-portrait, and an acknowledgment of the unformed. “I think because I'm porous, I just became it.”

Boundaries, again, for Kang are a concept learned over time, and many ideas—especially those that begin with a capital letter—are not inherent but acquired. They function more as artificial constructs that impose limitations, yet remain slippery and questionable. The artist also extends this skepticism to cultural symbols, including that of the lotus, which in East Asian traditions such as Ruism has long been a loaded emblem, often representing a *junzi*, or noble man—a figure who rises from the mud unstained, open within and upright without. Against this moralizing symbolism, Kang engages both the lotus and the “dirty” mud, highlighting the root's intricate configuration and the mud's existential

“I'm interested in the anti-monumental, in seeing all sorts of things that aren't doing what they're supposed to do”

TRACT XIV (detail), 2024, cast-aluminum anchorvies, cast-bronze kelp knot, nylon, polypropylene  
Previous spread: Installation view, RECEIVER TRANSMITTER (BUTTERFLY), 2023–24, mixed media, at MOCA Toronto





REVUE

“It’s something that happened inside of me. As an artist, your work is you—more you than you think it is—because it’s often already ahead of you in time”

essence. Reimagined as existing in an entropic state, the two symbols mirror the instability and dissolution that permeate contemporary life.

Kang’s fondness of verse, particularly Korean poetry, is telling in this regard. “A better history lesson—the history with a lowercase H,” is how she understands it. Among the poets she returns to most is Kim Hyesoon, whose opening line to her 2018 poem “Face,” “Inside you there is another you,” not only became part of the title for Kang’s installation at Commonwealth and Council last year, but also emerged as a crucial motif—one that prompts the artist to further explore how the essence of things can be turned inside out.

Another collection by Kim, *Autobiography of Death*, has guided Kang’s thoughts while she has been preparing for the show at 52 Walker. Composed of 49 diary-like poems, Kim’s elegy is dedicated to the spirits of the 304 victims of the 2014 Sewol ferry disaster, approximately 250 of whom were high-school students. In Buddhist, Taoist, Shamanistic, and folk traditions throughout Asia, a period of 49 days marks the cycle of reincarnation after death. The 28th poem in the collection, “Already,” consists of just two lines: “You are already born inside death / (echoes 49 times),” giving Kang the title of her new exhibition—*Already*, its conceptual status existing somewhere between arrival and departure, coming and going. As the artist told me, “It’s a word so difficult to define, full of happenings that are ungraspable. I mean, how else can you say ‘present within a past within a future?’” Primarily engaging with Kim’s poetry through translation, as Kang continues to work on regaining fluency in her lost mother tongue, the artist experiences translation as an almost guttural process—one that resonates deeply with her affinity for transit mediums such as tubes and conduits. “But no conduit is passive,” she affirms. She deeply values what Don Mee Choi, Kim’s English translator and an accomplished poet herself, has proposed: “Translation is an anti-neocolonial mode.”

To my surprise, as our conversation nears its end, Kang recommends Le Guin’s translation of the *Tao Te Ching*. In her introduction, Le Guin reflects on just why she chose to translate the text despite the wealth of existing scholarship. “I wanted a *Book of the Way* to be accessible to a present-day, unwise, unpowerful, and perhaps

‘un-male’ reader, not seeking esoteric secrets, but listening for a voice that speaks to the soul.”

“Speaking to the soul” through the body, is precisely the kind of embodied experience Kang’s works evoke. Distinct from dry, research-based installs, egocentric lyricism, vinegarish criticism, and bitter cynicism, her art resists confinement within popular notions like identity politics or the East–West binary. Instead, it possesses an abundant and delicious plainness—like lotus roots.

Lotus L. Kang’s work is profoundly cerebral and conceptually intricate, yet it places great trust in the labor of making. She invites viewers to do as she has done: to stay low, bend down, lean in—to engage with the many pieces displayed at floor level. Thought, experimentation, and translation are transformed into fluid, labor-intensive processes, with intellectual and emotional labor becoming the graceful contents of the work. But Kang redirects credit. She guides us toward the many forces at play: wind, mud, light, and time, as well as worms, fungi, mice, and chattering birds, understanding that human existence is not separate from, but enmeshed within, a non-anthropocentric network of active conduits. We are here, in a moment both tender and fleeting, and it’s not always clear what’s going on.

Lotus L. Kang’s solo exhibition, *Already*, at 52 Walker, New York, closes June 7, 2025.

Installation view, GREAT SHUTTLE, at the New Museum Triennial: Soft Water, Hard Stone, New Museum, New York, 2021  
Previous spread: AZALEAS, 2024, mixed media







Macabasco, Lisa Wong. "6 Under-the-Radar Art Shows to See in New York Right Now—and 3 to Look Forward To." *Vogue* (April 29, 2025) [ill.] [online]

# VOGUE

ARTS

## 6 Under-the-Radar Art Shows to See in New York Right Now—and 3 to Look Forward To

BY LISA WONG MACABASCO

April 29, 2025



Kim Yun Shin in her studio. Courtesy the artist, Lehmann Maupin, New York, Seoul, and London; and Kukje Gallery, Seoul and Busan. Photo by Lee Woojeong.

As the city prepares for the art world to descend around a burst of art fairs next month, New York is abloom with new gallery and museum shows. Here are six under-the-radar highlights from the many presentations on view right now—as well as three shows we’re looking forward to.

## Lotus Kang, “Already.” at 52 Walker



Courtesy 52 Walker, New York

“Already” (through June 7) is the absorbing first solo presentation at 52 Walker of Canadian-born, New York-based artist Lotus L. Kang. Her installation of long, wide sheets of light-sensitive film, draped from the ceiling and eventually bearing traces of sunlight and heat, was one of the highlights of last year’s Whitney Biennial, part of her ongoing investigations into impermanence, inheritance, memory, and time. A few of those panels can be found in this show, but the centerpiece is two greenhouses, which she often uses (outdoors) to expose the photographic film. They prompted a consideration of the kinds of artificial spaces that typically facilitate organic growth and transformation and are permeable and absorptive, like a body. You can’t enter the greenhouses, but peek around and you’ll see Kang’s signature aluminum- and bronze-cast food objects (anchovies and lotus tubers here), styrofoam pear holders, soju bottles, ginkgo leaves, and larger-than-life cast-aluminum kelp knots.

Wu, Simon. "The Liminal Words of Lotus L. Kang." *Frieze Magazine* (April 23, 2025) [ill.] [online]

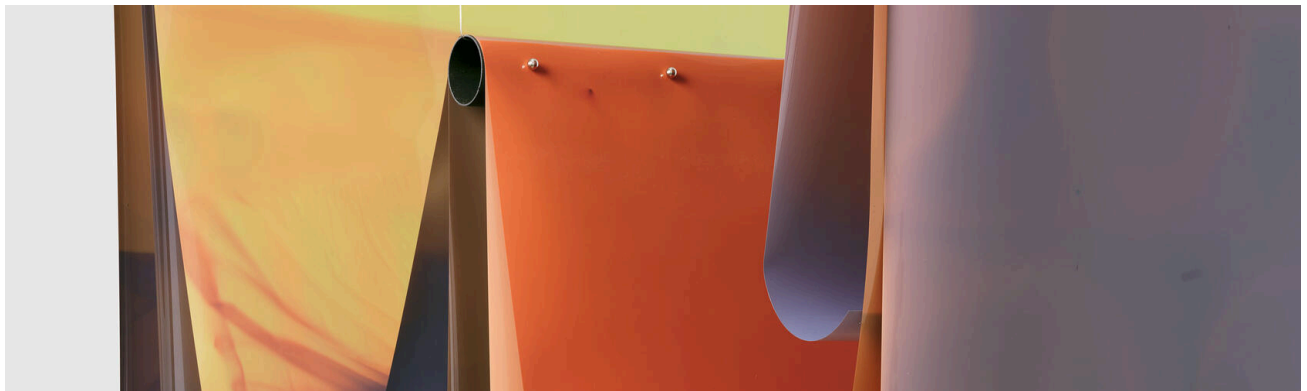
# FRIEZE

## The Liminal Words of Lotus L. Kang

At 52 Walker, the artist's sculptural syntax builds on years of quiet experimentation to reflect on death, ritual and the porous edges of identity



BY SIMON WU IN PROFILES | 23 APR 25



Since 2022, Lotus L. Kang has used greenhouses to tan her 'skins': great sheets of unfixed, light-sensitive film that she bruises into blues, purples and oranges under the sun. Normally handled in darkrooms or used for advertisements in lightboxes, Kang employs these skins in works such as *Molt* (*New York-Lethbridge-Los Angeles-Toronto-Chicago*) (2018–23), where, suspended from the ceiling, they form fleshy, synthetic panels resembling walls, portals or scrolls. They index light from multiple locations and change in appearance depending on the site's conditions. Look closely and they appear like slivers of sunrise, folds of skin or dark gums over teeth. Now, Kang's attention is turning deeper into this process for her new work.





Lotus L. Kang, 2025. Image commissioned for *frieze*; photograph: Sirui Ma

‘It was always a kind of private performance,’ Kang tells me when I visit her studio in DUMBO, Brooklyn, where a greenhouse sits in the middle of the room as a mock-up for her current show at 52 Walker. ‘And it made sense that the process would become a part of the work.’ Greenhouses are neither entirely outdoors nor indoors. Their steel armatures and polycarbonate walls make them artificial, yet their contents are organic. The plants within them are alive, but likely not in their natural habitat. For Kang, this makes them ‘architectures of becoming’ – spaces that facilitate transformation and process.

## I'm doing diaspora rather than showing it. I'm inhabiting a state of being in-between.

LOTUS L. KANG

The greenhouses cannot be entered, placing the viewer in a limbo between inside and outside, like her own version of a Dan Graham pavilion. I walk around the one in her studio. The *gestalt* of Kang's large installations is often punctuated by many smaller, detailed moments. Cut fragments of mesh produce bags sitting atop the greenhouse appear as red splotches that have bled through the translucent polycarbonate roof, creating splashes of colour on the mirrored floor. Yellow foam pear holders, looking like petrified jellyfish, sit in small groupings alongside ceramic casts of baby birds. Elsewhere, objects are frozen in states of transformation: dried anchovies, napa leaves and lotus tubers cast in aluminium and bronze hang from the ceiling, rest on the floor or languish in metal bowls.



Lotus L. Kang, *Receiver Transmitter (Butterfly)*, 2023–24, installation view, MOCA Toronto. Courtesy: © Lotus L. Kang and MOCA Toronto; photograph: LF Documentation

Kang wonders whether greenhouses could also be 'diasporic vessels'. Placeless and liminal, they share qualities she associates with diasporic experience. Born in Toronto to Korean parents and now based in New York, Kang's practice often draws from her family history, as well as from the histories of colonization and imperialism in Asia. Yet, rather than work autobiographically or with recognizable cultural symbols, she prefers to denature identity into the material processes and physical choreography of her installations.

For her first greenhouse as artwork, titled *Receiver Transmitter (Butterfly)* (2023–24) – shown at Greater Toronto Art 2024 – Kang lined the four-metre hot house with gum rubber and arranged an unfolded tatami mat holding various objects in the centre. Used historically in Japan as sites for sleeping, eating and living, tatami mats are so personal, so synonymous with a person's being, that they are occasionally burned along with an individual at their funeral. Kang uses them as stand-ins for a body carrying layered histories and geographies, but also as a plinth for an aluminium cast of an enlarged knot of kelp – a plant whose rootlessness inspired Kang to use it as a substitute for a body. The tatami mats in *Receiver Transmitter (Perilla Frutescens)* (2023), featured in her 2023 exhibition 'In Cascades' at Chisenhale Gallery in London, nodded to a historical detail about Kang's grandmother, a grain and seed shopkeeper who would sometimes sleep at her shop to work extra hours to make enough to provide for her family. This work presented a stack of tatamis covered in a silicone sheath, with aluminium perilla leaves tucked between each mat, like joists between vertebrae. A gathering of aluminium sculptures of cabbage leaves, lotus roots, shiitakes and torn mesh bags was tucked between the tatamis and the wall, like an accumulation of dust or a hidden loot, titled *Leak* (2023). Each plant holds cultural significance to her upbringing, operating as coded signifiers that some will recognize and some will not. Even when her references are personal or historical, they are often so abstracted that they are alienated or torqued from their roots. 'I'm doing diaspora rather than showing it', Kang tells me. 'I'm inhabiting a state of being in-between.'





Lotus L. Kang, *Receiver Transmitter (Butterfly)*, 2023-24,  
installation view, MOCA Toronto. Courtesy: © Lotus L. Kang and  
MOCA Toronto; photograph: LF Documentation

When we first met, back in 2018, I had just seen her installation *Channeler* (2018) at Brooklyn's Interstate Projects: a set of snaking metallic walls hung with fleshy photographic skins. I moved in and out of the porous partitions of *Channeler*, looking through their openings, and I could not discern a clear distinction between inside and outside. I peered down into a black plastic bag filled with pink silicone and read the press release, which described how Kang considered the spindly walls as 'mutated gardens' and 'frayed double-helices'. Citing Trinh T. Minh-ha and Donna Haraway, Kang referred to her process as an inheritance 'from her familial matriarchs' – a kind of diasporic, body-centric feminist theory. Then, like now, Kang can distil tomes of theory into eloquent sound bites, while the work itself often remains open-ended, even oblique in its references.

**If materials are 'words', then installation is the  
syntax – the body moves through them like a poem.**

LOTUS L. KANG

That same year, I invited Kang to install *Channeler* as part of 'Formula 1', a group exhibition at CUE Art Foundation in New York that I co-organized with writer and artist Mira Dayal. Kang, who had relocated to Toronto after graduating with an MFA from Bard College in 2015, returned to New York for the show, arriving with her partner and installing the work in the gallery herself. What drew us to her practice – along with that of the other two featured artists, Nikita Gale and Amanda Turner Pohan – was a shared interest in developing a material vocabulary that could approximate a new wave of body-based art. It was the germ of an idea that would be explored more fully by curators Chrissie Iles and Meg Onli in the 2024 Whitney Biennial.



Lotus L. Kang, *Channeller*, 2019, installation view, Interstate Projects, New York.  
Courtesy: © Lotus L. Kang and Interstate Projects, New York

During the pandemic, Kang stayed in Toronto. She began to study acupuncture and Chinese medicine, logging two years towards a degree before she dropped out to move back to New York. Now, she studies acupuncture mostly informally, through her interest in Daoist texts, performing it only on friends and loved ones. But the benefits of her healing practice clarified her artistic ambitions. 'It helped me understand what art can do and what applied medicine can do,' she tells me. 'Art is less direct – which is its strength – and learning acupuncture alleviated some of the demands that I had placed on my art.'



**Standing inside Kang's installation, the body itself  
becomes a sieve, filtering history, memory and  
light.**  
SIMON WU

Over the past two years, Kang's sculptural grammar has expanded across major installations. At the 2021 New Museum Triennial, she presented *Great Shuttle* (2020–21), a flexible track of steel studs and aircraft cable dressed with film, photograms, spherical magnets and various cast-aluminium objects – a noticeable continuation of themes explored in *Channeler*. At the 2024 Whitney Biennial, she showed the third iteration of 'In Cascades', in which sheets of tanned skins hung in modular labyrinths through which viewers could move – the most visible presentation to date of her best-known body of work. She also received a 2024 Guggenheim Fellowship, as well as a shout-out in *The New York Times* in December as one of their ten 'breakout stars' of the year. With her latest solo presentation having opened at 52 Walker in April, she has had a big three years.



Lotus L. Kang's studio, 2025. Image commissioned for *frieze*;  
photograph: Sirui Ma

At 52 Walker, Kang responded to the symmetry of the gallery by leaving the space mostly open and raw, with no walls built or major architectural interventions. In addition to two greenhouses, there are some lushly hued luminograms, which transform plastic bags to look like muscle or tendons, a selection of tanned skins and both floor-based and suspended sculptures. Downstairs, however, Kang has transformed an entire room into a version of an installation drawn from her 2024 exhibition 'Azaleas' at Commonwealth and Council in Los Angeles. A rotary dryer – another 'architecture of becoming' used to stretch and dry freshly processed, still-wet 35mm film – is synchronized to the metre of several texts, including works by two Korean poets: 'Azaleas' (1925) by Kim So-wol and 'Already' (2018) by Kim Hyesoon. In the version at 52 Walker, a light shines through a film of orchids stretched around the dryer. Standing inside this work, the viewer is subsumed entirely by the projection of the film, as if the walls of *Channeler* or the panels of *In Cascades* have become immaterial.

‘Lately, I’ve been thinking about my sculptural language as akin to making a poem,’ Kang tells me. ‘If the materials and the objects I work with are “words” that have social and personal associations and meaning, they create syntaxes when put into relation via installation, collage, assemblage, etc. These syntaxes then shift shape and order as the body moves around them in space.’ The studio, then, is filled with poems, translated into material vignettes. We discuss the title of the 52 Walker show, ‘Already’, taken from Hyesoon’s eponymous poem and meant to refer to a cyclical, non-linear time. ‘Can you define the word “already” without using the word already?’ Kang asks. The short poem, from Hyesoon’s 2018 collection *The Autobiography of Death*, reads: *You are already born inside death (echoes 49 times)*.



Lotus L. Kang, *Molt*, 2022, installation view, Horizon Art Foundation, Los Angeles. Courtesy: © Lotus L. Kang and Horizon Art Foundation, Los Angeles; photograph: Ed Mumford



In some forms of Buddhism, 49 days represents the length of time a soul spends in an intermediate space between death and rebirth. 'Already' appears as day 28 of Hyesoon's *Autobiography of Death*, where each chapter is structured around one of the 49 days. Both of Kang's greenhouses at 52 Walker translate this poem: one through 49 objects, a physical manifestation of this liminality; the other through an installation containing the traces of a ritual-performance Kang enacted. In the studio, Kang asks me to stand outside of the greenhouse as she rotates a bare lightbulb slowly around a roll of film. The light undulates across the polycarbonate walls, making the entire structure pulsate like a jellyfish or an otherworldly egg. The film comes from *49 Echoes* (2025), a ritual-performance Kang enacted at Fort Tilden Beach in New York, where she walked in a large circle 49 times, holding the camera at gut-level, lens pointing out to film the environment as she moved, rather than depict her body.

**Even when her references are personal, they are  
often abstracted – alienated or torqued from their  
roots.**

SIMON WU

Kang tells me that Kim Hyesoon wrote *Autobiography of Death* in response to the 304 deaths that occurred in the Sewol ferry incident in 2014, where the boat capsized while travelling from Incheon to Jeju Island in South Korea. The government initially reported that everyone had been rescued and then downplayed the severity of the disaster to save face. For Kang, Hyesoon's book speaks not only to the South Korean situation and the history of American military involvement in the region, but also to the global rise of authoritarianism. Suddenly, the cast-aluminium anchovies, fermented cabbage and ceramic birds take on a different pallor, while the mirrored floor of the greenhouse looks almost spiritual. If her earliest explorations investigated the liminality of the body in space, that interest has only naturally expanded into the historical and the cosmic. The greenhouses feel like futuristic shrines, as if each object were an offering to try to understand this purgatory. Kang has even placed bottles of 'spirits', both beneath and in each greenhouse – specifically, bottles of 'American Soju', whose logo, incredibly, features the American flag transposed on top of part of the Korean flag.



Lotus L. Kang, *Receiver Transmitter (Born inside death)*, 2025, tatami mat, mirrored plexi, porcelain, cast plaster, cast aluminium, cast bronze, polyester and photographs from the series 'Fleshing Out the Ghost', dimensions variable. Courtesy: © Lotus L. Kang and 52 Walker, New York

For all of her recent reflections on death, Kang is equally interested in rebirth. 'Orchids are epiphytes,' she tells me in reference to the film in her 'Azaleas' installation, 'which means their roots grow in the air.' I looked it up. Orchids often grow on the stems of other plants but, surprisingly, not in a parasitic way. They exist in a system of mutuality where they derive their moisture and nutrients from the air, rain and water accumulating around them. As we stand amidst the waves of light from the film, I am struck by how corporal the process of translation seems in Kang's practice. I imagine her holding the Hyesoon poem in her mind, selecting materials and arranging them around the greenhouse, her body a sieve through which experience is filtered and processed, as sensitive as photographic film or as obdurate as the steel beams on the wall.

*This article first appeared in frieze issue 251 with the headline 'Lotus L. Kang'*

*Lotus L. Kang's 'Already' is on view at 52 Walker, New York, until 7 June*

*Main image: Lotus L. Kang, Molt (Toronto-Chicago-Woodridge-New York-) (detail), 2022–25, installation view. Courtesy: © Lotus L. Kang and 52 Walker, New York*

Kang, Lotus L. “Frieze DJ in Residence: Lotus L. Kang.” *Frieze Magazine* (April 23, 2025) [ill.] [online]

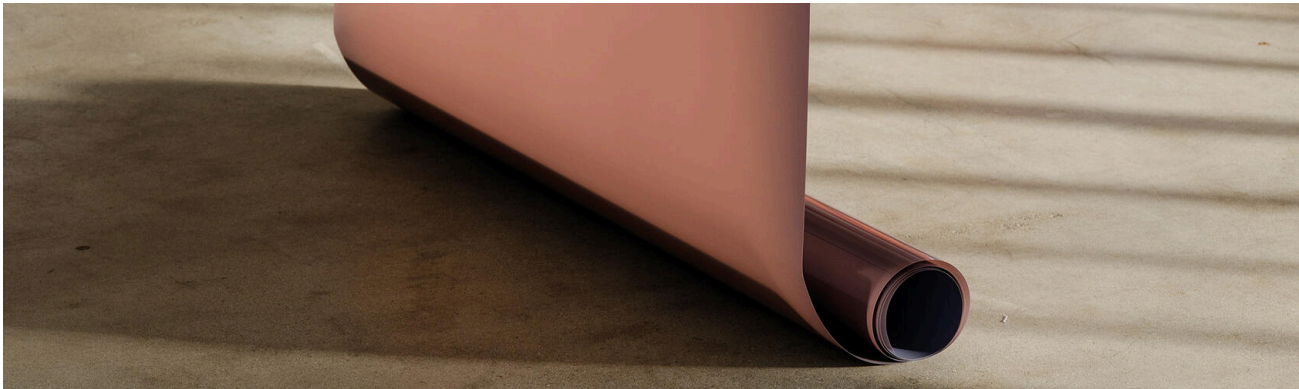
# FRIEZE


## Frieze DJ in Residence: Lotus L. Kang

To accompany her profile in the latest issue, the artist curates a playlist of 49 personally meaningful tracks

L

BY LOTUS L. KANG IN MUSIC | 23 APR 25





1 Army of Me · Björk

2 Lurk - Mixed · Oklou, Casey MQ

Artists' Playlist #15 - Lotus L. Kang · Frieze Magazine

Preview

⏮ ⏭ ⏵ ⏸

Toronto-born, New York-based artist Lotus L. Kang curates this 49-track playlist for *frieze* – each song a sonic thread in a larger tapestry of mood, memory and movement. The number of tracks is no accident: ‘49 songs total,’ Kang notes, ‘a number that is significant for my show at 52 Walker coming up.’ In her work, the number 49 relates to themes of transformation and the liminal space between death and rebirth – ideas rooted in Buddhist philosophy and explored through objects and rituals in her upcoming exhibition. With selections ranging from Björk to Little Simz, the mix pulses with emotional texture and shifting energy, much like Kang’s own work. Expect slow burns, sharp turns and deep attention to the atmosphere.



*A profile of the artist appears in frieze issue 251. Lotus L. Kang's 'Already' is on view at 52 Walker, New York, until 07 June.*

*Main image: Lotus L. Kang, Molt, 2022, installation view, Horizon Art Foundation, Los Angeles. Courtesy: the artist and Horizon Art Foundation, Los Angeles; photograph: Ed Mumford*

Wong, Stephanie. "Here Are the 12 Must-See Gallery Exhibitions in New York This Spring." *Cultured Magazine* (April 14, 2025) [ill.] [online]

# CULTURED

ART THIS WEEK IN CULTURE

## Here Are the 12 Must-See Gallery Exhibitions in New York This Spring

From cryptic creatures to cyanotype rituals—here's what to see in the city this season.

WORDS

**Stephanie Wong**

April 14, 2025



Lotus L. Kang, *Documentation, '49 Echoes'*, 2025. Image courtesy of the artist and 52 Walker.

**“Already.” by Lotus L. Kang****Where:** 52 Walker**When:** Through June 7

**Why It’s Worth a Look:** Inspired by Buddhist mourning rituals and Korean poetry, Lotus L. Kang’s latest exhibition explores memory and the passage of time. Using delicate materials like photographic film and found objects, she creates artwork that considers what lingers in the spaces between loss and return—where decay and renewal become inseparable.

**Know Before You Go:** At the heart of the show are two mirrored greenhouses—transplanted from Kang’s outdoor practice—installed as vessels for transformation. Don’t miss *Azaleas II*, a kinetic sculpture made from rotary film and purple orchids, which spins to the rhythm of Korean verse.



Tafoya, Harry. "April's Must-See Art Shows in NYC and Beyond." *PAPER* (April 11, 2025) [ill.] [online]

# PAPER®



## April's Must-See Art Shows in NYC and Beyond

HOME > ART > ART

BY HARRY TAFOYA  
APR 11, 2025

I didn't see as many shows in March because this past month was more festive than most. I celebrated my birthday, two weddings, and a gala, while doubling up my work load, traveling back and forth across the country and wincing my way through taxes. I've been so tired I've fallen asleep in cars and on the subway, jolting awake to the sound of doors opening and my friends' amused laughter. One morning, I'd actually dressed and headed downstairs for a walkthrough of an exhibition, before pausing at the door and realizing I was too exhausted to properly concentrate. I slept for an hour before getting up to teach another round of classes.

Balancing the correct portions of art and life is a central human dilemma. Keep your head down for too long and you end up a miserable crank; indulge in too much fantasy and you cut yourself off from any reality outside your own head. At either extreme, life becomes incredibly pointless and without a measure of grounding, so does art. In a recent column for *Artnet*, Annie Armstrong wrote about the rise of "red chip" over "blue chip" art, or in other words, the increasing market dominance of worthless trend-chasing garbage over more traditional artists. I was struck by a quote from the art advisor, Amy Cappellazzo who described the collectors fueling this boom as being "heavily digital... because they live in an immaterial world... their own status creation and accomplishments are not material. So they're not really attracted to physical things."

In a way it is very timely. Visually noisy, attention-grabbing, completely immaterial trolling is the dominant style of social media and it's fitting that contemporary art reflect that. The impact that much of this slop has on the wider world is mostly limited to hurting your eyes and insulting your intelligence. Still, to see AI-generated kitsch almost immediately be put in service of dehumanizing people by the government is frankly remarkable to behold. Although it can be incredibly satisfying to dish harassment back, these networks thrive on antagonism, trapping you in an obnoxious loop of response and reaction. If I sound defeatist, I don't mean to be. The lines between life and art, digital and IRL have never been more easily confused, and it takes an active effort to hold them in perspective. It's as important to see art as it is to get brunch, call your mother, buy flowers, run errands, clock in, clock out and go dancing. Like exercise, budgeting time to see art of any kind can be a chore, but it's worth it for the muscles it builds and the mental clarity it brings: of knowing the difference between burnout and growth.

## Downtown/SoHo

- Lotus L. Kang - *Already* - 52 Walker (**MUST SEE**)
  - Lotus L. Kang treats photography as something more expansive than an image fixed to a wall, building it out into sculpture and alleyways for the viewer to literally navigate. Her use of light sensitive, over-exposed film gives the work a hazy, impressionist quality and heightens your awareness of time. This isn't photography that's over in a flash but a process that deeply involves you.

Falb, Sam. "The New York Shows You Need to See this Spring." *Elephant Magazine* (April 4, 2025) [ill.] [online]

**ELEPHANT**

## The New York Shows You Need to See this Spring

Reframe is a monthly column in which contributor Sam Falb discusses timely openings to view in New York. Each edition offers commentary on the latest exhibitions, performances, and installations. Dynamic and ever-evolving, the content reflects the fluidity of the market it travels through.



Robert Zehnder, *Echo*, 2025. Oil on canvas over panel. 61 3/8 x 51 3/8 inches, 155,9 x 130,5 cm. Photo courtesy of the artist and gallery.



It's hard to imagine that we are already approaching shows with beginning (or end) of summer timelines, but here we are nevertheless. As the sun begins to poke through the swirling, gray clouds of a classic New York winter, displays of artistic triumph follow suit – hurrah. This month's edition features an array of exhibitions across material focuses, geographic origins, and storytelling that belies little in terms of vulnerability or pain-staking creative production. Gallerists Tara Downs and Francisco Correa Cordero offer their guidance on where to take one's wandering feet in search of a compelling array of works to view, and we thank them for it. Thoughtful eyes peek out from color-washed canvases, turtles swim lazily through mysterious, dystopian muck, and vistas of natural beauty rendered in heaping, whirling geometric experimentation all find their place within this month's edition.

#### INDUSTRY RECOMMENDATION: GALLERIST TARA DOWNS, TARA DOWNS

52 Walker: Already (April 11-June 7)

Anticipation builds for a mesmerizing exhibition at 52 Walker, set to open on April 11, featuring the evocative work of Canadian artist Lotus Kang (b. 1985). The show follows her breathtaking installation at the Whitney Biennale—where unfixed sheets of light-sensitive industrial film cascaded from industrial scaffolding, dynamically responding to the ambient light. In this upcoming exhibition titled *Already*, Kang will stage her installations around site-specific greenhouses, creating an environment that invites contemplation of the body's relationship to time, memory, and identity. Through her innovative approach to film, Kang challenges conventional boundaries, transforming the viewing experience into a meditative dialogue on the ephemeral nature of human existence.

Woodward, Daisy. "Brilliant Things to Do This April." *AnOther Magazine* (April 3, 2025) [ill.] [online]

# AnOther

## Brilliant Things to Do This April

DESIGN & LIVING / ANOTHER TO DO LIST



Wolfgang Tillmans, domestic scene, Remscheid, 1991 Courtesy of the artist and David Zwirner

**From excellent new films to upcoming exhibitions on Agnès Varda and Ed Atkins, here's our roundup of April's most exciting new cultural and culinary offerings**

APRIL 03, 2025

TEXT Daisy Woodward

## Exhibitions



Lotus L Kang, *In Cascades* (2023), installed in Chisenhale Gallery, London  
Photography by Andy Keate

### **Lotus L Kang: *Already* at 52 Walker, New York: April 11 – June 7, 2025**

Named one of the “breakout stars of 2024” by The New York Times, Canada-born, New York-based artist Lotus L Kang is certainly one to watch. If you’re in New York, be sure to catch her upcoming exhibition *Already* at 52 Walker, made up of a series of “discrete objects, wall works, and an installation staged within and around two greenhouses”. Kang’s practice centres on ideas of “impermanence, inheritance, memory and time” which she explores through a variety of media – her signature “skins”, for instance: suspended vertical sheets of photographic film which accrue imprints of their surroundings as light falls upon them.



“Lotus L. Kang: *Already*.” *Ocula* (March 16, 2025) [ill.] [online]

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David Zwirner

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ARTIST PROFILE  
Lotus L. Kang  
[VIEW BIO, WORKS & EXHIBITIONS](#)

Press Release Location

52 Walker is pleased to announce its fifteenth exhibition, *Already*, which features work by Canadian-born, New York-based artist Lotus L. Kang (b. 1985). Kang has pursued a multidisciplinary practice that includes sculpture, photography, and installation, and which often reflects upon such ideas as impermanence, inheritance, memory, and time. In her iterative presentations, Kang realises 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 will bring together a selection of discrete objects, wall works, and an installation staged within and around a greenhouse.

Kang's work was featured in *Even Better Than the Real Thing*, the 2024 Whitney Biennial, curated by Chrissie Iles and Meg Onli, with Min Sun Jeon and Beatriz Cifuentes.

Press release courtesy David Zwirner.

“Ten Artists to Watch in 2025.” *Frieze* (January 7, 2025) [ill.] [online]

# FRIEZE

## Ten Artists to Watch in 2025

We highlight the artists – each with major presentations this year – poised to shape the art scene this year

F

BY FRIEZE IN OPINION | 07 JAN 25



**Lotus L. Kang**



Lotus L. Kang, *Receiver Transmitter (Butterfly)*, 2023–24, installation view, mixed media. Courtesy: the artist, Franz Kaka, Toronto, and Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles and Mexico City; photograph: LF Documentation

Lotus L. Kang is a Canadian-Korean artist based in New York. Her artistic practice includes sculpture, installation, drawing and photography. Kang's work explores the permeability of the body and the concept of 'becoming', often using materials such as light-sensitive film to create site-responsive installations that evolve over time. Among her notable works is *In Cascades* (2024), shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art, in which she draped tanned sheets of light-sensitive film over industrial steel structures, examining themes of transformation and ephemerality. She has shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2023), and Chisenhale Gallery, London (2023). In 2025, she will have a solo exhibition at 52 Walker, New York.



Salam, Maya. "The Breakout Stars of 2024." *The New York Times* (December 16, 2024) [ill.] [online]

The New York Times

# The Breakout Stars of 2024

Across the arts world, these 10 performers broke away from the pack this year by channeling guts and grit into their work.



After a rocket-ship year of success, Chappell Roan has become a pop phenomenon (or "Femininomenon," as one of her songs is titled). Chona Kasinger for The New York Times



By Maya Salam

Dec. 16, 2024

Audacious, original and wielding a clear vision, the stars who rose to the top in 2024 pushed boundaries and made bold, even risky, choices. Here are 10 artists who shook up their scenes and resonated with fans this year.

FINE ART

## Lotus L. Kang



Lotus L. Kang at the Whitney Museum of American Art, in Manhattan, in March. Rebecca Smeyne for The New York Times

At the March opening of the 81st [Whitney Biennial](#), throngs of attendees, including plenty of stars of the art world and beyond, [lined up to see](#) Lotus L. Kang's site-specific installation "In Cascades."

The work is what Kang, 39, has described as "tanned" sheets of light-sensitive film that, because they are exposed to elements like air and humidity, morph over even a short time.

"They're porous, taking on their own lives, and that precarity is also the reality of the human condition," Kang [told The Times](#) in March.

Earlier this year, she had [a solo show](#) at the hottest [gallery](#) in Los Angeles, Commonwealth and Council, and an [exhibition](#) at the Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto, in which Kang installed "Receiver Transmitter," a site-specific greenhouse. She added material objects like lotus shells and tatami mattresses, which have ancestral significance to Kang: [Her grandmother](#), who fled to Seoul from North Korea, used to sleep on one in her grain and seed shop.

"It has a lot to do with memory, time and containing things," Kang, a Canadian artist based in Brooklyn, told [S magazine](#) of the work.

The Times critic [Jason Farago called Kang](#) an artist of rare precision and said her [European debut](#) last year was "a richly sedimented, beautifully vulnerable installation in a perpetual state of becoming."

Next up for Kang: a solo show at [52 Walker](#) in New York in April.

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