

Tang Contemporary Art presents:

DONUT FEAR: DO NOT FEAR

Artist: Jae Yong Kim

Curator: Yonni Park

Exhibition Dates: 7 August - 12 September 2021

Venue: Tang Contemporary Art Bangkok

Opening Reception: Saturday, 7 August at 4:00PM

Tang Contemporary Art is proud to present “Donut Fear”, the solo exhibition by Jae Yong Kim, curated by Yonni Park, which will be on view between 7 August - 12 September 2021, at Tang Contemporary Art’s Bangkok space.

Dip a well-baked ceramic donut into glossy cream made of luster glaze, and decorate it with fancy Swarovski crystals to add a sense of volume. This will result in the unique donut of Jae Yong Kim. Don’t worry about not finding a donut of your taste. Hanging on the walls, a variety of donuts in different shapes, patterns, colors and crystals will be waiting for you, each expressing its distinctive character.

Kim’s work on donuts began in 2012. When he was in New York in 2008, he had to look for alternate sources of income other than art because it had become hard to make a living. That was when he started a donut business, which only failed due to the financial crisis, leading to hard times thereafter. He said he decided to make donut art pieces during the most challenging period he had experienced as an artist. Originating from Kim’s determination to “not go after money but do what I like to do,” these donuts represent each individual’s own wishes or desires. “Is there a rule for donuts to exist only to be eaten?” he asks. “Why not hang [them] on a wall like a trophy instead? But then, who would do such a thing?” Following his words, Kim achieved the ultimate goal of incessantly pursued desire by hanging it on the wall instead of taking it for himself.

Looking at the fully crowded cluster of donuts, it seems as if they are expressing the inner sides of contemporary people, themselves composed of various donuts. Viewers will therefore find single donuts of their tastes from all those hanging. One may find love, and another may find happiness — should they so desire — by looking at the numerous donuts.

Kim’s works are full of delight, as fun is of the highest priority in his works. Another notable characteristic is the cartoon-style expressions, which Kim explained all started at his *début* solo exhibition when he saw a kid drawing his work in a sketchbook and felt happy. His works actually resemble pop art, which emphasizes the power of images. They also hint at *vanitas* paintings, popular during the Baroque period of the 17th century Netherlands and Flanders. *Vanitas* means “emptiness” in Latin and is a genre of still-life art notable for the sophisticated portrayal of luxury items that remind viewers of futility. However, because of the luxury items expressed as if they exist in reality, a sense of “vanity” is also paradoxically encompassed in the genre. Kim’s works hang people’s wishes and vain expectations on the wall in cartoonish style and varying color schemes. Truly, pop art meets *vanitas* in his pieces.

It is possible to wonder why Kim created so many donuts. It all has to do with the exhibition title: DONUT FEAR, born from the similarity in pronunciation to DO NOT FEAR and encompassing the directivity of Kim’s art activities.

Kim is red-green color blind and would often deliberately use dark colors, avoiding vibrancy in his works. He even had to go to the US to study art because it was difficult for him to enter an art college in Korea due to his condition. Encouraged by his professor, he tried using various colors, but his fear remained. Kim later started making donuts with cheerful colors to overcome this issue. He said he finally became comfortable with colors after making 300 to 400 donuts, which also allowed him to persevere over personal struggles with art as well as race, the latter being due to several changes of residence he had to endure.

Kim views each and every donut like an entry in a journal, "In whatever form troubles or opportunities show up in one's life, his/her body, mind and work should be prepared to seize it. The most important elements in the process are amusing work, empathy and communication."

For Kim, his donuts carry his preparations and aspirations to overcome fear and move forward with a smile and loving heart. Celebrating his special exhibition in Thailand, Kim plans to premiere new yellow donuts that took their motifs from the *Leelawadee*, a flower that resembles Thailand's bright colors, and the golden rain tree, Thailand's national flower. In addition, he also expressed Thailand's burning passion and climate in his two new works titled *Devil Donut is Hot!!* and *Bubble Donut is Hot!* by including fire patterns on cold stainless-steel surfaces. Together with these new works, it is hoped that the exhibition will allow viewers to feel the desires of contemporary people through Kim's art and his ambition as an artist to move forward from the works themselves.

About the Artist

Born in 1973, in South Korea, Jaeyong Kim relocated with his family first to Kuwait and then Saudi Arabia at the age of three. Though returning to Seoul during adolescence, these early experiences abroad inspired him to study internationally, receiving his Bachelors of Fine Arts (in Ceramics and Sculpture) at the Hartford Art School at the University of Hartford and his Masters of Fine Arts in Ceramics at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan. The artist's early work features subjects such as snails and his dog Momo as whimsical representations of his search for "home" amidst this nomadic background.

Jaeyong discovered the donut as his current signature motif while struggling to adapt to life in New York City in 2008. Sweet "cheap and yummy" treats provided a source of simple joy, while also serving as an icon of the consumption, greed, pleasure and addiction fuelling modern, and especially American, pop culture. Individually handcrafted and brightly glazed over several days, these playful ceramics both reflect and challenge associations of mass production, temptation and instant gratification. Jaeyong has exhibited in numerous solo and group shows at galleries across three continents, notably including Blank Space Gallery, Anthony Brunelli Fine Arts and Waterfall Gallery & Mansion in New York, as well as Hakgojae Gallery and Gallery Yeh in Seoul. His works have been acquired by both private and public collections such as Fidelity Investments Corporate Art Collection, Royal Caribbean Cruises, the University of Bridgeport and the University of Hartford. Among other accolades, he received the Jurors Choice Award in the Craft Forms '99 competition hosted by the Wayne Art Center in Pennsylvania, and the Estelle Hartman Sculpture Award from the University of Hartford in 1998. The artist currently lives and works in both Seoul and New York.

Tang Contemporary Art

Tang Contemporary Art was established in 1997 in Bangkok, later establishing galleries in Beijing and Hong Kong. Tang Contemporary Art is fully committed to producing critical projects and exhibitions to promote Contemporary Chinese art regionally and worldwide, and encourage a dynamic exchange between Chinese artists and those abroad. Acting as one of the most progressive and critically driven exhibition spaces in China, the gallery strives to initiate dialogue between artists, curators, collectors and institutions working both locally and internationally. A roster of groundbreaking exhibitions has earned Tang Contemporary Art internationally renowned recognition, establishing its status as a pioneer of the contemporary art scene in Asia.

Location: Room 201 - 206, River City Bangkok, 23 Soi Charoenkrung 24, Talad Noi, Sampantawong, Bangkok, 10100, Thailand

Hours: 11AM - 7PM, Tuesday - Sunday

Email: bkk@tanggallery.vip

Tel: +662 000 1541

Website: www.tangcontemporary.com

Facebook: [@tangcontemporaryartbangkok](https://www.facebook.com/tangcontemporaryartbangkok)

Instagram: [@tangcontemporaryart](https://www.instagram.com/tangcontemporaryart)

LINE: [@tangbkk](https://www.line.me/tv/tangbkk)