KIM BEOM: ANIMALIA

By Clara Kim

To enter into Kim Beom's world of images is to escape into a parallel universe of surrealist wonderment and metaphysical mind games. In a rich and expansive practice that spans drawing, painting, sculpture, video, and artist books, Kim contemplates a world in which perception is radically questioned. His visual language is characterized by deadpan humor and absurdist propositions that playfully and subversively invert expectations. By suggesting that what you see may not be what you see, Kim reveals the tension between internal psychology and external reality and relates observation and knowledge as states of mind.

Organized around the theme and title **Animalia**, Kim's exhibition explores the vast sphere of nature, often upending its laws and collapsing the boundaries of living beings and inanimate objects. Refusing to accept the clear distinctions that separate realms of existence, Kim deftly employs animism, illusion and a deep sense of empathy to reflect upon, manipulate and transgress the social institutions that create order.

Kim's recent series of sculptural tableaux titled "Educated Objects" (2010) featured in the exhibition explore social education and developmental psychology. Made up of four discrete installations of objects and video, the works—A Rock That Was Taught It Was a Bird, A Ship That Was Taught There Is No Sea, A Rock That <u>Learned the Poetry of JUNG Jiyong</u> and <u>Objects Being</u> Taught They Are Nothing But Tools—employ pedagogical techniques to alter and invert socialization processes that give way to knowledge and learning. A selection of drawings from the "Perspectives and Blueprints" series provide necessary context for the sculptural installations. Made since the early 2000s, these drawings imagine, with great detail, instruments and structures of control for criminals, tyrants, immigrants and spies, as parodies of social and political order. The suite of drawings is shown with two recent videos Horse Riding Horse (After Eadweard Muybridge) (2008) and Spectacle (2010). Brought together, the works capture Kim's versatile artistic practice and the varied means through which he addresses fundamental questions of being.

Interview with the artist By Sunjung Kim

Sunjung Kim: A Rock That Learned the Poetry of JUNG Jiyong (2010) features video of readings and a lecture on Jung Jiyong's poetry along with the rock that is being taught. The video A Rock That Was Taught It Was a Bird (2010) features a rock that is taught to fly and sit on a branch like a bird. Inanimate objects such as rocks are personified and educated in these works. First, as the title indicates, the work shows the I would like to hear your thoughts on education.

Kim Beom: Education is an experience, whether voluntary or compulsory, that changes the inner meaning and identity of the person being educat- that cannot be negated by logic, the dilemma ed. Education not only transmits knowledge but also influences the educatee's views on the world, humanity, and society. These works explore the differences in meaning and identity that result from the inner changes instigated by education as well as the lopsided and controlling nature of education. These are stories about a rock that gains a different meaning after being educated, as compared to an ordinary rock, or a rock whose meaning and identity change as a result of **SK:** There are a series of works that use blueprints a horse riding a horse. What are the ideas that one-sided teaching. They arise from a viewpoint that divides the subject into "container" and "content." The content is usually metaphysical, and its nature allows it to be moved and conveyed from one place to another.

SK: Why did you choose the poetry of Jung Jiyong?

KB: Jung Jiyong is a famous modern poet whose poems are taught in school. I chose a lyric poet because recognizing life in inanimate objects ties ings' blueprints. Blueprints seem to render the in with the lyrical reverie and rhetoric of poetry. The reason I selected his poetry from among many other poets is simply a matter of personal **KB:** The Blueprint series reveals a sort of "semipreference. Doubts, longing, passion, childlike innocence... His poems contain many emotions and meaning are seen through the depersonalized format in order to visually convey the repetition that run ever so delicately through each and every nature of human existence as marked on the word and phrase; for me, they evoke something clear that flows within a hard structure. That is probably why I felt that his poems could penetrate even the indifference of inorganic rocks. lives; they are ideated images of persons "who do Meanwhile, Jung Jiyong's poems were almost taboo for a long time in South Korea due to stories about his defection to North Korea. This is no longer the case, and people say that stories a society seen against a political or institutional about his defection were groundless rumors. Nonetheless, his poems, which aspire to purity in literary expression, were a long time entangled in political prejudice. I found that the fact the one could get entangled in some sort of political awareness by learning his poems suited this work, which explores the process in which a rock being controlled by a huge, stupid force. Even now, acquires a certain meaning and awareness.

SK: In Objects Being Taught They Are Nothing in a space that resembles a classroom are being taught that they are merely tools that humans use in their everyday lives. It shows a scene in which abilities are curbed rather than enhanced through education.

KB: This work is a bit different. It deals with animism, personification, and human perception. dogmatic and controlling nature of education in certain societies. On the other hand, it also reveals—in a reality in which psychological reality and logical reality coexist—something whereby negation itself has to start from an affir- earlier drawings explore the reversal of relationmation of the paradoxical effect of psychological reality being all the more emphasized as a result of attempts to negate it. Teaching is basically assumed to be for the living, and I wanted to talk about the fundamental nature of psychological reality that cannot be controlled by animistic

as a means of giving concrete form to the purpose and usage of a building and describing the functions of its interior which are different from what may be assumed from the exterior. A Design of an Muybridge) is about the master-servant relation-Immigration Bureau Complex on a Border Line (2005) and A Wiring Diagram of a Lighthouse (2005) appear to depict imaginary or universal places but may be real places in Korea. The incidents and stories that take place in the interior structure in many cases. I have never exhibited space, which is at odds with the outer appearance of the buildings, are represented through the build- theme and, as with Spectacle, I wanted to see places universal and specific at the same time.

otic view on numanking." The world's phenomena diagrams and blueprints. The semiotic characters drawn on the blueprints show no cause-and-effect relationship between feelings, personalities, and not show any emotion regarding their situation, or who clearly assume their roles." The Blueprint series mostly focuses on the nature of humans in backdrop, and betrays my personal thoughts on the dogmatism and absurdity of the world that I have been witness to since childhood. The "places" in the Blueprint series are abstract, but if I must infer their origin, it would probably be Korea. I find society in general gloomy and felt that it was people I see under the large and faraway angle of society often continue to appear that way.

SK: Let's talk about your video works Spectacle But Tools (2010), various objects posed on chairs (2010) which shows situations that go against the laws of nature as we know them, such as an antelope chasing a cheetah. What do you want to express through these reversed situations?

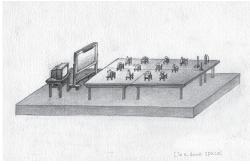
> KB: A cheetah chasing and knocking down an antelope is one of the most frequently shown sequences on TV programs about wild animals. It portrays the law of the jungle in an exotic. dynamic way and has the right amount of cruelty to spark even more interest. I think I have been deeply influenced by my religious upbringing and its teachings about justice. I have always had misgivings about the cruel injustice that exists between animals or human beings. Many of my ships, but in **Spectacle**, I express the theme though a more visual moving-picture format. Since "that" is such a spectacle, I thought that "this" could also be a spectacle of equal interest.

SK: Horse Riding Horse (After Eadweard Muybridge) (2008) transforms Muybridge's consecutive images of a man riding a horse into

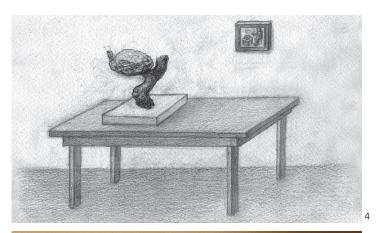
KB: Horse Riding Horse (After Eadweard ship. Horses do not ride horses, but I think humans "ride" other humans. Humans have the peculiar ability to be both the master and the horse. I think human society bases itself on this them, but I have many other drawings on this the drawings in the form of a moving picture. Muybridge's The Horse in Motion (1878) is composed of only sixteen photos, but is successfully shows the typical movements of horseback riding

Text excerpted from "Interview by Sunjung Kim," originally published in Kim Beom (Seoul: Samuso. 2010) on the occasion of his exhibition at Artsonje Center, Seoul.



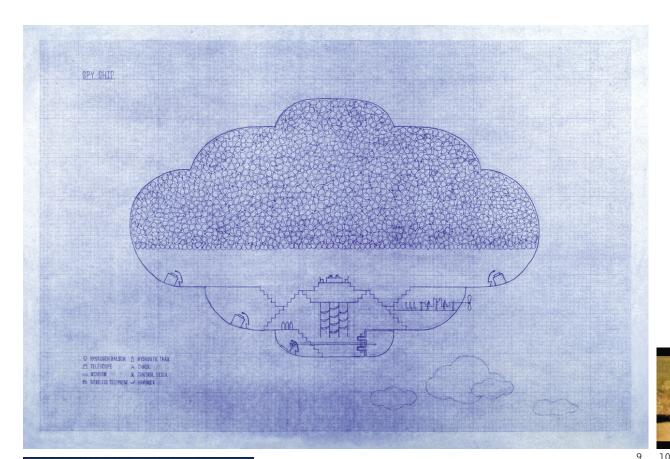




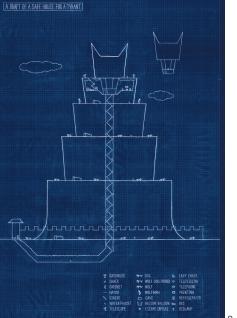


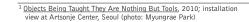








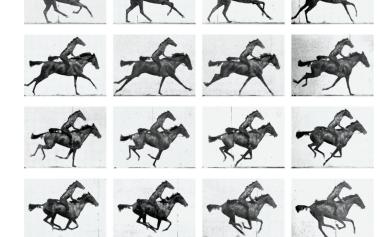




sketch for Objects Being Taught They Are Nothing But Tools, 2010 ³ Kim Beom, <u>A Rock That Learned the Poetry of JUNG Jiyong</u>, 2010; installation view at Artsonie Center, Seoul (photo: Myungrae Park)



⁵ <u>A Ship That Was Taught There Is No Sea</u>, 2010; installation view ⁶ Spy Ship (Perspective), 2004, colored pencil on paper, 52.5 x 39 cm



A Draft of a Safe House for a Tyrant (Perspective), 2009, colored penci

⁹ Spy Ship, 2004, blueprint, 56.5 x 80.5 cm

A Draft of a Safe House for a Tyrant, 2009, blueprint, 68 x 98 cm

11 video still from Spectacle, 2010 12 video stills from Horse Riding Horse (After Eadweard Muybridge),

A Rock That Learned the Poetry of JUNG Jiyong, 2010 29 sec.) on 12-inch flat-screen, overall dimensions variable,

A Rock That Was Taught It Was a Bird, 2010 stone, wood, wooden table, single-channel video (87 min. 24 sec.) on 12-inch flat-screen monitor, overall dimension variable. Collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Louis D. Kacalieff. M.D. Fund. 2010.263.a-d.

A Ship That Was Taught There Is No Sea, 2010 model ship, Plexiglas box, wooden table, single-channel video (91 min. 41 sec.) on 12-inch flat-screen monitor, overall dimensions variable, courtesy the artist.

Objects Being Taught They Are Nothing But Tools, 2010 daily objects, wooden chairs, blackboard with fluorescent light, wooden tables, single-channel video (21 min. 8 sec.) on nonitor, overall dimensions variable, Private Collection, Seoul, courtesy the artist.

A Design of a Building for Putting Together Hallucinated Heinous Criminals and Offensive Beasts, 2002 blueprint, 82 x 56 cm, courtesy the artist.

A Design of a Building for Putting Together Hallucinated Heinous Criminals and Offensive Beasts (Perspective), 2002 colored pencil on paper, 91.5 x 59.5 cm. Collection of Artsonje Center, Seoul.

A Design of a Memorial Fountain for colored pencil on paper, 45 x 57 cm. Private collection, Seoul.

A Design of an Immigration Bureau Complex

blueprint, 57 x 82 cm, courtesy the artist.

A Draft of a Safe House for a Tyrant, 2009 blueprint, 68 x 98 cm, courtesy the artist. A Draft of a Safe House for a Tyrant (Perspective), 2009 colored pencil on paper, 60 x 90 cm, courtesy the artist.

A Draft of a School of Inversion, 2009 blueprint, 83 x 59 cm, courtesy the artist.

A Draft of a School of Inversion (Perspective), 2009 A Wiring Diagram of a Lighthouse, 2005

Fountain (Perspective), 2002 colored pencil on paper, 36.7 x 47.5 cm. Collection of

Spy Ship, 2004 blueprint, 80.5 x 56.5 cm, courtesy the artist. Spy Ship (Perspective), 2004

52.5 x 39 cm. Private collection, Seoul.

Horse Riding Horse (After Eadweard Muybridge), 2008

single-channel video, 1 min. 7 sec., courtesy the artist.

Born in 1963 in Seoul, Korea Lives and works in Seoul, Korea

M.F.A., School of Visual Arts, New York, 1991 M.F.A., Seoul National University, Seoul, 1988 B.F.A., Seoul National University, Seoul, 1986

Kim Beom: Objects Being Taught They Are Nothing But Tools, Kim Beom, Artsonje Center, Seoul

Sun Gallery, Seoul

Artsonje Center Annex, Kyungju, Korea

Flower, Trans Hudson Gallery, New York

<u>Utility Objects</u>, Trans Hudson Gallery, New York Yoon Gallery, Seoul Paint This Canvas Part by Part with Blue Paint and Other Works, University Art Gallery, University of Massachusetts

A Supposition, Trans Hudson Gallery, Jersey City, New Jersey

Arena Gallery, Brooklyn, New York

Selected Group Exhibitions

Trust, Media City Seoul 2010, Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul

Unconquered, Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo,

The Demons of Comparisons, Stedelijk Museum Your Bright Future, Los Angeles County Museum of Art,

 $\underline{\text{Your Bright Future}}, \text{The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston}$ If It Works, It's Out of Date, Gallery Shilla, Daegu, Korea

<u>Typography & Calligraphy & Tex</u>t, Kyung Book National University Museum, Daegu, Korea Metamorphosis, Espace Culturel Louis Vuitton, Paris State of Exception, Paço das Artes, São Paulo, Brazil The Options of Fragment, K-art Space, Kyungwon University,

Kim Kim Gallery, ROB-ERT, Berlin Fiction and Nonfiction, Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul The Way Things Go, Susan Inglett Gallery, New York The Cover of a Book Is the Beginning of a Journey, Arnolfini, Bristol, England

Namespace, CUBITT, London Fast Break, PKM Gallery, Beijing Something Mr. C Can't Have, KIAF 2007, Coex, Seoul Homage 100, Korea Art Gallery, Busan, Korea Tina B Art Festival, Prague, Czech Republic

Through the Looking Glass, Asia House, London Somewhere in Time, Artsonje Center, Seoul All Look Same, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo

Transmediale 06: Smile Machines, Akademie der Künste, Berlin 404 object not found, Total Museum, Seoul

Drawn to Drawing, SOMA Museum of Art, Seoul

Venice Biennale, Korean Pavilion, Venice Parallel Life, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, Germany Cool & Warm, Sungkok Art Museum, Seoul Enclosed, Stevenson Lecture Theatre, British Museum, London Seoul Until Now, Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, Denmark Mapping on the Root, K-art Space, Kyungwon University,

Look and See, Sungkok Art Museum, Seoul Stranger Than Paradise, Total Museum, Seoul A Praise for Still Life, Ilmin Museum of Art, Seoul Paper, 175 Gallery, Seoul <u>Alchemy in Daily Life</u>, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea

Poetic Justice, Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul Time after Time, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts,

Yangguang Canlan, Biz Art, Shanghai 5: 5th Anniversary, Artsonje Center, Seou <u>Art in Landscape</u>, Heyri, Korea Drawings by Contemporary Artists from Korea, The Korea Society, New York

House, Ga Gallery, Seoul D.I.Y, Beyond Instruction, Total Museum of Contemporary Cabinet Film Screening: Films and Videos on Flying,

Facing Korea: Eight Tempos in Seoul, Netherlands Media Art

<u>Under Construction</u>, Japan Foundation Forum, Tokyo Fantasia, East Modern Art Center, Beijing Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, Korea Korean Young Artists Biennale, Daegu, Korea Hyun-Dai Moonhak Beneficial, Gallery La Mer, Seoul

Art Spectrum 2001, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul Fantasia, Space imA, Seoul Asian Artist Next Generation, Passage de Retz, Paris The New Light and Life, Young-Un Museum of

art@design.org, Seoul Art Center, Seoul

Double Space, Young-Un Museum of Contemporary Art, <u>Utopia, Dystopia</u>, Sungsan Art Hall, Changwon, Korea Media Art 21, Sejong Gallery, Seoul Drawing, Trans Hudson Gallery, New York

50-Year Anniversary Alumni Exhibition of College of Fine Arts,

Seoul Art Center, Seoul

Beyond Landscape, Artsonje Center, Seoul Beyond Landscape, Sonje Museum of Contemporary Art,

A Window, Inside and Outside, Gwangju City Art Museum, Conceptual Art as Neurobiological Praxis, Thread Waxing

The Cereiiido Summer Film & Video Festival, MOTA Gallery, London

Garage Project No. 1: Cartoon, Artsonje Center, Seou Video and Contemporary Music Festival, Gallery X, New York Y2K, Trans Hudson Gallery, New York Art Scene in the '90s, Ellen Kim Murphy Gallery, Seoul

City and Images, Seoul Art Center, Seoul Educating Barbie, Trans Hudson Gallery, New York Taipei Biennial, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei Defrost, Sunie Museum of Contemporary Art, Kyongiu, Korea The Changing Face of Humor within Contemporary Korean Art,

<u>Visual Extension of the Photographic Image</u>, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea Spelled Out, James Howe Gallery, Kean University, Union,

Trust What You Cannot Name, Korean Cultural Center, Paris

Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, Korea Promenade in Asia, Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo The Cereijido Summer Film & Video Festival, Tricia Collins,

The Whole World in a Small Painting, Trans Hudson Gallery,

Unformed, Gaain Gallery, Seoul Artists in the 21st Century, Sun Gallery, Seoul

Dots & Lines, Eighth Floor Gallery, New York October, RVCC Gallery, Raritan Valley Community College

Scratch, Thread Waxing Space, New York Art Gallery Collectors Event, RVCC Gallery, Raritan Valley <u>Art at Home</u>, Gallery Seomi, Seoul

Options, John Weber Gallery, New York Material Abuse, Trans Hudson Gallery, Jersey City, New Jersey Oblique, Roger Merians Gallery, New York Natural, Arena Gallery, Brooklyn, New York Inspiration, Trans Hudson Gallery, Jersey City, New Jersey Art / Habit / Introspection, Kum-Ho Art Gallery, Seoul Starbucks Invitational, Rabbet Gallery, New Brunswick,

Smells Like Vinyl, Roger Merians Gallery, New York

New York Artists, Manes, Prague, Czech Republic Race & Gender, Walters Hall, Douglass College Campus, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey Race & Gender, RVCC Gallery, Raritan Valley Community Page 9, The 450 Broadway Gallery, New York

Memory and Prototype, Yoon Gallery, Seoul

 $(\underline{\text{oh, shyness}})$, Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, Sandra Gering Gallery, Thread Waxing Space, New York The Return of the Cadavre Exquis, The Forum, The Return of the Cadavre Exquis, Santa Monica The Return of the Cadavre Exquis, The Foundation for

The Return of the Cadavre Exquis, The Corcoran Gallery The Return of the Cadavre Exquis, The Drawing Center,

National Showcase Exhibition, Alternative Museum, New York Fiction and Experience, Gallery Korea, New York Not Just a Print, Rosenberg Gallery, New York Free in Between, Clayton Art Center, Morrow, Georgia A Night of 1000 Drawings, Artists Space, New York

Engendered Stories, 494 Gallery, New York Seoul-New York 92, Gallery Korea, New York <u>Governors Asian American Heritage Month Celebration,</u> World Trade Center, New York

Two Persons Painting (with Wha-Young Lee), Graduation Project, School of Visual Arts Gallery, New York

West Moreland Art Festival, Twin Lakes Park, Pennsylvania

Honesty, Batangol Gallery, Seoul

The Contemporary Art Place, Doll Gallery, Seou 3rd Contemporary Art Festival, 3rd Gallery, Seoul Seoul Contemporary Art Show, Fine Art Center, Seoul Contemporary Formative Art, Grorich Gallery, Seoul Four Persons Works, Kwan-Hoon Gallery, Seoul Insight 82, Grorich Gallery, Seoul Pan-Printing, 3rd Gallery, Seoul Yaewoo Art Festival, Seoul Art Center, Seoul

Direction, Yoon Gallery, Seoul

New Spirit, 3rd Gallery, Seoul Seoul 82, Kwan-Hoon Gallery, Seoul **Awards and Residencies**

Sight of 8 Artists, 3rd Gallery, Seoul

Sun Art Award, Sun Gallery, Seoul, Korea

Hermes Art Award, Hermes Korea, Seoul Artist's residency, Art Omi, New York

Suk Nam Arts and Cultural Foundation, Seoul

Kyoung-An Artist Residency Studio Grant, Gwangiu, Korea Project Support Grant, The Year of New Arts, Seoul

Seoul 600-Year Memorial Time Capsule Plaza Design, 2nd Artist's residency, P.S. 122 Project Artist, New York

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KIM BEOM ANIMALIA

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Korea Foundation

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