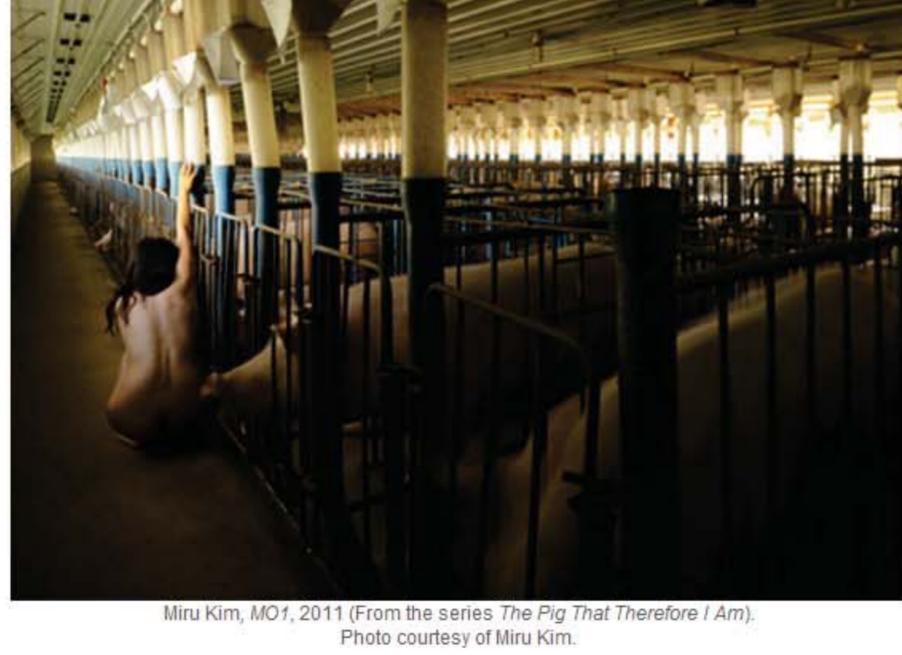


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Miru Kim, *MO1*, 2011 (From the series *The Pig That Therefore I Am*).
Photo courtesy of Miru Kim.

Dear Immigrant Artists and Community,

In the month of February, the IAP is well on its way in providing services of great demand. Last Wednesday, we held a well-attended NYFA Source workshop for the Mentees of our Mentoring Program. Last night, our Cultural Community Seminar on *Finding Funds and Resources for Your Art* at Art for Change Gallery in East Harlem, had a full house. And on February 28th, all sessions for our Individual Consultation Initiative are already filled.

Not to worry if you miss this seminar – the IAP will be continuing our uptown outreach in March. Our next Cultural Community Workshop on the *Essential Tools for Grantwriting* will be held at the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance in Washington Heights/Inwood on March 15th, from 6:30-8:30pm. This will then be followed by a March 29th workshop on *Developing Project Narratives and Budgets* to be co-presented with the Bronx Council on the Arts, from 6-8pm (location tba). More details on registering for these workshops will be provided in upcoming IAP announcements, so if you haven't already done so, do sign up for our IAP online mailing list [here](#).

In this newsletter, the IAP is featuring an interview with the Korean artist Miru Kim, best known for her photography series *Naked City Spleen*. In our Mentoring Alumni Corner, we will also be highlighting the work of the German composer and musician Volker Goetze, who took part as a Mentee in last year's cycle of the Mentoring Program for Immigrant Artists. And finally, we will provide the first Korean translation of our Helpful Tips section on "On Public Speaking for Artists."

Immigrant Artist Project
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Featured Artist

This month's featured artist is Miru Kim, a New York based artist. The interview is conducted by IAP intern, Hyeyoung Kim. This is also available in Korean, please click [here](#).

Miru Kim is a Korean artist based in New York. She describes herself as an urban explorer, who discovers urban ruins such as abandoned factories, tunnels, and subway stations. These explorations are captured in her series of photographs entitled *Naked City Spleen*. On March 24th, Kim will hold a solo exhibition at [DOOSAN Gallery New York](#), introducing a new series of work, *The Pig That Therefore I Am*, which takes her on a more intimate delving of the skin and an animal's remarkable yet little known qualities. To visit Miru Kim's website, please click [here](#).

IAP: You were born in the U.S., raised in Korea, and came back to the U.S. when you were a student. Did this transition change your personality? Does Korean culture still influence you?

MK: Yes. I was raised in Korea and came to the United States when I was thirteen. Moving to the U.S. made me more introverted. When I was a kid, I liked playing a lot and having fun with friends. But in the U.S., it was little bit hard to adapt to a totally new environment because of the different language. Even though I have lived in the U.S. since I was thirteen years old, I am still highly influenced by Eastern thinking and philosophy such as Buddhism and Taoism. This influence can be seen in my new series of work.

IAP: You wanted to be a doctor, and actually took a medical course. Why did you change your career path to be an artist?

MK: I've always loved art since I was a child. I received a lot of compliments on my painting when I was an elementary school student. The reason why I started drawing might be due to animals. I like animals a lot, so I wanted to draw them. In the middle my studies in medical school, I realized it wasn't what I wanted to do. So I decided to go for an MFA in Painting in pursuit of what I love so much. Actually, I majored in Painting at Pratt and I didn't work on photography at that time. One of my professors discouraged me from doing painting during a critique session. Around that time, I started discovering abandoned places like tunnels, and became very interested in taking photographs. I didn't plan to be a photographer, but it organically happened resulting in a series of works called *Naked City Spleen*. In addition, I studied French and Romance Philology during my undergraduate years and I liked the French poet Charles Baudelaire. He also influenced my work and the title of the series *Naked City Spleen*.

IAP: You seem to be a very shy person. What make you so brave and enthusiastic when you do your work?

MK: I don't think I'm a different person when I work. I love adventure and challenging norms, so these would be my reasons for being enthusiastic in the process of creating art work.

IAP: Personally, I was very surprised that you took a nude photo in a public place in Seoul, because Korean society is more conservative than Western contexts. Did you get permission to take it? Did something out of the ordinary happen to you?

MK: Actually, I was worried about that, too. To avoid people, I went there in the very early morning before the construction workers came to work. When I was almost done with taking pictures, they started arriving at the site. They didn't do anything to me and nothing happened. I was sitting on the roof and thinking that people might look at me as a crazy woman who is protesting the demolition of the town. When I was working in Istanbul, I felt more scared because the security guard approached me to say something. Turkey is a Muslim country, so it seemed more harrowing to be naked as a woman in public.

IAP: In Korea, why did you pick the specific place of the demolition zone?

MK: It was hard to find any old abandoned factories in Korea because people are rapidly building new buildings and towns. So the demolition zone was rather easy to find. I think it perfectly depicts how fast the city is redeveloping.

IAP: You are going to present a new series of work featuring an animal for your next solo show at DOOSAN Gallery in March. Tell me why you started the new series and what you wish to convey to the audience.

MK: For my upcoming solo exhibition in March, I deal with pigs as the main subject. When I was in an anatomy class in medical school, I learned that pigs were physically similar to humans, especially their organs. People normally consider pigs as lazy and dirty, but their skin has actually been researched as relevant material for implants in human skin. I think the skin is a perfect organ to incorporate inner sensations and the outside world. From a psychological perspective, the skin represents the meeting point between the interior and exterior realms of the body. The body and soul are viewed as separate in the Western world, but it exists at the same time and place in Eastern culture. Based on Buddhism and Taoism, the soul intimately co-exists in both animals and humans. In this regard, to me, the mingling of my skin with that of a pig's is the act of interacting and communicating our bodies and souls. In Fokus Łódź Biennale 2010, I've done a performance with mud from the pig farm. This mud also expresses the similarity between pigs and humans. In Eastern philosophy, the soil is where we (both pig and human) come from, live, and revert back to after life ends. (Her writing entitled "The Pig That Therefore I Am" is available [here](#).)

IAP: What factors inspire you to build an idea for work?

MK: Perhaps interacting with other artists influence my art works. I actually like the Classics in the form of a book, art, music, and opera. My sister majored in Classical Art History and Archeology. Through this environment, I was always exposed to the Classics. I've visited many classical art museums and I've studied history, too. When I was a high school student, I was fascinated with Impressionism, however, I prefer Expressionism now. My favorite artists are El Greco and the Vienna Secession artists such as Egon Schiele. Recently, I've been obsessed with Gustave Moreau.

IAP: Tell me a little bit about Naked City Art, which you run as an art organization.

MK: There is an event space at the top of my building. It inspired me to throw a party with people and I wanted to promote artists in New York City. That's why I started running an art organization and hold two auctions there. Right now, I don't have any plans for it because I'm so busy with my own works. Organizing an event and running an art organization require a lot of time and work. Since I love art, I am also highly interested in collecting art works, mostly by emerging artists and students. Currently, many artists in New York are suffering from making a living and competing with each other. It is hard to truly network and gather as artists. I'm sad because many artists used to live Downtown where I live because it was a much better environment for artists to focus on art surrounded by bohemian influence. A big part of it was because the rent was free for artists. Due to this current climate in the art world, I think that artists trading work has become a challenge, too. I hope that artists can trade their works a lot someday. I make an effort to interact with artists, but New Yorkers are always so busy, so it's more difficult than I expected.

IAP: There are a lot of immigrant artists in New York; can you give them a piece of advice to survive in the art world?

MK: I recommend that artists study. It's very important to improve the quality of your work. Also, New York is a place where much competition is going on. If an artist is only working in the studio by him/herself, he or she can't survive in the art world, especially in New York. I was really introverted, but I changed a lot after I came to New York because I tried to meet a lot of people and build a network. Social networking is one of the crucial processes to cultivate in order to be a good artist in New York. In addition, you should enjoy what you are doing. Enjoy, but don't be shallow. If you are just having fun without any knowledge, people will easily catch on to your ignorance. Visit galleries to see and study the current art scene and keep experimenting on your work. Finally, learning language and writing skills are very crucial to being a good artist. Since I majored in French and Romance Philology, I write a lot whether or not it is in relation to my work. I think writing is a tool of expressing oneself, therefore, an artist should write well. Although there are a lot of artists in New York, I don't think many artists can express or write well about themselves.

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