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SUNDARAM TAGORE NEW YORK PRESENTS NEW WORK BY YOUNG KOREAN ARTIST KIM JOON

Exhibition dates: **October 14 – November 13, 2010**

Opening cocktail reception: **Thursday, October 14, 6 – 8 pm**



Fragile-Holy Plants, 2010, digital print, 47 x 66 inches
Fragile-Flow Blue, 2010, digital print, 82.7 x 47 inches



New York, September 20, 2010—For his second solo exhibition at Sundaram Tagore New York, Korean artist Kim Joon presents a new series of digital prints exploring desire, fragility, and human imperfection. Using three-dimensional computer graphics, he composes surreal landscapes of supine figures tattooed from head to toe in luxury-brand imagery.

In his newest series, *Fragile*, Kim turns away from tattooed human flesh, which has been the focus of his previous work. Instead, he fabricates images of fragments of hollow porcelain that resemble nude bodies. Through a painstaking digital process, Kim coats the anthropomorphic forms in bold patterns from ceramic brands such as Villeroy & Boch, Herend, and Royal Copenhagen. What results are deceptively convincing surfaces complete with reflection and shadows.

Works such as *Fragile-Holy Plants* appear to be still-life scenes of tattooed porcelain bodies posing consciously against a white background. Other works, such as *Fragile-Flow Blue*, assume the guise of all-over paintings with

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tattoo patterns spilling out from the bodies and onto pieces of tableware and the background below. Reality and fantasy collide in these digital prints. Kim invites us to experience a world in which random porcelain body parts burst forth out of plates, interlock in tight embraces, and take on a life of their own.

According to Kim tattoos are not only physical inscriptions on the body but also signifiers of mental impressions left on the consciousness. Alluding to society's weakness for material objects, Kim's tattoo imagery reflects our obsessions and deep-seated attachments. The artist's exploration of tattoos stems from his experiences tattooing his peers while in the Korean military. In his earliest works, Kim grappled with the notion of tattoos as socially taboo in Korean society. He created sculptures that mimicked tattooed portions of flesh. Using water-based markers, he embellished latex-coated sponges, creating anonymous parts divorced from the human form.

In recent years, Kim's work has neatly overturned the negative connotations surrounding tattoos in Korea. In his hands, not only do tattoos reflect social habits and desires but they're also a vehicle for transforming the body into a highly aestheticized object.

Kim Joon was born in Seoul, Korea, where he currently lives and works. His work has been shown at the Saatchi Gallery, London; Total Museum, Seoul, Korea; the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Kwachon, Korea; the National Taiwan Museum; Canvas International Art Gallery, Amsterdam; Alexander Ochs Galleries, Berlin; and Sundaram Tagore Gallery, Beverly Hills and Hong Kong.

This month Kim's work will appear on the cover of the book *Korean Eye*, published by the noted Italian fine-art publisher Skira.

A catalogue accompanies this exhibition.

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