

# TATTOO YOU

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GALLERY

OCTOBER 21 - DECEMBER 2, 2005

opening reception: OCTOBER 21, 5 - 9 p m

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Chicago, IL - Tattoo You: Logos Dress Us

In his first solo show in the US, Korean artist Kim Joon explores the tattoo as a social metaphor. Mr. Kim uses a single digital file to produce different kinds of art, from large-scale digital photos to video installation. The show opens on Friday October 21, reception from 5 to 9. Kim Joon will be coming from Korea for the opening reception.

Mr. Kim's photos show small clusterings of a single nude figure that is replicated in different spatial orientations. The figures embrace each other, and their only clothing is tattooed logos ranging from corporate signs (like Gucci and Starbucks) to religious and political icons. Instead of using a canvas and paintbrush, Mr. Kim uses "mouse painting" to create his tattoos (in other words, he use a computer mouse to draw these tattoo images on the same figure as it is rotated in space). In traditional Korean culture, tattoos are seen as a social taboo, and such markings are generally found only on criminals. Mr. Kim began to experiment with the art of tattooing his friends when he was serving his mandatory term in the Korean military. Instead of a social taboo, the artist talks about "social tattoos." The process begins as each person chooses their own iconography, which will be imprinted on them based on that person's socioeconomic status and gender. In this exhibit, the artist masterminds the "tattoo dress" every man will wear. These non-specific human bodies (each person is replicated three times) are mostly headless and are adorned by corporate, religious, or political brandings that are worn by each body as a new type of body wear. This body wear series is called "Tattooress." Two other photo or video based works are called "We" and "Bubbles."

The large-scale video projection called "Bubbles" features bubbles that are quite visceral - a cross between styrofoam and shaving cream. The bubbles start out small and gradually get bigger, until they lift a human leg. The artist believes the bubbles represent our "bubble-like society," whose iconography reflects us both physically and mentally. South Korea is very much a consumer culture, with shopping a popular pastime. In this body of work, these tattoos make explicit the people's desires for wealth and elevated status. As Mr. Kim says, "I am interested in tattoo as a metaphor for hidden desire or a kind of compulsion engraved into human consciousness... I see the skin, or in some cases the monitor, as an extension of a canvas. Tattoos can reflect individual and collective reality or displaced desire."

Kim Joon's work has appeared at the Total Museum (Seoul) and the National Museum of Contemporary Art (Kwachon, Korea). Mr. Kim's work has also been included in the second Asia Pacific Triennial (Brisbane) and the third Kwangju Biennial (Kwangju, Korea).

