



JENKINS JOHNSON GALLERY



SeoWoo and Her Pink Things, 2005, lightjet print, sizes and editions vary



Terry and His Blue Things, 2005, lightjet print, sizes and editions vary

Pink and Blue Project: JeongMee Yoon

March 6 – April 26, 2008

Jenkins Johnson Gallery announces a solo exhibition of photographer Jeongmee Yoon's *Pink and Blue Project*, which is a photographic portfolio that looks at possessions of children, specifically girls' pink objects and boys' blue. The exhibition will open at the New York location March 6 and run through April 26, 2008. An opening reception and book signing will be held Saturday, March 8 from 5 to 7 pm. Jenkins Johnson Gallery would like to thank Arts Council of Korea for their support of this exhibition.

One would be mistaken to assume *The Pink and Blue Project* is frothy or light. Analysis of the images provokes conversation sensitive to issues in modern society that resonate on consumerism as well as how we define femininity and masculinity. Yoon scrutinizes the adage "pink for a girl, blue for a boy" as an examination of gender specific colors and how a modicum can cross-culturally imbed itself in buying patterns and identities. In itself, color has no meaning, but human associations bring significance to shades that wield a heft in defining mood, behavior, politics, personality, often unconsciously. When we "see red" we are angry, if "blue" we are sad or we could be labeled "red" and associated with communism or perhaps as a "greenback" looking to save the environment. The list goes on and on...

Yoon realized the weight of the issue when shopping for her son and daughter. The choices in products from clothes to toothpaste to books are limited by the predetermined standard of society and manufacturers. Companies enforce trends with stylized advertising and pervasive commercials swamp our daily lives. Often children and tweens are the targets because it is they who influence adults' pocketbooks. Although aware of this power, consumers viewing Yoon's work realize how even the most conscious buyer striving to avoid falling into the pitfalls of mass marketing suddenly seem less in control than they think. The robust difference between girls' and boys' color choices is predictable, but nonetheless astounding in its universality.

A recent study at Newcastle University released findings that biological causes might be a key factor in gender color preferences. It could all lead back to hunting and gathering days when men went out to find the meat and women looked to gather fruits and vegetables, which typically have a red toned hue when ripe. Moreover, an interesting switch occurred after WWII. Until that juncture, blue was commonly held as a color for girls due to its tranquil qualities and pinks and reds for boys because red signified power and strength.

The power of Yoon's work is further heightened by its simplicity and tight, crafted arrangement as well as the subtle, witty perspective. Yoon asks her subjects to make as neutral a facial expression as possible during their sitting, but with children this is often difficult; inevitably personalities peek through and she is adept at capturing these small moments. Moreover, her use of a medium format set to the lowest aperture camera brings clarity and sharpness to the seas of pink and blue that imbues objects with a tactile quality that evokes the sense of want they originally did for the portrayed owner. Overall, Yoon's sensibility highlights our vulnerability to conformity and makes you wonder what your belongings would say about you if they were laid out for all eyes to see.

Jeongmee Yoon began her series during graduate studies at the School of Visual Arts, New York and continues to expand it in South Korea. She was a smash success at Scope Hamptons 2007 and had the crowd abuzz as well as was featured on the cover of Life Magazine weekend edition and the New York Sun. Moreover, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston featured her in their 2007 fall acquisitions exhibit and has permanently adding her to their repertoire. Yoon received the commendation of South Korea's prestigious Daum Prize in 2007. Moreover, her work from this project has been widely published in the US as well as South Korea in addition to being included in numerable group exhibitions in both locales.