

# SOLUNA

FINE ART

## *Kim Yongchul - Happy Days Are Here Again*

Date: June 1 - July 4, 2019

Opening Reception: Thursday May 31, 6-8 pm



(Image: Kim Yongchul, *On a Spring Day of Peony Blossom*, 2013. Acrylic on Canvas, 72.7 x 116.8 cm.)

***“Our current situation wants us to love each other and our lives to be fuller. And, I want to deliver a message of love and hope.”***

Soluna Fine Art is proud to present *Happy Days Are Here Again*, **Kim Yongchul**'s first solo exhibition both in Hong Kong and with the gallery. This exhibition which introduces Kim's latest body of work, will be on view at our Sai Street location from June 1 - July 4, 2019 with an opening reception in the presence of the artist on May 31, 2019, from 6 - 8pm.

**Kim Yongchul**'s work has always been reflective of the situations of the times. Tracing back to his first solo exhibition in 1977 when he did a series of photographs featuring himself as the man reading a newspaper,



# SOLUNA

FINE ART

followed by his experimental painting series “This is but a piece of Paper”, his work was strongly progressive and

intensive, criticizing the society / politics / culture in the period. Between 1970's to early 1980's, diverse information and cultures were introduced into South Korea though internationalization and industrialization, while the nation was dealing with its monstrous military culture. Kim as well as most people from that time was forced to face the conflicts and began to work on the series mentioned above, to show the monstrosity of the TV and the tongue-tied newspaper, accusing the media of the period with their role in suppressing people's lives.

In the early 1980's, there is a change in style and theme in Kim's work. In 1982 Kim started extensively introducing the figure of heart into his work. It is from this period of time most of his works are named with the word “love” or “heart” included. Besides the gestural heart figure painted boldly in primary colors such as red, blue or yellow, Kim also started including numerous traditional folk images including flowers, peony blossoms, pigeons (symbol for peace), mountains, masks, religious figures as well as the text “YES” in comic-style thought bubbles. Kim believed that in the times of conflicts, what people need is not critics but a message of love and hope. In his own words, “... my ideas started to change. What was beneficial for those floundering times was not the frustration and criticism born out of negative attitudes but a hopeful prospect for the future.”

For *Happy Days Are Here Again*, Kim created 8 pieces of new paintings, including three small works entitled “*I and You*”, “*You and I*” and “*...With You*”. In these three works painted with brilliantly vibrant colors, Kim divided the canvases into two sections, one filled with his iconic big heart figure and the other with the work titles written in Chinese. These three works in particular especially celebrate the relationship between lovers and love in general, spreading love and hope still three decades after his first heart paintings. Other works in this exhibition include numerous birds and blossoms paintings, with Chinese characters like “Fortune” and “Spring” which resembles “the new beginning” in Korean culture. Kim never stopped making works that bring his viewers joy and in 2019, *Happy Days Are Here Again* is more relevant and refreshing in the current political state, than ever.

## About Kim Yongchul

**Kim Yongchul** was born in 1949 in South Korea and received both his BFA and MFA at Hong-Ik University, under the department of Painting. After his first exhibition of Group-X in 1970, he mostly presented works from the iconic *This is but a piece of Paper* Series and the *Photo- Painting- Television* Series during the 70's / early 80's. The Series which experimentally combined with photography and painting criticized the Korean society at the time which granted him as one of the “Today's 12 Young Artist” by art critic Uhak Yun in 1982 (Quarterly Art, Spring 1982-today's Monthly Art). Kim then started making paintings with the now representative heart image through his solo exhibition in 1984, later with other symbols of positivity including flowers and birds to send the message of hope and peace in the era full of conflict and split.



# SOLUNA

FINE ART

Before retirement, Kim was a professor of the painting department at Hong-Ik University. His work is exhibited at important institutions and galleries worldwide, some include - The Brooklyn Museum, Kyoto Art Museum, Seoul Metropolitan Museum of Art, Korea National Museum of Contemporary Art, University of Tennessee and more.



# SOLUNA

FINE ART

## About Soluna Fine Art

**Soluna Fine Art** is the pioneering purveyor of Asian fine art and objects in Hong Kong with deep roots in South Korea. The mission is to revitalize the concept of Eastern aesthetics by promoting works that brings traditional value with contemporary interpretations, and to provide platforms for art that goes beyond boundaries of cross-cultural encounters. It emphasizes the idea of essential meaning and tradition of Asian fine art that incorporated a wide variety of cultural influences throughout history. The gallery showcases established and emerging artists, such as **Lee Kang-hyo**, **Park Yoon-Kyung**, and **Huh Sangwook**, through art exhibitions, fairs, educational programs, multi-disciplinary collaborations on an international level.

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Gallery opening hours: Monday - Saturday, 10am - 6pm

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