

Cindy Ji Hye Kim

Animal Triste

March 20 — April 19, 2025



François Ghebaly is proud to present *Animal Triste*, Cindy Ji Hye Kim's third exhibition at the gallery.

In the centuries before the widespread adoption of the Gregorian calendar, agrarian societies in Western Europe represented time as infused with the cycles of nature. Not unlike the modern Farmer's Almanac or other global calendars based on solar and lunar movements, medieval farming calendars correlated times of the year with the sequence of labors necessary to raise and maintain crops and livestock. The calendars also served an invaluable psychosocial function, offering instruction for the timing of courtship, child-rearing, and other practices, and, in effect, creating a steadfast tie between the social order and the natural world.

These agrarian calendars have become a new part of Cindy Ji Hye Kim's visual vocabulary, extending the artist's ongoing engagement with ancient myth, psychoanalysis, and archetypal iconographies. In her newest exhibition *Animal Triste*, Kim explores ideas of collective action and the psychic reconnection of the human body as it moves through the first six months of the year. Across a series of paintings, the artist depicts the labors and rituals identified with the Spring Equinox through the Autumn Equinox—roughly February through July—, reimagining the calendars' diminutive peasant scenes in her shadowy grisaille palette. The labors include, in order: making love, pruning, gathering flowers, falconry, mowing, and reaping wheat. In works like *Days in the Wind* (2025) and *Cardinalia* (2025), the sweeping motion of a scythe is conveyed by a single, gliding brushstroke, and a couple's embrace appears as an act of erasure. The forms that emerge in Kim's paintings reflect the artist's connection to her materials and to her own hands, mirroring her depicted subjects' experience of nature and the passage of time.

In large part, Kim's interest in medieval farming calendars comes from her research into the early origins of Hellenistic astrology and the sexagenary calendar of Ancient China. Moving away from individualistic narrativization, these calendrical systems reflect the artist's desire to maintain sacred connection with nature

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rather than to master it or distance herself from it. The works in *Animal Triste* push beyond the confines of the psychic interior as it's been explored in the arts and letters of the industrial centuries, and seek to acknowledge humanity's shared journey as it is shaped by land, labor, and the collective unconscious.

Cindy Ji Hye Kim utilizes a rich grayscale vocabulary in iconic representations of the body under duress. Synthesizing influences as disparate as early animation, pests and flora, medieval torture devices, Jungian psychoanalysis, and Korean folk arts, Kim's images speak to the limits of both body and language. She places special emphasis on the sculptural qualities of her works, from round panels with notches that reference early animation technology to translucent silk works with carved stretchers bars that impose a ghostly silhouette onto their painted compositions. In her practice, which extends through drawing and painting to installation, sculpture, and animation, Kim marries a playful tangle of symbols and visual information with a foreboding sense of what lies beyond the surface, beyond the body, beyond the word itself.

Kim received her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2013 and her MFA from the Yale University School of Art in 2016. Recent institutional exhibitions include Savannah College of Art and Design Museum of Art, Savannah; Kunsthall Stavanger, Stavanger; and the MIT List Visual Art Center, Cambridge. Gallery solo exhibitions include François Ghebaly, Los Angeles; Casey Kaplan, New York; Helena Anrather, New York; Cooper Cole, Toronto; Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels; and Foxy Productions, New York. She has shown in numerous group exhibitions, including those at the Frye Art Museum, Seattle; Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles; David Lewis, New York; Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York. Kim lives and works in New York City.