

# GAA GALLERY

**KIM WESTFALL**

*DMZ ORCHIDS*

August 5 - 29

Gaa Gallery Provincetown

Gaa Gallery is pleased to present *DMZ Orchids*, a solo exhibition of tufted ribbon tapestries by Brooklyn-based artist Kim Westfall. In *DMZ Orchids*, Westfall examines the plant life found in the Korean Demilitarized Zone. This is Westfall's first exhibition with the gallery.

"Once I cleared the Civilian Control line and military checkpoints, I entered the DMZ, and finally felt a sense of calm that has always evaded me in the country. It wasn't just the wild beaches flanked by barbed wire and thriving plant life, it was also because it was the farthest I could get away from South Korea.

The DMZ is heavenly, despite what politicians say."

After decades of fortification, the Korean Demilitarized Zone is now a largely untouched nature preserve where over 5,000 species of animals and plants flourish. While the surrounding area is sparsely populated and economically depressed, the flora and fauna in the DMZ are thriving. Orchids are among the many plants growing in this biosphere.

The orchids that grow in the DMZ have personality, but their expressions are unknowable. They grow freely in a restricted space where few people have permission to enter. Their world exists apart from human affairs and persists regardless of past and future deterritorializations.

In the Spring of 2022, Westfall traveled to the northernmost point of the DMZ via Goseong county in Gangwon province in the Republic of Korea. Before the war, this land was a single county called Koseong, located in what is now the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The division after the war resulted in two counties and two provinces with the same names. Koseong county in Kangwon province in the northern DPRK, and Goseong county in Gangwon province in the southern ROK. In Korean, they are spelled exactly the same.

This imposed redundancy is relatable for Westfall. Her work asks nuanced questions about national and racial identities, and how they are often streamlined and manipulated. Previously Westfall's work has examined narratives surrounding the US-Korean linked adoption industry, and she continues to search for oblique angles into the uneasy relationship and history surrounding the US-Korea alliance.

In *DMZ Orchids*, Westfall continues this investigation by focusing on orchids in the accidental ecosphere of the heavily armed DMZ border.

The orchids in Westfall's tufted ribbon works recall studio floral photography's black backdrop. These ribbon textiles are generated from digital drawings projected onto a backing cloth. Using materials common to craft and goods for the home, or adorning the body, the resultant works are both mechanized and handmade. Featuring a single flower per image, the works in *DMZ Orchids* present as a film still, a photograph, a moment captured in time. Faces begin to emerge in the centers of flowers. The body of the plant becomes recognizable, embodying a new language. Nearly cartoon-like, there is a simultaneous humor and bleakness to the images. They are filled with juxtapositions: soft and heavy, still and animate, delicate and opaque, resilient and precarious. These works represent narrative absences and suggest histories and futures not yet told; the quiet and insistent messages of orchids.

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**Kim Westfall** (b. 1986 Seoul, Korea) received her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2008. Previous exhibitions include *Splendid Bitch*, White Columns, New York, NY; *Chibi USA*, No Place Gallery, Columbus, OH; *Me, My Friends, & I*, 1969 Gallery, New York, NY; and *Stop the World I Want to Get Off*, Big Medium, Austin, TX, among others. Westfall's work has been exhibited in group exhibitions at NADA Miami, Miami, FL; Independent Art Fair, New York, NY; 1969 Gallery, New York, NY; Untitled Art Fair, New York, NY; Sensei Gallery, New York, NY; Helmuth Projects, San Diego, CA; Cathouse FUNeral, Brooklyn, NY; and Quaid Gallery, Tampa, FL. In 2018 Westfall was a recipient of a Korean Government Scholarship; and in 2017 she received a travel and study grant from the Jerome Foundation to research the history of international adoption in Korea. Westfall continues to travel and conduct research in Korea and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

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## KIM WESTFALL - "DMZ ORCHIDS"



Kim Westfall  
*Commelina Communis Dayflower*, 2022  
Tufted organza ribbon  
111.7 x 147.3 cm / 44 x 58 in

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Kim Westfall  
*Cymbidium Goeringii*, 2022  
Tufted organza ribbon  
109.2 x 137.1 cm / 43 x 54 in

# GAA GALLERY



Kim Westfall  
*Oreorchis Patens*, 2022  
Tufted organza ribbon  
111.7 x 147.3 cm / 44 x 58 in

# GAA GALLERY



Kim Westfall  
*Small Whorled Pogonia*, 2022  
Tufted organza ribbon  
114.3 x 127 cm / 45 x 50 in

# GAA GALLERY



Kim Westfall  
*Dendrobium Moniliforme*, 2022  
Tufted organza ribbon  
119.3 x 134.6 cm / 47 x 53 in

# GAA GALLERY



Kim Westfall  
*Platanthera Grandiflora*, 2022  
Tufted organza ribbon  
114.3 x 127 cm / 45 x 50 in



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## KIM WESTFALL

### BORN

1986, Seoul, Korea

### SELECTED SOLO + TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 *DMZ Orchids*, Gaa Gallery, Provincetown, MA, USA  
*Decoys*, No Place Gallery, Columbus, OH, USA  
2020 *Kim Westfall: Splendid Bitch*, White Columns, New York, NY, USA  
2018 *Chibi USA*, No Place Gallery, Columbus, OH, USA  
2015 *Kim Westfall: In the Project Room*, Thierry Goldberg, New York, NY, USA  
2014 *Stop the World I Want to Get Off*, Big Medium, Austin, TX, USA

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 NADA Miami, White Columns, New York, NY, USA  
2020 Independent Art Fair, White Columns, New York, NY, USA  
Untitled Art Fair, White Columns, New York, NY, USA  
2019 NADA Miami, White Columns, Miami, FL, USA  
2018 *Me My Friends and I*, 1969 Gallery, New York, NY, USA  
2016 *Q-SEE SIGD2*, bb, Baltimore, MD, USA  
*Help Wanted*, No Place Gallery, Columbus, OH, USA  
2015 *Jerry Bruckheimer Films*, Sensei Gallery, New York, NY, USA  
*How to Throw Away a Knife*, Quaid Gallery, Tampa, FL, USA  
2014 *Having a Cup of Coffee with You*, Helmuth Projects, San Diego, CA, USA  
2013 *Shrink it Pink it*, Cathouse FUNeral, Brooklyn, NY, USA

### SELECTED, AWARDS, GRANTS, + FELLOWSHIPS

- 2021 City Artist Corps Grant - Cycle 3, NYFA - New York Foundation for the Arts, New York, NY, USA  
2018 Korean Government Scholarship, National Institute of International Education, Seoul, South Korea  
2017 Travel and Study Grant, The Jerome Foundation, Minneapolis, MN, USA

### PUBLIC PROJECTS

- 2021 AS AN ANGEL-AMERICAN, Hudson River, New York, NY, USA

### EDUCATION

- 2008 BFA Printmaking, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, USA

### SELECTED PRESS + PUBLICATIONS + WORKS CITED

- 2020 "Editors Picks: 11 Things Not to Miss in New York's Art World This Week." Tatiana Berg. Artnet  
"Interviews: Kim Westfall on traumatic cuteness and social reproduction." Vanessa Thill. Artforum  
2016 "Jared Brown and Kim Westfall at Bb." Art Viewer. July 16 2016.