

# GAA GALLERY

**EMILY YONG BECK**

**LIONS & LAMBS**

August 5 - 29, 2022

Provincetown

Gaa Gallery is pleased to present *Lions & Lambs*, a solo exhibition of ceramic sculptures by Chicago-based artist, Emily Yong Beck. Juxtaposing propaganda cartoons and reinterpretations of European and Asian ceramics, *Lions & Lambs* is a rigorous and aesthetically expansive examination of cuteness culture. This will be Yong Beck's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

They're seated at a table. Eleven objects of slumped together earth, vitrified, vibrant, and adorned. A TV hums in the background.

Thumper is carrying a missile. There are faded, glossy flowers stuck to his hind legs. Outside he sees his likeness on a fighter jet with names of locations and kills etched below. Mickey Mouse has his hands on his hips. He's thinking - "Aren't these new blockbusters beautiful." Donald Duck is talking with pursed lips donning a sailor cap. Something about paying taxes, patriotism, and aiding in the war effort.

Disney is on the edge of financial collapse and cutting deals with the US Government.

Tinged with high gloss sand gold leaf, one of a pair of vaguely familiar pigs sits at a dinner table, arms folded, waiting. Obscure and from a long time ago, they are still lingering somewhere. Betty Boop is winking.

The Sanrio Family is here too. The virtuous My Melody and her evil counterpart Kuromi are backlit by the rays of the Imperial Japanese Rising Sun Flag. The tail of a Korean folk tiger wraps around them. Its eye looks out through a hole in the vase.

Popeye is eating spinach. Dumbo is looking up.

*Lions & Lambs* illustrates duality— Lions, often representing evil, harshness, and strength, and lambs— innocence, purity, and vulnerability. With the title and the works in the exhibition Yong Beck, born in Korea and raised in the United States, develops a personal connection to the mass-produced media, drawing comparisons to the duality of her own experiences.

Examining her relationships with nostalgia, Yong Beck contrasts how she consumes media now compared to her understanding of cartoons as a child. Central to her work is questioning the role of media and how it is perceived, recollected, and later re-experienced. What is remembered? What happens when we become desensitized to an image? What is the legacy of media and material culture if lived experiences and histories are erased by the more pervasive and palatable qualities of a mass-produced image?

Underscoring the extreme visual qualities of cuteness and what might be underlining its saccharine veneer, Yong Beck examines how media, craft, and cuteness can be used to obscure violence. Through a selective appropriation and pairing of cultural references, her work subverts familiarity and creates a dialog about forgotten histories erased by political propaganda. A fresh take on contemporary ceramics and the Sloppy Craft Movement, Yong Beck's work operates in a decisive swiftness - merging the easily digestible and benevolent aesthetics of cartoons and the more malignant subtext underwriting the narratives of the seemingly naive characters.

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In these maximal and intricate sculptures, Yong Beck references the ornate and highly stylized ceramics of the Sevres Factory in France. In contrast to porcelain used by much of 18th-century ceramics, Yong Beck utilizes stoneware glazed in saturated colors applied onto scratched images and attaches elements extending beyond the vessels. Rococo ceramics, characterized by using white porcelain figures set in whimsical and dreamy narratives, were used to further an agenda of white supremacy and nationalism while supporting the erasure of the violence of colonialism.

In a similar strategy of pairing historical materials with contemporary motifs, Yong Beck's recent work pairs the Korean folk tiger with popular Anime characters. Set to the background of the Rising Sun Flag, a symbol of Imperial Japan, recognizable cartoon characters battle a tiger, a symbol of strength, resilience, and power in Korean culture. In these works Yong Beck examines Kawaii Culture as a mode of "cute-washing" to erase the history of Japanese occupation and the continued militarization of Korea.

Through creating works that at first glance, are familiar, playful, vibrant, and maximal, Yong Beck asks the viewer to take a second look.

**Emily Yong Beck** (b. 1999, Daegu, South Korea) is an interdisciplinary ceramic artist who received her BFA from the School of the Art Institute in 2021. Yong Beck's work has been featured in the solo exhibition, *Spoonful of Sugar* at New Image Art, Los Angeles, CA, and a two-person presentation with Gaa Gallery at NADA New York, NY. In early 2023, she will have a solo exhibition at Gaa Projects, Cologne, Germany. Yong Beck has been awarded residences at Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts, Newcastle, ME, and Township10, Marshall, NC. Yong Beck lives and works in Chicago, IL, where she co-runs the exhibition space, The Latent Space.

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## EMILY YONG BECK - "LIONS & LAMBS"



Emily Yong Beck  
*Horangi vs Doraemon, 2022*  
Stoneware, glaze, majolica and underglaze  
32 x 29 x 29 cm / 12 5/8 x 11 1/2 x 11 3/8 in



Emily Yong Beck

*Pigs is Pigs 1*, 2022

Stoneware, glaze, majolica and underglaze

31 x 26 x 21 cm / 12 1/8 x 10 1/4 x 8 1/8 in





Emily Yong Beck  
*Betty Boop VS Ghost, 2022*  
Stoneware, glaze, majolica and underglaze  
23 x 18 x 18 cm / 7 1/2 x 10 1/2 x 7 1/2 in



Emily Yong Beck  
*Thumper*, 2021

Stoneware, glaze, majolica and underglaze  
37.5 x 22 x 23.5 cm / 14 3/4 x 8 3/4 x 9 1/4 in



Emily Yong Beck  
*Fighting Mickey*, 2022  
Stoneware and glaze  
30.5 x 35.5 x 20 cm / 12 x 14 x 8 in



Emily Yong Beck  
*Irresistible Pot*, 2022  
Stoneware and glaze  
34 x 20 x 20 cm / 13 1/2 x 8 x 8 in





Emily Yong Beck  
*Popeye The Sailor*, 2022  
Stoneware and glaze  
34 x 38 x 30.5 cm / 13 1/2 x 15 x 12 in



Emily Yong Beck  
*Dumbo*, 2021

Stoneware, glaze, majolica and underglaze  
39 x 38 x 19 cm / 15 1/4 x 15 x 7 1/2 in



Emily Yong Beck

*Pigs is Pigs 2*, 2022

Stoneware, glaze, majolica and underglaze  
30 x 29 x 20 cm / 11 3/4 x 11 3/8 x 7 7/8 in





Emily Yong Beck  
*Donald Pot*, 2022

Stoneware, glaze, majolica and underglaze  
26 x 23 x 26 cm / 10 3/8 x 9 x 10 1/4 in





Emily Yong Beck  
*Horangi vs Kuromi & My Melody*, 2022  
Stoneware, glaze, majolica and underglaze  
27 x 22.5 x 19 cm / 10 3/4 x 8 7/8 x 7 5/8 in

# GAA GALLERY

## EMILY YONG BECK

### BORN

1999, Daegu, South Korea

### SOLO + TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2023 Gaa Projects, Cologne, Germany (Upcoming)

2022 *Spoonful of Sugar*, New Image Art Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA

*Lions & Lambs*, Gaa Gallery, Provincetown, MA, USA

Emily Yong Beck, *The Neveca Project*, Chicago, IL (Online Feature)

Emily Yong Beck + Kaylie Kaitschuck, *NADA* New York, Gaa Gallery, New York, NY, USA

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022 *Menagerie*, Agency Art, Chicago, IL, USA

*Obscurity and the Unknown*, Sebastian Gladstone, Los Angeles, CA, USA

2021 Undergraduate Exhibition, SAIC Galleries, Chicago, Illinois, USA

*Cozy Warm*, Arts of Life, Chicago, IL, USA

*Bright Line*, The Latent Space, Chicago, IL, USA

*Quick Hello*, Black Book Gallery, Englewood, Colorado, USA

*Milkweed*, Watershed Gallery, Newcastle, ME, USA

New Image Art, *Untitled Art Fair Miami*, FL, USA

### AWARDS + RESIDENCIES

2022 Township10, Marshall, NC, USA

2021 Watershed, Newcastle, ME, USA

White Columns: The White Columns Curated Artist Registry

### EDUCATION

2021 BFA, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

### SELECTED PRESS + PUBLICATIONS + WORKS CITED

2021 *Clay In Color: The Propaganda of Rococo Ceramics and Cuteness* with Emily Yong Beck

2020 ALL MY FRIENDS: friends forever 5-8