

Spotlight: South Korean-Born Artist GJ Kimsunken's Incandescent Canvases Reaffirm the Presence of the Viewer's Body

Kimsunken's exhibition "Figuration" is on view at Yi Gallery in Brooklyn into September.

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GJ Kimsunken, 2022. Courtesy of the artist and Yi Gallery.

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About the Artist: Seoul-born, New Jersey-based artist GJ Kimsunken (b. 1985) creates luminous, minimalistic canvases that obliquely reference the human figure, hovering hauntingly between representation and abstraction. His new exhibition “Figuration,” at Brooklyn’s Yi Gallery, brings together a group of recent monochromatic works made through the artist’s methodical process. Kimsunken primes his canvases with gesso, which he then covers with multiple layers of oil paint, imbuing the works with luminosity and a rich, substantial physicality. From here, the artist scrapes away areas of paint from the canvas to create both passages of emptiness and depth.



Installation view, “GJ Kimsunken: Figurations,” 2022. Courtesy of Yi Gallery.

Why We Like It: Kimsunken’s works capture the tension of presence and absence in relationship to the human body. In *Figuration 22. 14*, the artist creates a self-portrait of sorts, with the canvas measuring some 71 inches high—his exact height. The narrow plinth-like work has a sculptural, almost totemic effect. Other works in the show

share similar bodily proportions. Three smaller-scaled works are installed at different wall heights, such as *Figuration 22. 16 (legs)*, which is installed in parallel to where a viewer might stand. These gestures are repeated in *Figuration 22. 13 (shoulder)* and *Figuration 22. 15*, which, by enforcing the spatial relationship between the viewer and the artworks, serve to affirm the viewer's sense of their own presence.

According to the Gallery: "In his work, Kimsunken asks questions about human existence: who are we, why are we, and what are we for? Despite the reductive, abstract appearance, Kimsunken's paintings represent the human figure...As with much of the artist's practice, these predominantly monochromatic paintings possess subtle yet richly worked surfaces with pronounced textures. Kimsunken sought to investigate the relationship between the paint material and the passage of time, with an emphasis on raising the physical matter to the height of the human spirit."

Browse works by the artist below.

Figuration 21. 31 (son)

Inquire for More Information



GJ Kimsunken, *Figuration 21. 31 (son)* (2021). Courtesy of Yi Gallery.

Figuration 22. 18 (Otherness) (2022)

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GJ Kimsunken, *Figuration 22. 18 (Otherness)* (2022). Courtesy of Yi Gallery.

Untitled (2022)

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GJ Kimsunken, *Untitled* (2022). Courtesy of Yi Gallery.

Figuration 22.16 (legs)

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J Kimsunken, *Figuration 22.16 (legs)* (2022). Courtesy of Yi Gallery.

Untitled (2022)

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GJ Kimsunken, *Untitled (2022)*. Courtesy of Yi Gallery.

"GJ Kimsunken: Figuration" is on view at Yi Gallery through September 10, 2022.