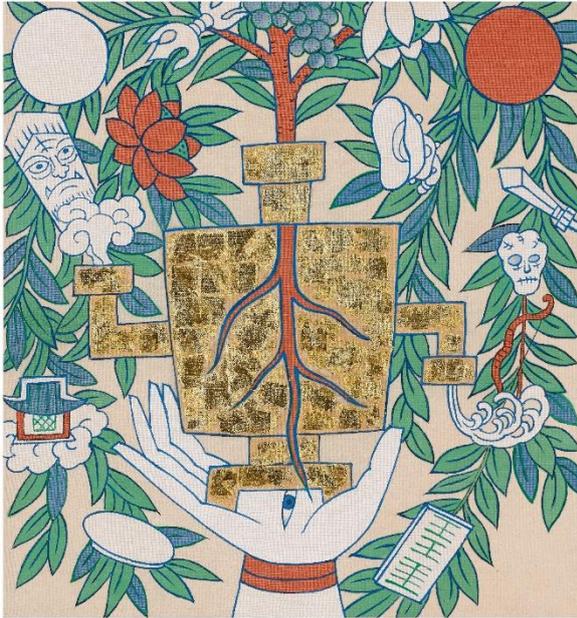


## Thirty-two manifestations of Avalokitesvara

Subtitle: Avalokitasvara's 42 hand signs (觀音四十二手眞言)



### SUNHEE YANG

Opening reception:  
June 01, 6-8 PM

K&P Gallery  
547 West 27<sup>th</sup> Street (#518)  
New York, NY 10001

Dates: June 01-07, 2017  
Venue: K&P Gallery  
Contact: joanne.lee@daamdaa.com  
Curated by Art Space DA:MDAA

**MARCH 24, 2017** - Art Space DA:MDAA together with K&P Gallery is pleased to present Sunhee Yang's first solo New York exhibition. The exhibition features thirty-two manifestations of Avalokitesvara and forty-two hand signs of the deity in a contemporary style.

Avalokitesvara in Sanskrit or Gwanse-eum (Korean), Guanyin (Chinese), Kannon (Japanese) is immensely popular among East Asian Buddhists. Avalokitesvara, or the Goddess of Mercy, is believed to save people from suffering that stems from living in this world.

Buddhist temples and monasteries in East Asia project Avalokitesvara as a feminine or a masculine figure, some may even project an androgynous figure. In general, Avalokitesvara wears a flowing elegant white robe holding a jar in the left hand and a willow branch in the right. Usually on the front side of the crown is Amitahba -The Buddha of Immeasurable Life and Light. Avalokitesvara manifests a total of 32 or 33 different kinds.

One distinctive character of the Buddhist arts is Buddha's and Bodhisattvas' hand signs or gestures, called Mudrā in Sanskrit. Mudrā is a symbolic or ritual gesture in Buddhism. Avalokitesvara's 42 hand signs convey different messages inherent in them. Buddhists believe that people's sufferings can be alleviated or eliminated by chanting a specific phrase in Sanskrit, each of which has a corresponding a hand sign. 42 secretive messages are described in Yang's paintings at this solo show in Chelsea. It may be a mere hope to non-Buddhists that Avalokitesvara would help my wish come true with one simple word *Abracadabra* from non-Buddhist's point of view.

Sunhee Yang is known for her mastery in fine gold and mineral powder pigment on fine silk or hemp cloth. She is the 48th Korea National Heritage master, or so called Dangcheong (Korean

traditional coloring technique applied on wooden objects or buildings). Her extensive works amount to more than 400 pieces from small hanging scroll paintings to several commissioned Buddhist murals at historic temples in Korea. One of her well-known works is a forty-nine-foot-tall hanging scroll entitled 'The Vulture Peak Assembly', which depicts Darma's talk on Vulture peak and was made for the outdoor ritual purpose. In collaboration with nine other skilled Buddhist artists, it took her almost a year from start to finish

Sunghee Yang approaches paintings as her path to achieve enlightenment. The Korean Buddhist artist's work is full of hope to alleviate people's pain and suffering with Buddha's mercy. "Buddhism advocates salvation for all people. Buddhist paintings were originally intended to carry Buddha's teachings to people. But modern Buddhist paintings go a step beyond this. A piece of painting or an act of painting the Buddha per se can help people succeed in attaining happiness or learn the Buddha's teachings. It's in one's best interest, I hope that all the people will also learn the art of Buddhist painting", Sunghee Yang.

Traditionally, Buddhist artists prepare their own fabric canvas after performing purification. They usually dye, cut, starch and dry silk/ hemp/ cotton cloth on their own before sketching or inking. Material preparation for Buddhist paintings takes long time. Natural mineral pigment is often applied on the rear side of textile first and then on the front side. Several brush strokes, sometimes tens of strokes, are necessary so as to reach an artist's desired hue and chroma. Therefore, painting a Buddhist art has been regarded as a way of meditation and a path to achieve enlightenment.

#### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Sunhee Yang was born in 1960 and lives in Korea. Her work is featured in the collections of the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation, Seoul; Museum of Gyeonggi Provincial Museum, Yong-in; and Yong-in University Museum, Yong-in as well as commissions for historic Buddhist temples in Korea such as "The Vulture Peak Assembly(영산회상도)", Paldal Temple in Suwon; "Five Hundred Arhats(500 나한도)", Manui Temple in Hwasung; "The Great Buddhist Master, Soongsan's large portrait of the diseased(서울 화계사 조실 행원당 승산 대선사 진영)", Hwagye Temple in Seoul and so forth. She was awarded a grand prize, the 26th Korean Buddhism Painting Awards from Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism in 2011.

Sunhee Yang, a Buddhist painting artist and a Dancheong artisan, has studied Buddhist Arts at Dong-guk University, a private university in South Korea based on Buddhism. And she continued with a master degree at Yong-In University with an aim to acquire mastery of mineral pigment on Goryeo Buddhist paintings. She has been an apprentice of the Great monk artist named Manbong in Korea. Her Buddhist paintings as well as Dancheong paintings have been exhibited at top-notch galleries and museums in Korea. She is currently an instructor of Buddhist painting at Korea Traditional Art & Craft Institute, an affiliate of the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation.

## ABOUT ART SPACE DAAMDAA

This exhibition is curated by Art Space DA:MDAA located in Korea. Art Space DA:MDAA is devoted to representing cross-cultural arts and emerging artists from worldwide. For further information, please contact the gallery at [joanne.lee@daamdaa.com](mailto:joanne.lee@daamdaa.com).

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## ABOUT K&P GALLERY

Relocated in New York City in 2015 since its establishment in 1986 in South Korea, K&P Gallery strives to present the work of mid-career artists that inspire, excite, and intrigue increasingly diverse clientele from worldwide.

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Image

Title: Avalokitesvara oversees people with thousands eyes.

2017, mineral powder pigment on hemp cloth 32x 32.5cm

지켜봐야할 중생이 얼마나 많았으면 관세음보살의 눈이 천개나 되었을까?

Thirty two manifestations of Avalokitesvara | 관세음보살 32 응신전

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