

# ARTnews

DECEMBER 2013

## The New Collage

Remixing Manet

China's Desert  
Treasures

How Museums  
Title Their  
Shows





## Eemyun Kang

**Tina Kim**

In her moving exhibition of paintings "Fungalland and the Stranded Mother Whale," Eemyun Kang returned to her self-created realm of Fungi to expand its mythos. She has said that she first got the idea of the stranded whale from the Inuit myth of Big Raven, a male deity who saves a marooned whale by eating mushrooms from the forest to gain strength. To this story, Kang added her own memories of the mountain-enclosed forests of her home in southeast Korea—the location of the celebrated whale carvings of the Daegokcheon Stream Petroglyphs. She has written of her feelings of displacement living abroad, and recalled a memorable incident in London, when in 2006 a bottlenose whale swam up the Thames and became trapped in the shallow water.

This show consisted of nine oil-on-linen paintings from a 2012 series of 12, as well as a single ink drawing from 2013. Each painting represents a month of the year, and takes its title from the

Finnish calendar, which names its months after the weather and associated conditions for harvest: *Moss month*, *Snow month*, *Death month*. In these paintings, the hazy, washed-out skies of Fungalland hang over blended strokes, with vivid shades of magenta emerging from muddy, ochre-streaked green shadows. Some details are clearer than others, such as the dainty leaves on branches surrounding the corrugated fungal shelf of *Forest month*. Yet the whale itself was elusive in the paintings selected for this show; it was dissolved in stages, so that the image of the creature appears and disappears.

Kang's works do not end at their frames, as was evident when two paintings hung side by side—*Mould month* and *Death month*—tended slowly to merge. Thus Fungalland is possessed of cyclical seasons, and Kang's whale is not saved, in the sense of being removed from her land-locked trap. Rather, she is an abstraction that persists just beyond discernment, ever caught in the lush strokes of the verdant surroundings.

—Kiki Turner

### UP NOW

Käthe  
Kollwitz

**Galerie St. Etienne**

**Through December 28**

Sometimes the work of German artist Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945) is overshadowed by the myth. An activist who lived through



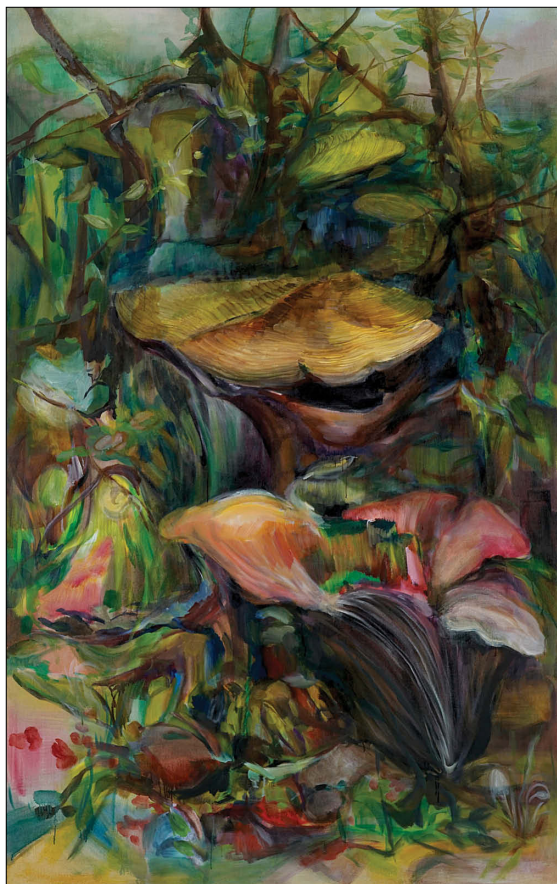
Käthe Kollwitz, *Two Men Charging*, 1902, soft-ground etching on heavy tan wove paper, 12 1/4" x 19 1/2". Galerie St. Etienne.

two world wars and lost a son and grandson to the German war machine, she is also recognized as one of the world's great printmakers. She could draw with the skill and elegance of a Renaissance draftsman even as she chronicled profound despair; formal beauty was the balm she offered her brutal times.

This fine show examines her most important work, five print cycles that she began at age 26 with "Revolt of the Weavers" and ended with the series "Death" 44 years later. The "Revolt" series includes etchings, lithographs, and drawings based on historical events in Silesia in 1844. In the best of these, Kollwitz takes us into the homes of weavers—small, dark rooms, riven by shafts of light—and makes that stark world palpable.

The artist's second and greatest cycle, "Peasant War," completed a decade later, includes a stunning, sepia-toned lithograph of two men dragging a plow while a woman walks behind. The dark landscape suggests wounded flesh; the figures are doubled over from exertion. At any moment, it seems, they may fall into the grave. In the famous *Uprising* (1902-3), legendary leader Black Anna throws up her arms to urge on the peasant insurrectionists. Nearby hangs a study for it—two men from the crowd, their teeth bared as they charge. Because those faces would have overpowered the composition, Kollwitz toned them down in the final etching. The show sparks many revelations about how this artist worked.

—Mona Molarsky



Eemyun Kang, *Forest month*, 2012, oil on linen, 94 1/2" x 59". Tina Kim.