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## **George Bolster & Dong Kyu Kim**

### ***Imminent Archive***

guest curated by Jane Burke

May 29—July 25, 2021, RULE Gallery, Marfa, TX

**(Marfa, TX)** RULE Gallery is pleased to present, *Imminent Archive*, an exhibition featuring New Jersey-based artist, Dong Kyu Kim, and New York-based artist, George Bolster. The show is guest curated by Jane Burke and on view from May 29 through July 25, 2021. A public reception will be held on May 29 from 6 to 8pm in Marfa, TX with George Bolster and Jane Burke in attendance.

The pairing of Dong Kyu Kim and George Bolster originated from an interest in situating their work as a form of cartography. Akin to maps, their body of work serves as an archival record of a new frontier; employing evidence and imagination; mathematics and mythmaking. Their individual methods and materials explore the intersections between analog and digital, visible and invisible, and ultimately, meaning and value.

Kim's series, *Consuming Memories* (2007-17), tracks the onset of his immigration to America with a trail of paper receipts marked with the exact time, date, and location of nearly every purchase he has made since 2007. His work posits the glorification of capitalistic consumerism through the myth of the American dream. Growing up relatively poor in the 80s and 90s, prior to the rapid globalization of South Korea, Kim's teenage infatuation with money and fame fell under the influence of cultural hierarchies dominated by American pop culture and disposable income.

Kim's relationship with his materials is fraught with contradictory emotions. His aspiration to escape his childhood poverty of hand-me-downs and *Han-ji* (handmade paper)-covered windows led him to become a fashion designer in the US. However, as an artist, he has reverted back to the handmade stitch and the illusion of *Han-ji*. He uses a traditional Korean patchwork technique, *jogakbo*, to sew his paper "scraps" together by hand, mimicking quilts made of fabric and windows without glass.

Another aspect of the material is the volatility of the ink used in receipts. The pigment is known as "fugitive" in that it will start to disappear over time from exposure to light, temperature, and humidity, as evident in *Becoming Blank* (2018). At the same time, as our transactions continue to relocate online, receipts themselves are becoming more and more obsolete, like the performative ritual of in-store shopping.

This selection of George Bolster's 2020 series, *Tearing at the Fabric of Your Reality*, tests the elasticity of the viewer's mind through manipulated images blurring the lines between "seen" and "unseen." The materiality of Bolster's work directly links digital photography with its ancestral method, jacquard tapestry weaving, through their shared binary code building blocks. Jacquard became known as the first technology to pixelate patterns, albeit analog, starting in the nineteenth century.

Bolster has replicated the Grand Staircase-Escalante national monument in Utah using the negative side of a digital photograph in the form of a ten-foot-high panoramic tapestry. The immersive scale and inverted image evoke the idea of a sublime landscape that repositions our navigation of the universe. This concept is further reinforced with the plot point placement of the smaller tapestries of the Allen Telescope Array in Hat Creek, California, the site of Bolster's residency at SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) Institute (2016). Planets are hand embroidered on the surface of the



tapestries to allude to galaxies that have yet to be discovered, in the vast amount of universe still unseen.

Bolster conflates nostalgic science-fiction tropes with science-fact by superimposing a mythological “elsewhere” onto a recognizable “here” therein suspending disbelief. The narrative of his naming, as in *Impossible Beauty of What We Have Yet to Know* (2020), invokes a psychological expansiveness underlined with a sense of urgency to collectively tend to our present global climate crisis. In *Life on Other Planets: Their Quest to Find Us* (2020) he uses a *décortiquée* technique, a hulling of the threads, to re-weave them back into a monochromatic scheme, visually tethering us to the aura of outer space.

Although static, both bodies of work track the constant motion of the universe, measuring evidence and imagination, similar to seismology and vibration. Subsequently, the work contributes to a reordering of reality, contingent on the value assigned to capitalistic consumerism and environmental conservation. These pieces will become even more precious as we start to analyze receipts as artifacts and analog maps as guides to the next galaxy.

**Dong Kyu Kim (b. 1975, Seosan, South Korea)** is a mixed-media artist and fashion designer based in New Jersey. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in fashion design and has worked as a fashion designer for nearly twenty years in Korea, China, Mexico, and the U.S. Kim’s artistic practice explores his relationship with the US and how individual lives are impacted by global economic shifts. Kim has exhibited in museums and galleries throughout the United States and in Korea. He recently received a 2021 fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts as well as other national awards from various state universities.

**George Bolster (b. 1972, Cork, Ireland)** is an Irish multidisciplinary artist based in NYC. He has exhibited at numerous museums and galleries internationally. Through oppositional narratives, his work addresses our most pressing societal and species-wide challenges. Bolster received the SETI Institute AIR, Mountain View, CA (2016-17); and the Robert Rauschenberg Residency, Captiva, FL (2013), among others. Selected exhibitions include: *Tearing at the Fabric of Your Reality*, Ulterior, NY (solo, 2020); *You are Made of Stardust*, Solstice Arts Centre, Navan, Meath, Ireland (solo, 2020); and *Traveling to the END*, MMCA, Seoul, Korea (2019). Bolster is represented by Ulterior Gallery in New York; the gallery plans to present his works at The Armory Show this September.

**Jane Burke** is a freelance curator, and currently the curatorial assistant at the Denver Art Museum in the textile art and fashion department. Burke has an undergraduate degree in studio art from the University of Colorado at Boulder and an interdisciplinary master’s degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in contemporary Asian art history. She has previously held positions at the Honolulu Museum of Art, The Contemporary Museum, and The East-West Center Gallery.

**RULE Gallery**, founded in 1991, has locations in Denver, CO, and Marfa, TX. RULE represents emerging and mid-career contemporary artists and artist estates, with a focus on fostering investigative art practices while developing artists' long-term careers. Outside their robust in-house exhibition schedule, RULE coordinates programming in prominent institutions and non-traditional settings, expanding community engagement with the work. In addition, the gallery actively endeavors to bring greater recognition of the region's historic art movements to a broader audience. For more information, [visitwww.rulegallery.com](http://www.rulegallery.com)