

# Boyon Kang - Reflective ME

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## Houseplants receiving attention in abundance grow faster

Whether or not that is true, the idea is charming. It creates some sort of healthy interdependence: The owner allows the plant to develop and flourish in its most beautiful form while the plant provides the owner with aesthetic pleasure and air to breathe.

At the same time, the imagery of the elegant houseplant almost seems to be omnipresent: it occurs as an element in #vaporware/#sad #art, as the go-to subject for holiday pictures as a proof of nice, warm weather, or as the only organic element in our overly photogenic bedrooms combined with uni-coloured (preferably monochrome) minimal furniture (and the list goes on).

It seems to function as physical manifestation of the ambivalence between our self-created distance to nature and our longing to be connected to it all the same, the pursuit of "The Good Life" with endless holidays as a goal of the American-turned-Universal Dream and of our obsession with the exotic imagery.

Enquiring the relationship between Man and Nature, as well as our modern approach when dealing with our emotions, Boyon Kang often uses inorganic material to investigate our sentiments.

For her first solo-exhibition in Switzerland, *Reflective ME*, she abstracted the *Howea Forsteriana* from the IKEA houseplant range to a mere presence of the palm tree. The result is a sculpture made with 3M-reflective fabric, that hangs in the middle of the room. It is highly interactive, as it reveals its full aesthetic potential when light or flashes are directed at it. This is surely the case when a picture is taken of it and draws a comparison to our own behaviour, displaying only the most intriguing, interesting and defining pictures on our social network accounts as we try to gain attention and acceptance from specific communities.

Therefore, the true appearance of the sculpture is only visible on the screens of the visitors' phones or cameras. In that way, the exhibition expands itself beyond the physical limits of 1.1, and lives on elsewhere, physically and virtually.

*Reflective ME* is the first part of a series called *BOYS AS HOUSEPLANTS 2016*, which, as the title suggests, compares the transition of boys from adolescence to adulthood with the growth of plants, and addresses the growing "mother instinct" of the artist herself.

In this first episode, she directs these maternal feelings towards the plant sculpture that behaves so similar to boys in said transitional age and provides it with various elements that are said to help the growth of plants.

The video projected onto the sculpture shows caressing hand movements, stroking and picking the sculpture, and represents a physical and tactile relationship with the plant.

Drawing from Kang's own childhood in South Korea and based on the scientifically proven fact that plants grow faster when music is being played, a song evoking the connotation of military marches is played for the plant. It is a song that is played in primary schools in South Korea during the National Gymnastics each morning, which are mandatory for all children between the age of 8 and 13, and serves to promote the physical growth of the children.

Boyon Kang (\*1988) is a South Korean artist who is currently living and working in Amsterdam (NL), where she moved after studying Graphic Design. She then studied at the VAV department at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and obtained her BA in 2015.