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# Arts & Books

## An original, witty take on perception, reality

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In his knockout 2002 Atlanta debut at Saltworks, Shin-il Kim drew on Buddhism for his video meditations on life and death, presence and absence, identity and self-effacement.

This time, the New York conceptual artist explores the nature of art. With similar pith and an engaging dollop of wit, Kim's three videos at Saltworks pose questions about originality, (virtual) reality and perception.

In two of the pieces, he employs the laborious method of the earlier show. He shoots a video of an action or an object. Then, he reduces the action to a series of silhouette drawings, more ghostly because he presses an inkless pen into the paper to imprint the shape. It takes hundreds of these white-on-white drawings to make an animation of the action, which he then turns back into video.

"Painter" is based on a man copying an Old Master painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Kim's animation shows him dabbing a palette with his brush, applying a stroke and standing back to look at it. The repetition speaks to the



"In Between" represents a new, all-video direction for Shin-il Kim.

discipline of the craft and the method used by thousands of artists through many centuries.

"Painter" also tracks a tortuous route between art and reality. It is a video of an animation of a video of an artist making a painting of a painting. Simulacrum, anybody?

"Thinker" is similarly tricky. Kim messes with the difference between two and three

dimensions in an animation of the iconic Rodin sculpture that rotates so that it can be "seen" in three dimensions on the screen. He has mounted the video screen on a base just like the one holding the "Thinker" at the Met, and the video plays on the front and back of the screen, so that you can walk around it just like a sculpture. Furthering the subversion,

### REVIEW

#### "Shin-il Kim"

Through June 4. Noon-5 p.m.  
Thursdays-Saturdays. \$2,000-  
\$25,000. Saltworks, 635 Angier  
Ave., Atlanta. 404-876-8000.

**The verdict:** Serious conceptual video art with a sense of humor.

his depiction of the sculpture as a white-on-white silhouette makes a solid sculpture into a void.

"In Between" represents a new direction, in which Kim has abandoned animation for an all-video format. But he has not left those witty inversions behind. The large video projection is a still of a man standing in front of a painting in a gallery. It's the painting that is in motion. Inside the frame a man moves about in a gallery (perhaps the same one) as he looks at a work of art offscreen.

Gallery owner Brian Holcombe says Kim took his cue from modernist advocate Clement Greenberg, who lauded self-examination as a means to keep modernism's essential nature. But Kim's examination leads not to certainty but to conundrums, which is a whole lot more fun.