

JEONGMEE YOON**INTOXICATED BY COLOR IN THE AGE OF CONSUMERISM**

For her *Pink and Blue Project* the South Korean artist Jeong Mee Yoon has spent more than ten years photographing Korean and American girls and boys surrounded by their possessions in their rooms. In their grotesque overload and homogeneity, the photos raise questions about gender stereotypes on the one hand, and about our consumer habits on the other.

Berlin, January 17, 2019 – Pink for girls, blue for boys: JeongMee Yoon (*1969, Seoul), the winner of the ILWOO Foundation Prize, began a series in 2005 that shows how astonishingly successful global marketing has been in promoting this stark color dichotomy, which dominates children’s playrooms from New York City to Seoul. Initially, the photographer merely wanted to document her five-year-old daughter’s fixation on the color pink, and so she arranged all of the pink-colored possessions around her in her realm. This picture was the starting point for *The Pink and Blue Project*, which Yoon has carried on to this day.

Ever since, Yoon has been visiting families with toddlers, mainly in New York City and Seoul, and photographed the children in their bedrooms, surrounded by countless monochromatic objects. The girls and boys almost seem to be swallowed up by the sheer mass of the same old stuff: one princess after the next, with the jarring Hello Kitty and Barbie worlds showing up in girls’ rooms as often as blue action figures and sports items appear in the boys’ rooms. With their arrangements and uniformity, the photographs look more like they are displaying the wares from a toy store rather than the domestic surroundings of a toddler.

In addition, the photos show how the symbolic use of color schemes from the earliest age onward leads to the creation of gender identity. By employing a medium format camera and placing the smaller objects in the foreground—the lower half of the photo—the photographer heightens the impression of overflowing rooms. In some of the pictures viewers even need a few seconds before they can clearly identify each child amid all of the things.

“When I’m photographing, I ask the children to give me the most neutral expression possible. Among the five to eight rolls of film I shoot during each session, I’m looking for the subtle gestures that point out the character of each child,” says Yoon, summarizing her work method.

This book of photographs, edited by Nadine Barth, sheds illuminating light on the connections between gender, social norms, and consumer culture, and the theme is elaborated upon in texts by Bill Kouwenhoven, Bonnie Yochelson, Geun-Jun Lim (aka Chungwoo Lee), Young June Lee, and JeongMee Yoon.



**JEONGMEE YOON
THE PINK AND BLUE PROJECT**

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