

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY



Byron Kim (born 1961) is a contemporary artist who lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. In the early 1990s he produced minimalist paintings exploring racial identity. This work consisted of monochrome canvases depicting the skin tones of friends and family. He gained early recognition for *Synecdoche*, his contribution to the 1993 Whitney Biennial, which embodied the aesthetic and political aspirations of the art in that year's exhibition. *Synecdoche* (1991–92) is a grid of four hundred small, monochromatic paintings. Each panel recreates the skin color of an individual who sat for Kim while he painted their portrait. Although the works, at first glance, resemble minimalist paintings of the 1960s, the racial and political dimensions became apparent after reading the explanation of the work in the exhibition catalogue. These monochrome canvases were followed by two- or three-zoned canvases that color-sampled objects, sites, or people. Kim collaborated with artist Glenn Ligon on *Black & White* (1993), part of a series critiquing the "prejudices" of art materials, specifically the hues of "flesh"-colored tubes of paint. Other works employ a more naturalistic approach to represent details such as the palms of the artist's hands, or the whorls in his children's hair. Kim's work has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (1998), the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (1996), and other national and international venues.