SO YOON LYM
INFINITY: THE DREAMTIME

February 3 - 23, 2011
Opening reception, Thursday, February, 3, 2011 from 4-6pm



The Dreamtime is a reference to the European coined word to describe the pre-colonial aboriginal Australian way of life and viewpoint of the world. Perhaps this could be regarded as a form of spirituality. The Aborigines believed in *The Dreamtime*, which to them was a way of viewing life as an inter-connected field of time, histories, ancestral stories, nature, land, the earth, the universe, in essenceÉ.all that exists. So, in the European coined term, there is this suggestion that this is a belief and experience of life that is *otherworldly, dreamlike, unreal*.
I am titling my hair and braid pattern painting series, *The Dreamtime*, for a few reasons that have to do with this original reference. These hair and braid pattern designs are viewed from an aerial perspective. In most cultures around the world, as in Australian aboriginal art, perspective in art is aerial. It is not the egocentric perspective of European Renaissance art. This aerial perspective is significant in light of the fact that the inspiration of this body of work came from actual hair and braid patterns on students I encountered at John F. Kennedy High School in Paterson, NJ, where I had worked as an art educator for 8 years.

The histories of my students as well as myself is such that we are all connected in that most of our ancestors did not originate from Europe. And so, in my representation of these hair and braid patterns, I am referencing patterns that are unique to an urban and often immigrant culture in America that in my imagination exists in very much in a planetary, *aboriginal* existence, with

all the layers and references to colonialism, immigration, migration, displacement, segregation and racism.

Although the title is an appropriation of the Aboriginal *Dreamtime,* it is also a play on the word as we would understand the meaning in contemporary American lexicon. It is a time period that I recognized in most young teenagers lives whether they are urban or suburban students, as an unreal time period of learning about their history and the history of others in an isolated time vacuum. The language that is used in textbooks as well as verbal stories as reinforced by the institution of public school education in America continues to promote and maintain illusory ideas about who people are in neighboring towns and around the world based on numeric facts, generalized stories and histories and representations from the point of viewpoint of the colonizer with artificially constructed language and imprecise vocabulary.

For more information please visit: **www.soyoonlym.com**

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