Shattering exhibition at Hillyer
Art Space

Concrete and heavy tools of Jin Lee’s “Exploit” are a call for transformation

by Mark Jenkins

To prove that he should be king of Britain, Arthur pulled a sword from a stone. That feat is evoked, visually, at least, by Jin Lee’s “Exploit.” The local sculptor’s Hillyer Art Space show consists of blocks of concrete, partly shattered by wooden and metal wedges. The point of these exercises is not to communalize anything from the man-made rock, but simply to smash the implements into it. The results are heavy metaphors for change.

Lee varies the format by tinting the concrete in assorted colors, including black, green and brick red. Inherent in his method is another variation: The blocks shatter in multiple ways, yielding different sorts of shards to be arranged into tableaux of destruction.

Sculptures have long shaped hard and heavy materials, of course, but traditionally the goal is dimensional areas. Continuous black dashes on the walls and floor in one corner mark off a small alcove of the gallery as a separate space. Nearby, 3-D angles protrude from various sections of wall, as though a room from another dimension partly intersects this one. Kramm is as interested in demonstrating the various forms that dotted lines can take as he is in using them to divide an open area. The show includes a few small pieces on folded paper, as well as a rectangle of neon tubing that’s taped over at regular intervals to simulate dashes floating in space. In the dark, the piece might conjure that illusion, but Kramm’s goal is not to fool the senses. He uses the visual language of blueprints and diagrams to turn actual spaces into theoretical ones, a process that calls on the mind more than the eye.

Wade Kramm: Dotted Space
On view through Aug. 28 at Target Gallery, 1154 22nd St. NW, Alexandria, 703/389-4586. Ext. 4, target-gallery.org

1460 Wall Mountables
Every summer, the District of Columbia Arts Center uses string to divide its walls into 2-by-2-foot squares, each rentable to artists or would-be artists for $15. The string isn’t part of the show; it comes down once entrants have staked their claims. The selection this year is fairly typical, with lots of stuff that’s more pulp fiction than fine

by Ron Charles

In case you’re wondering what you can do for the book festival

by Ron Charles

Here’s a sweltering thought experiment: Imagine the National Book Festival broiling on the Mall this weekend. Hot books, indeed! Fortunately, a couple of years ago, the Library of Congress moved the festival into the air-conditioned Walter E. Washington Convention Center. And this year, there’s another improvement: The city’s biggest literary event is taking place several weeks later, Sept. 23.

The lineup of authors is as dazzling as ever, though, including Colson Whitehead, Ken Burns, Annette Gordon-Reed, Stephen King, Joyce Carol Oates and a hundred more. Look for a special guide to the festival in The Washington Post on Sept. 18.

As you’re making plans to attend, you may also consider making plans to help out. The festival is such a success largely because of the 1,000 volunteers who keep everything moving along smoothly.

Volunteer coordinator Faye Levin says: “Even the smallest festival-goers have difficulty navigating the convention center, and this seems to be an issue that more signage alone won’t fix. As a result, we have added 50 Hall Chaperones for each shift to the mix.”

Volunteers will also help usher featured authors to where they need to be; hand out posters, programs and CSV STAPLE bags; answer questions; and distribute handouts to other volunteers.

To participate, you just need to commit to serving one 1½-hour shift, which, believe me, will fly by in a blur of literary delights.

Soon after last year’s festival, one of the volunteers sent a note to Levin that captured the spirit of the day. “No matter how rainy or warm, the Web and TV might be, there are still thousands of people who love authors and books and reading. My faith in civilization is renewed!”

If you’d like to help, please register by clicking here to fill out the Google submission form. (If you have any questions, write to Levin at faye.levin@ketchum.com.)

Training is easy. All you have to do is attend one of the three briefing sessions in the Madison Building at 101 Independence Ave. SE:
• Tuesday, Sept. 20, 7:30-9 p.m. (Omaha Room).
• Thursday, Sept. 22, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. (Pickford Theater).
• Friday, Sept. 23, 10:30 a.m.-noon. (Montpelier Room).

No matter which training session you choose to attend, you’ll learn everything you need to know, and you’ll get an official National Book Festival T-shirt, which is the coolest literary swag you’ll score this year.

The Post has been a charter sponsor of the festival since it began 15 years ago, and you’ll see about two dozen Post writers and editors introducing featured authors at the convention center. Read on...

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was to give shape and even delicacy. Lee’s pieces exemplify modernist art’s emphasis on ideas and process over form and outcome. The heavy tools and ruptured blocks are substantial, but they merely illustrate Lee’s call for transformation.

Equally violent, and potentially more disturbing, is "Consumables" also at HiRyER. What’s being consumed in Rachel Schechtmman’s video-media-assemblages is the human body, eaten by disease and chewed by surgery. To conjure the fleshly weakness, the D.C. artist combines medical gear with incongruous materials, such as used motor oil, and chicken skin and fat. Some pieces are more evocative than others, but most gallerygoers are likely to experience a sense of their own vulnerability.


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**"Amaigamate"

(2016), glass vases, butter's twine, salt solution and IV pole.

"Exploit" and Schechtmann’s "Consumables" exhibition are on display at HiRyER Art Space.

**Wade Kramm**

At Target Gallery, Wade Kramm also is defining space with lines, but broken ones. “Dotted Space” uses them to enclose both flat and threedimensional art.

Many contributors are represented by a single piece, but there have taken enough space to stage mini-surveys of their works. Paul Beecik is showing absurdist collages derived from the sort of 1960s-vintage comics once repurposed by Roy Lichtenstein; the most effective depict square-jawed men whose reality has been just slightly skewed.

Gregory Ferrand uses a sort of graphic novel style, but painted in acrylic. Three of his four pictures are gray-blue portraits of impasive subjects; their emotionless faces contrast full-color vignettes, representing memories or dreams, that seem to burst from their hearts.

Aside from their square format, Niall Kereci’s landscapes are unusual in this context. Her work is impressionistic and luminous, in the manner of J.M.W. Turner, with filtered sunlight expertly rendered in the skies. In a show full of outlined figures, Kereci’s soft colors and mutable forms stand out.

**1466 Wall Mountables**

On view through Aug. 28 at 1466 Mount Vernon Place, 4th Floor, Washington, D.C.

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