

## EXHIBITION

## IN THE GALLERIES

# At cultural center, art is tethered to Korea

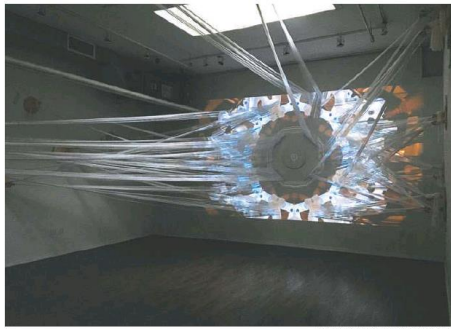
BY MARK JENKINS

For three South Korean women making art in the United States, being connected means retaining ties to their families and their culture. But more literal sorts of links also figure in "Newly Connected," a show of video, photography, sculpture and painting at the Korean Cultural Center.

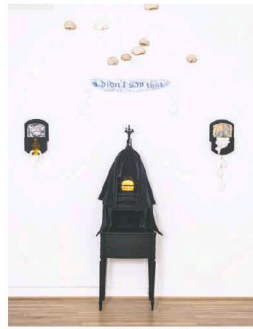
One of the center's two galleries has been laced with white strands by Kieun Kim, who supplements the spidery installation with ambient music and kaleidoscopic lights. The enticing web was designed in part for a performance in which Kim acts out her search for identity and purpose. Even when the performer is not there, though, her existence is strongly indicated by the objects holding the cords in place: wall-mounted wooden mannequin hands.

Stones and songs attach Kyoung eun Kang to Korea, specifically to her parents. In a video, the artist laboriously navigates a New York City sidewalk, balancing upon rocks sent from her homeland by her mother. She also photographed her parents as they held stones in front of their faces, and she videotaped them separately as they sang traditional Korean laments. The video locations are two different lighthouses, navigational aids that here offer a sense of loss.

In paintings supplemented by ceramic orbs, Namwon Choi renders postcard views of scenic byways. Such scenes are not quite universal, but they can be seen anywhere trees grow alongside modern, auto-oriented thoroughfares. The pictures are incorporated into tidy, larger



KIEUN KIM/KOREAN CULTURAL CENTER



ZOFIE KING/INTERNATIONAL ARTS & ARTISTS AT HILLYER

compositions of narrow lines and thick bars, a sort of hard-edge geometric imagery that's also common throughout the industrialized world. What ties the work to traditional culture is the austere color scheme: blue and white, common in Asian pottery. Choi connects the new to an art form that was old when the first Model T chugged off the assembly line.

**Newly Connected** Through Sept. 27 at the Korean Cultural Center, 2370 Massachusetts Ave. NW.

## Amy Guadagnoli

Woodblock printing is a millennia-old process, used widely but associated notably with Japan in the 1603-1868 Edo period. Amy Guadagnoli doesn't explicitly emulate that era's printmaking, but there are aspects of her style that recall it. Most of the works in "Cutting Through," the artist's Washington Printmakers Gallery show, are on mulberry paper, a traditional Japanese medium. Patterns she incises into areas of flat color suggest decorative motifs seen on kimonos. And Guadagnoli conceives her images as "in the spirit of Buddhist koans," according to her statement.

Yet these dynamically composed, splendidly colorful pictures differ from their Japanese precursors in significant ways. Unlike Edo-period prints, they don't depict the known world. They're abstract, with mere hints of landscape in vista-implying horizontals and tree-like verticals. Also, Guadagnoli often prints from the same hand-carved block, recutting it between each impression of an additional color. This approach, known as reduction printing, yields pieces that are unique and irreproducible, not mass-produced.

The show's title, Guadagnoli explains, is both literal and metaphorical: She wants to slice through the viewer's everyday perceptions. In the print "Keel," one of the show's standouts, the forms and spaces heaved by her blade play eloquently against each other. The black vertical at the center is framed by what appear to be gashes of white — unprinted paper that's as forceful as the inked areas. It's a strategy worthy of an Edo-period virtuoso.

**Amy Guadagnoli: Cutting Through** Through Sept. 29 at Washington Printmakers Gallery, 1641 Wisconsin

Ave. NW.

## Zofie King

The curiosity cabinet — or "wunderkammer" — in Zofie King's native Germany — was a place for wealthy, educated people to keep scientific specimens, holy mementos and small artworks. Such cabinets have lost their usefulness since they originated about 400 years ago, but for King they still have a purpose. Her show at IA&A at Hillyer, "Secular Relics and Apocryphal Fossils," combines real and fake to spark reflection on what we believe and why.

Since it's a compendium of found and invented objects, the Arlington artist's show can be seen as a big brain. It's stuffed with information that ranges from meaningful to worthless. The brain metaphor also suggests itself because models of the human cerebrum abound: A translucent yellow-resin one glows at the center of one assemblage, while a flock of mini-brains molded from pages of 19th-century Bibles hangs from the ceiling in another construction.

The cabinets hold minerals, fabric, bullet shells and fur, both synthetic and genuine. But

**LEFT: Kieun Kim's "Reveluxion" installation at the Korean Cultural Center includes enticing weblike strands and is augmented with ambient music and kaleidoscopic lights. RIGHT: Zofie King's exhibition at IA&A at Hillyer touches on the cerebral and the sacred, with mini-brains molded from pages of 19th-century Bibles hanging from the ceiling and a banner that reads "I didn't say that," a declaration open to interpretation.**

religion seems to be King's principal interest. A banner on the wall reads, "I didn't say that." Is this the word of a god, rebuking those who play loose with scripture? What some take as absolute truth, King suggests, is merely an accumulation of symbols and suppositions.

**Zofie King: Secular Relics and Apocryphal Fossils** Through Sept. 29 at IA&A at Hillyer, 9 Hillyer Ct. NW.

## The Trawick Prize

There are no traditional portraits among the work by the eight finalists for this year's Trawick Prize, on exhibit at Gallery B, but a human presence is suggested in effective ways. Among the most powerful submissions from the Maryland, Virginia and D.C. entrants is a life-size silhouette of a crouching man on the side of a wooden crate, one of two pieces that won Oletta DeVane the \$10,000 top prize. The painted container memorializes Henry "Box" Brown, an enslaved man who escaped Virginia in 1849 by having himself shipped to Philadelphia.

Second-place winner Mojdeh Rezaei pour evokes family and Iranian American identity primarily with artifacts, supplemented by small paintings. Renee Rendine took third place by erecting a field of yellow-plastic lattices under a white-mesh funnel for a performance, which can be seen on video.

The young-artist award went to Monroe Iseberg for a brawny construction: a stump-like wooden sculpture that seemingly teeters in space, held up by a cable. The feeling of tension that makes the piece so vital is echoed in a large, off-kilter ceramic sculpture by Anne Clare Rogers. Both Iseberg and Rogers abstract the natural world while retaining a trace of its actual power.

**The Trawick Prize: Bethesda Contemporary Art Awards** Through Sept. 28 at Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Ave., #E, Bethesda. [style@washpost.com](mailto:style@washpost.com)