

ASIAN ART NEWS

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QUARTERLY

SIMONE BOON



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THE UNITED STATES

Los Angeles

Kim Minjung at Leslie Sacks Gallery

For her fourth solo exhibition at Leslie Sacks, a gallery specializing in works on paper, Korean artist Minjung Kim impressively underscores the texture and tactility of paper as a two-dimensional medium. Through inventive shaping, collage, and burning of the mulberry paper surfaces, Kim demonstrates her keen understanding of her medium. This is beautifully conveyed in the singed edges and radiating rib lines of patterned parasols as in *The Street* (2015-2016).

Executed mostly between 2014 and 2016, but with certain pieces dating from as early as 2003, the exhibition is divided loosely into three sets of images. These are *The Street* parasol arrangements that indicate human presence and suggest urban living; the stunning red landscape pairing *Red Mountain* (2014), and the resonant chains of *Milky Way* (2003), *Interchange* (2013), *Predestination* (2014), and *Relation* (2014). Her three complementary strands connect human existence, the natural world, and the cosmos.

Kim's poetic works have a *joie de vivre* brimming with idealism but could be seen as both fanciful and enriching. The swirling-patterned umbrella overlays of *The Street* series are full of energy but avoid the brashness of today's Asian metropolises. That Kim is based in Europe might encourage her sentimental view.

Kim's mastery of paper



Minjung Kim,
The Street, 2015-2016,
watercolor, burning, and
collage on mulberry *hanji*,
37 x 53 inches.

and watercolor is seductive in the undulating landscapes of *Red Mountain*. The artful bleeding of her red paint suggests depth of space as it contributes a misty view that resonates with East Asian ink painting traditions.

In *Relation*, organic particle chains dance with our own molecular energy along with the macroscopic of our galaxy. Here physical and metaphysical realms may be interpreted through Taoist and Buddhist philosophy.

Kim's work highlights her virtuosity with line and fine brushwork. In the *Story* series (2006-2012), however, her actions are more restrained, orderly, and with a less spontaneous look.

Kim's works are meditative with the occasional exhilarating bursts of energy. In some of her best works she reminds us just how insignificant we are within the cosmos.

Steven Pettifor



Seiko Tachibana at Ruth Bachofner Gallery

Northern California-based Japanese artist, Seiko Tachibana's modest acrylic and ink-on-paper panels in the show entitled *Link* continue to highlight the mainstay theme of a connected universe. Other semi-abstract works, including *Connection*, suggest the Milky Way or Blossom and through them the relationship between the earth and the cosmos.

All her works in this show—multiple small panels, diptychs and triptychs—were made in 2016. They are in subdued elemental tones such as pale blue, grey, and umber, emphasizing nature's palette.

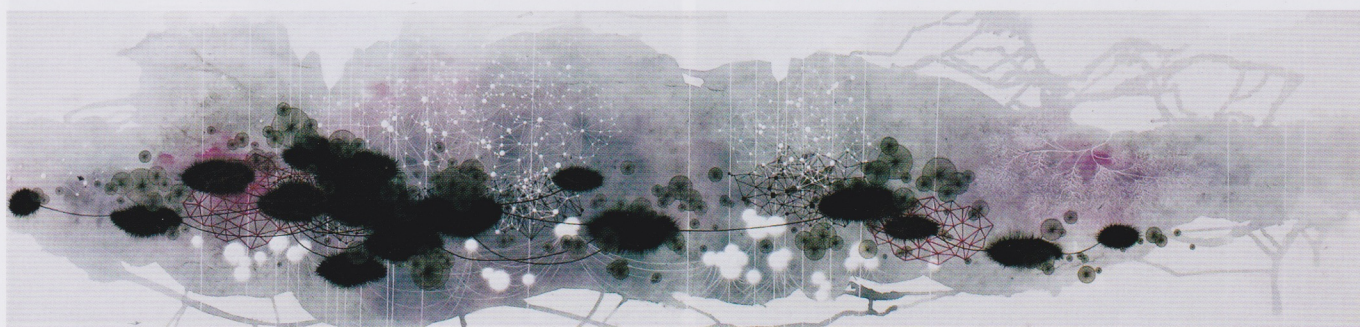
In the horizontal *Link Scene - 1* (2016), Tachibana uses stained marbling backdrops to suggest topography and clouds or a curved aquatic horizon. On the other hand, the clouds of *Connection - Blossom J-1* (2016) speak to the immensity of the sky.

Tachibana's semi-abstract works are serene

visions of landscapes in which humanity and nature are brought together. As a printmaker, Tachibana's geometric and botanical images of molecular chains, stars, and foliage with delicate lines and forms are more painterly than print. Between her precise line and fluid organic images, Tachibana uses bleeds, blotting, and fine draftsmanship. Her meticulously drawn patterned panels suggest the 'big bang' beginning of our world. Her more meditative compositions are the stable aftermath of creation.

Tachibana's sensitivity to Eastern philosophy and her preferred medium of paper find common cause in the works of the Korean artist Kim Minjung. But overall, Tachibana's contemplative images and exacting methodology suggest a more conventional Asian aesthetic and spirituality. Rhythm against spontaneity, presence versus insignificance, minutiae and vastness all contribute to her *yin/yang* symmetry.

Steven Pettifor



Seiko Tachibana, *Connection - Blossom J-1*, 2016, acrylic and ink on paper on panel, 18 x 54 inches.