

Sumter County Gallery of Art in Sumter, SC, Features Works by In Kyoung Chun and Emma Knight

The Sumter County Gallery of Art in Sumter, SC, is presenting two new exhibits including: *Glass Houses*, featuring works by In Kyoung Chun and *Twisted Eden*, featuring works by Emma Knight, on view through June 16, 2023.

Originally from Seoul, South Korea, In Kyoung Chun studied psychology in college. While constantly seeking warmth and belonging in a foreign land, she began using painting and sculpture to build safe, quiet spaces that we all crave. Now based in Atlanta, Chun makes art that depicts intimate, personal spaces in daily life with a variety of materials – oils, Plexiglas and neon.

While juxtaposing simple forms and familiar objects through painting and sculpture, Chun discovers life's optimism and peace - even in the most chaotic and complex of settings. Chun believes that discovering and recognizing the sweetness in our everyday lives is essential. Domestic scenes and memory-building moments, such as family celebrations, birthday cakes and deeply personal interiors, are vivid motifs in her work.



Work by Kyoung Chun

In Kyoung Chun received the Emerging Artist Award 2012-2013 from the City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs. In the spring of 2020, Chun joined the Atlanta Contemporary Studio program and had her two-person show at Project:ARTspace in New York City. Chun has been included in exhibitions at the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Athens Institute of Contemporary Art of Georgia, Museum of Contemporary Art, Georgia, Hathaway Contemporary, Aqua Miami Art Fair, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond, ArtFields, Lake City, SC and the Sumter County Gallery of Art.

In a recent interview, Chun observed, "I am a visual artist from Seoul, South Korea. Without knowing exactly what I want to do for the rest of my life, I got married and moved to the United States. Since my English was bad, I avoided socializing with people. I always loved making art and thought painting could be an effective tool for communication. So, I became an artist. Artists take risks to reveal what's hiding in our world. My art is based on my daily personal life. And of course, my personal life gets affected by all the political, social and cultural events."

These days, with the rise in anti-Asian violence, including the Atlanta spa shootings, Chun says she feels more threatened.

Executive director, Karen Watson, during a wide-ranging conversation with Chun, asked the artist about her Plexiglas houses that typically encase a small painting of a cozy room or a dog sleeping. Chun expressed that the houses show a little bit of everyday life and how they also operate like a little museum. She talked about how she saw homes with children as personal, everyday museums with children's art displayed on refrigerators or taped to walls. She also talked about how, with the rise of social media, everyone has a public persona different from their personal one, where we can be "our real selves" with family and friends.



Work by Emma Knight

Emma Knight studied art at the University of Mary Washington and at Virginia Commonwealth University. Born and raised in Richmond, VA, she spent 20 years in Savannah, GA, before returning to her hometown. She has won several exhibition prizes in her 30 years of painting and has also been included in the prestigious State Department's Art in Embassies program and ArtFields in Lake City, SC. Her work has been shown across the United States and in Europe.

There is no mistaking Knight's specific artistic style. Windswept, puffy, organic shapes fill the canvas and take the place of foliage, leaving the viewer with a sense of curiosity and wonder. Knight has been influenced along the way by masters such as Paul Gauguin and Georgia O'Keeffe.

"My style is both random but controlled. It's not exactly what a tree looks like, but you know that's what it is - it's very freeing," says Knight.

Her paintings reveal an atmospheric sensibility. Line, shape and color work in concert to evoke the mood of a place and time rather than clear and detached details. In her newest works, her abstraction has gone a step further. No longer representing actual space, the organic structures still conjure sensations of life. They recall the petals of chrysanthemum or carnation. Or perhaps their squiggly shapes suggest creatures found in the waters of a lake. Knight embraces the natural world to her own sensuous end, her own *Twisted Eden*.

Knight observes, "I just love painting trees," she says with a laugh. "When my kids were little their friends called them claymation trees. The landscape paintings I create are influenced by a childhood love of fairy tales, cartoons, and science fiction. I often start by taking lots of photographs on walks and hikes. Back in the studio, the scene changes into something a bit more surreal. Recent political events, the pandemic and aliens have been affecting my latest work."

Thoughts about how different beings coexist are prevalent in Knight's paintings. Jolly, bubbly shapes float amongst sinister, sharp lines. Thin, patterned vines hug, or at times strangle thick tree trunks. A variety of colors that don't necessarily go together bounce harmoniously in the sky. Woods and forests symbolize the unknown as well as exploration.

For Knight, the main idea behind her work is escape, exploration and a little solitude. She hopes her viewers will find themselves in the painting and escape into this whimsical place.

Emma Knight will give her artists' talk sometime in late May-early June.

As with everything the Sumter County Gallery of Art does, we could not do it without the generosity of our sponsors: Dr. Deanne and Elielson Messais, Hill Plumbing and Air. Flowers courtesy of Poinsett Garden Club, and the Council of Garden Clubs of Sumter.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Gallery at 803/775-0543, or visit (www.sumtergallery.com).

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Columbia Museum of Art in Columbia, SC, Offers *Art Blossoms* Exhibition - May 11 - 14, 2023

The Columbia Museum of Art in Columbia, SC, announces the return of *Art Blossoms*, a beautifully botanical exhibition experience and museum fundraiser on view from May 11 - May 14, 2023. Over four festive days of flowers, fun, and fine art, *Art Blossoms* showcases a kaleidoscope of fresh floral arrangements - located throughout CMA galleries and public spaces - created by local garden clubs, florists, and designers alongside the art that inspired them.

Art Blossoms is a moment for the community to come together to celebrate the arts and the beauty of nature. Visitors are invited to marvel at living art arrangements and to participate in a full schedule of dynamic events. For its third year, *Art Blossoms* brings back beloved events like Roses and Rosé tour and tastings, art classes, and a Mother's Day brunch. It also includes exciting new events like exclusive tours with CMA Executive Director Della Watkins, a gin tasting, and floral demonstrations by professional gardeners and florists.

"Come celebrate art, flowers, and spring with us!" says Watkins. "*Art Blossoms* is growing into a very special annual regional attraction, and this year's programming has something for everyone, from wine tastings with Tim Gardner of James Beard Award-nominated Lula Drake to an art class on natural dyeing. We are thankful to the garden clubs and floral designers sharing their creativity, wonderful program partners, and of course the hundreds of visitors who come to experience this fundraiser that supports this museum and a thriving creative culture in South Carolina."

In addition to the CMA Collection, this year's *Art Blossoms* features work on view in exhibitions *Our Own Work*, *Our Own Way: Ascendant Women Artists in the Johnson Collection* (closing May 21) and *Bullets and Band-aids: A Veteran Anthology*.



View of a previous "Art Blossoms" event

Other exhibitions open during *Art Blossoms* include *Reverent Ornament: Art from the Islamic World* (closing May 14) and *Constantine Manos: A Greek Portfolio*.

Art Blossoms is a unique exhibition held annually on Mother's Day weekend that also serves as a fundraiser for the Columbia Museum of Art. Every ticket purchased for the exhibition and its related events supports the CMA's award-winning arts education and programming and helps to ensure a thriving creative community in the Midlands.

Art Blossoms general museum admission: \$15 / \$5 for members. General admission tickets are sold at the door and not available for advance purchase. Event tickets are on sale now, with more events rolling out.

For a complete list of Art Blossoms events visit (www.columbiamuseum.org).

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