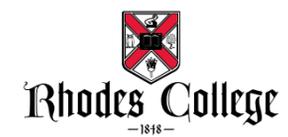




Springfield, 2011, 12" diameter, Ink and acrylic on Hanji mounted on canvas



Day for Night I, 2011, 24" x 36", Ink and acrylic on Hanji mounted on panel



Clough-Hanson Gallery | 2000 North Parkway, Memphis, TN, 38112 | 901.843.3442 | rhodes.edu/gallery
All images are courtesy the artist and Saltworks Gallery, Atlanta.

COVER: Yongfongfong, 2011, 24" x 24", Ink, acrylic, fabric, and stickers on Hanji mounted on canvas.



JIHA MOON: DAY FOR NIGHT

2011 sep 9 — oct 14 clough-hanson gallery
rhodes college, memphis, tennessee



Day for Night includes thirteen recent paintings by Korean-American artist Jiha Moon. These bold paintings present dreamy landscapes that are super-saturated with a breathtaking array of visual information. The densely composed pictures whirl and tumble like turbulent seas filled with parts culled from myriad sources and influences. The paintings create a liminal space that blurs the lines between East and West, seduction and repulsion, old and new, abstraction and representation, and spontaneity and intentionality. The dynamic paintings are at times laugh-out-loud funny or disquieting in their jarring peculiarity. The artist provides a lens through which to view a magical world where she combines disparate elements, constructing a representation of the frenetic, information-rich world in which we live.

Upon first glance Moon's paintings can seem unruly in their over-the-top exuberance, but as the viewer's eyes adjust, one begins to see the sweet harmony at work within the spectacular chaos. It is as if Moon is trying to make a painting using every technique imaginable. Each painting presents its own particular juxtaposition of parts. Bold, gestural brushstrokes and delicately rendered passages mix to form a no-holds-barred visual feast for the viewer. The artist engages us with her elegant balancing act as we dissect the formal layers of her paintings. In *Day for Night I* we find delicately rendered passages of intensely colored forms bobbing in a fog of watery underpainting. The carefully modulated, flat shapes are contrasted with mushy, gestural swaths of variegated wet-into-wet paint. Watery paint runs and drips into abraded areas, sanded down to reveal the grain of the painting surface. Subtly nuanced Hanji (handmade Korean mulberry paper) is collaged atop richly textured tapestry. While many contemporary painters filter and distill their many influences into a hybridized style, Moon maintains the specific particularities of her multivalent approach. In doing so she reveals the multivalent nature of her practice.

Further inspection proves the paintings are just as layered conceptually as they are in technique. Moon cross-pollinates and assimilates bits and pieces from a wide variety of cultures in an effort to speak to the pluralistic nature of the modern experience. Using a delightful mish-mash of sources that

are at times dizzying and elegant she carefully orchestrates varying levels of visual turmoil. Brightly colored pop-images are layered with elements of traditional Asian landscape painting. Wavy tendrils rendered in a trademark Roy Lichtenstein style overlap with decorative elements borrowed from Pennsylvania Dutch Fraktur paintings. Microsoft's Technicolor butterfly and the Twitter bluebird soar while the Grateful Dead's tie-dyed smiley face and the head of the Botan Rice Candy dog look on from a distance. German calligraphic letters and classical Korean writing share the space with collaged paisley bandanas while reflective stickers, rubber stamps, and glitter glue pepper the compositions. All of which is held in place by some of the most exquisite, delicate brushwork found in painting today. Dozens of other familiar shapes are inches from the point of recognition. The unpredictable combination of images assures that no two viewers will experience or interpret the work the same way. By establishing a place where these disparate elements can co-exist on the same picture plane, these assemblages highlight points of cultural commonality while savoring the delicious tension created by the dramatic differences.

As I work my way through the twists and turns of Jiha Moon's wonderful paintings I find myself stupefied and breathless. At some point early in the prolonged viewing experience I find myself doubting her ability to execute everything in one painting, a combination of skepticism and nervous anticipation—but each time I am led to the marvelous moment of synthesis. It is the very same feeling I get watching the neighborhood kids work their magic on their skateboards, flipping, twisting, teetering, and finally executing a brilliant move. Moon's eloquent painting practice speaks to our own important task as members of modern society: to deftly maneuver the constant bombardment of visual information—from the pop-ups on the computer screens to our logo-filled public sphere. The underlying harmony within Moon's carefully constructed chaos reflects the opposing dynamic and delicate order found in the complex human world.

Hamlett Dobbins
Director, Clough-Hanson Gallery

Left: *Hideout*, 2011, 24" x 24", Ink, acrylic, and fabric on Hanji mounted on canvas. Right: Detail of *Hideout*.

