

YUNI LEE

*TECHSTALGIA: ÉCHOS FROM A SMALL SCREEN*



WOMEN & THEIR WORK

DECEMBER 9, 2023 - JANUARY 18, 2024

AUSTIN, TEXAS

## TECHSTALGIA: ECHOS FROM A SMALL SCREEN

The collection of artworks which make up Yuni Lee's *Techstalgia: Echoes from a Small Screen* feel at once familiar and beyond reality. The monumental scale of the largest works allows us to step into the virtual space beyond the screen while the more intimate scale of smaller pieces allows us to consider pattern, gesture, and surface. The paintings are at once calligraphic, using the language of line, mark, and shape, but also expressive in the mode of Abstract Expressionism. Carefully taped hard-edged bars of color collide with globby sculptural paint on the surface. This collision is spatial, not flat, and the layering goes beyond the surface of the work in some paintings (beyond the screen, into the heart of the device) and also invades the physical space of the gallery. The dimensional paint globs relate directly to the quality of collage on surface, making the brushstroke just one additional element among bits of plastic and fabric.

The analog tech component (which provides a thematic thread between these works) is balanced by lyrical and expressive paint which dances across the hard-edged color blocks. We are further invited to consider the contrast when Lee chooses to physically separate the components in *Techno Tessellation*, allowing the gestural paint to float closer to the viewer on clear panels of plexiglass. The neon components in Lee's work similarly project into the space of the gallery, towards us and away from the wall. These lines of light play off the contour line work in three dimensions, creating a physical manifestation of the artist's gesture.

Lee's abstractions serve as a means of calibrating memory. In *Techno Tessellation*, the staid order of the grid has been reconfigured to echo SMPTE color bars. The SMPTE color bars – a nostalgic nod to analog television— provide the reference by which color targets can be matched for videotape transmission. Here, the bars are recreated painstakingly in paint. The color bar image, and the accompanying

Day-Glo color scheme, takes one back to Saturday morning cartoons, sitting criss cross on the floor with a bowl of cereal. The visual association is so familiar and so recognizable it provides entry into what becomes a singularly personal expression of artistic identity. That moment of discovery, established with a child's entry into popular culture, provides the cornerstone method for Lee to work out her unique place in-between South Korea and America.

When one steps back to allow *Techno Tessellation* to provide a panoramic visual field, the superimposed plexi panels read as moments of glitch in the regular patchwork. And those loopy bits of neon rope bring to mind a meandering doodle fresh from the cover of a *Trapper Keeper*.

In *RetroVision*, Lee has reinvented the SMPTE color bars into a playfully loose madras-style grid which serves as a backdrop for drama to unfold. Four amoeba clusters of color, shape and line confront each other from their



*Techno Tessellation*, 2023  
Mixed media on canvas, 72 x 180"



*Imperium, 2023*  
Mixed media on canvas, 84 x 144"

Cover Panel: *RetroVision, 2023*  
Mixed media on canvas, 60 x 72"

respective corners, establishing a four-square conversation. They are similar enough to be siblings but also uniquely distinct. The character in the front left quadrant has an extended tentacle reaching into the center of the panel, while loopy action-painted squiggles also provide lyrical links.

The back wall of the gallery reveals a measured drumbeat of four square canvases where the grid has been replaced by a flattened terrazzo splatter which brings to mind the texture of sandpaper and the sound of static. The meandering shapes of brushstroke and bits of paper and fabric function as characters in a motion picture display. They float in a shallow cosmic space of intermittent projection and animation. The layers pop and recede, but only within a very limited realm between the screen and its inner workings of electrical pulses.

*Imperium* is twelve feet of meandering pathways which make their way across organic color fields. Lee's distinctive use of contour line becomes a layer on top of loosely painted strokes, defining them as shapes, not gestures, lending a graphic quality to what would otherwise read as painterly abstraction. It is masterful how the key element of value is so carefully considered amidst the chaos. Finding balance within multiplicity is a unifying component of the work throughout the show.



*Nostalgic Verticals*, 2023  
Spray, acrylic paint on found object, 6 x 5.2 x 5.5"



*Analogous Alchemy*, 2023  
Mixed media on canvas, 60 x 72"

The hazy atmosphere of *Imperium* brings to mind a cosmic landscape within the motherboard of memory, where some features (moments) are indistinct through the fog (distance). This space allows room for exploration (reflection) not just beyond the screen but backwards in time. The result is an otherworldly image which strikes a note of comparison between outer space and the space within: beyond the screen, in the guts of a deep vintage television, or better yet, beyond the screen of our eyes, in the depths of the mind. Flowing chunks of massively thick brushstrokes mimic the look of a jet stream flowing across an expansive continent.

The work featured in *Techstalgia: Echoes from a Small Screen* is unapologetically Pop, but not in a retro way (despite the fact that very term is used by the artist as a title for a repurposed portable TV). The work is pop in a 21st century way, clearly fashioned by an artist who has come of age in the dawn of the new

millennium. In the paintings, we see an homage to the language of Modernism, but reconfigured for the digital age.

The broad landscape of color, texture, and movement presented in *Techstalgia: Echoes from a Small Screen* allows us to become engulfed in an abstract space (don't sit too close, you'll ruin your eyes!). Look closely, and you'll see that Lee has left little clues, including scraps of opulent fabric juxtaposed with discarded bits of plastic. These particles swirl and compete for our focus much like moments deep in our past, clouded and made indistinct by time's passing. The fragments become spatial manifestations of the echoes of transmission— memories casting backwards in the mind's eye, come to life in the real world.

Rachel Black is an artist and Principal Lecturer at the University of North Texas's College of Visual Arts & Design, Denton, TX.

# Yuni Lee CV

## EDUCATION

- 2016 MFA, Drawing and Painting, University of North Texas, Denton, TX  
2012 BA, Art and Performance, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 *Mindscapes*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
*Artist Collective*, Art Window at Galleria Dallas, TX  
2022 *CITADEL II*, Clyde H. Wells Gallery, Tarleton State University, Stephenville, TX  
2021 *CITADEL*, Fort Worth Community Arts Center, Fort Worth, TX  
2019 *Space/Time...Continuum*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
2018 *Balance*, Statler Hotel, Dallas, TX  
2017 *Balance*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
*Balance*, The Metropolitan Condominiums, Dallas, TX  
*Telergy Telemetry II*, The Buzz, Dallas, TX  
*Telergy Telemetry II*, Gough Gallery, Greater Denton Arts Council, Denton, TX  
2016 *Creation, Evolution, Disco*, Cedar Valley College Art Gallery, Cedar Valley College, Lancaster, TX  
*Hybrid Genesis*, The Metropolitan Condominiums, Dallas, TX  
*MFA Thesis Show*, Cora Stafford Gallery, University of North Texas, Denton, TX  
*Telergy Telemetry*, Gough Gallery, Greater Denton Arts Council, Denton, TX  
*Then*, Jupiter House, Denton, TX  
*Through the Looking Glass*, Mighty Fine Arts Gallery, Dallas, TX  
2015 *Hybrid Genesis*, 500X Gallery, Dallas, TX  
2012 *Color + Shape + Pattern = Me*, Main Gallery, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 *CHAOS 9*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
*Red Dot*, Women & Their Work, Austin, TX  
*She/Her*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
2022 *Art Walk West*, Tin District Gallery, Ro2 Art, Dallas, TX  
*'DALLAS'*, Carillon Gallery, Fort Worth, TX, curated by Dr. Margarita Kuleva  
*CHAOS 8*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
*Form 2022*, CICA Museum, Gimpo, Korea  
*Red Dot*, Women & Their Work, Austin, TX  
*Unique by Nature*, McKinney Performing Arts Center, McKinney, TX, juried by Karl Buchberg & J. Patrick Cooney  
2021 *Together: 23rd Annual Membership Show*, The MAC, Dallas, TX  
*VISIBLE: Asian and AAPI Artists in America*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
2020 *175-Mile Exhibition*, Meadows Gallery, Visual Arts Society of Texas, Denton, TX  
*ART ROOM's 4th Annual Small Works Show*, Fort Worth Community Arts Center, Fort Worth, TX

- Back to the Future*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
*Contemporary Art Dealers of Dallas*, SieMatic, Dallas, TX  
*Modern Art National*, Dallas Metro Arts Contemporary, Plano, TX, curated by Jerry Smith  
*From a Distance*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
*My Corona*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
*Ro2 :: Presents*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
*TEXAS NOW: 2020 Texas Artist Showcase*, Artspace111, Fort Worth, TX  
*Texas Juried Exhibition*, Artspace111, Fort Worth, TX, curated by Kristen Gaylord  
*Visual Arts Society of Texas Members' Exhibition*, Meadows Gallery, Denton, TX, curated by Allison Proulx  
2019 *Assembly: 22nd Annual Members Show*, The MAC, Dallas, TX  
*CHAOS 7!*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
*Drawing Room 2*, Cedar Valley College Art Gallery, Cedar Valley College, Lancaster, TX  
*POP – UP!! SHOP: ART + DESIGN*, 500X Gallery, Dallas, TX  
2018 *12th Annual 125 Mile Visual Arts Exhibition*, Patterson-Appleton Art Center, Denton, TX  
*Aspen Art Fair*, Aspen Ice Garden, Aspen, CO  
*CHAOS!!!!!! 2018*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX  
*The Women of Ro2*, Ro2 Art Gallery, Dallas, TX

## AWARDS

- 2020 VAST Members Exhibition, Best in Show, Greater Denton Arts Council, Denton, TX  
Texas Juried Exhibition, Honorable Mention, Artspace 111, Fort Worth, TX, juried by Kristen Gaylord  
2019 The Business Council for the Arts Selects – Capital One Bank  
2016 Jeanne Heartsill Memorial, Second Place Award  
2015 Access First Capital Bank, First Place Award

## SELECTED PRESS

- 2023 Top Five, *Glasstire*, January 19, 2023  
Franceschini, Cinzia. "Maps From a Hybrid Reality", *modern.dallas ed41*, January 23, 2023.  
"Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages Community Canvas: Yuni Lee" *WFAA*, May 3, 2023.  
2022 Bu, Jiwon. *Anthology for Celestial Review Literary Magazine*, September 5, 2022.  
"Meta-morphic: 4 Artists Creating Magical Universes", *LiveArt*, October 11, 2022.  
2017 Ratcliff, Darryl. "5 Reasons to Be Excited for the Dallas Art Fair", *D Magazine*, April 5, 2017.  
2015 Simek, Peter. "5 Art Events for Your Weekend", *D Magazine*, December 3, 2015.  
Morgan, Kendall. "4 must-see Dallas art gallery shows to check off your list this December", *Culture Map Dallas*, December 3, 2015.



*Cold Logic*, 2023, Mixed media on canvas, 36 x 36" (left)  
*Static Memories*, 2023, Mixed media on canvas, 36 x 36" (right)

## WOMEN & THEIR WORK

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*Photographs by Essentials Creative*

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Women & Their Work is a visual and performing arts organization located in Austin that serves as a catalyst for new ideas in contemporary art. Since 1978, Women & Their Work has created significant opportunities for artists and audiences to experience contemporary art through ambitious exhibitions, commissions of new work, performances and programs that inform audiences of all ages. We have actively developed the careers of more than 2,000 women artists, presenting 338 visual art exhibitions, 163 music, dance and theater events, 30 spoken word and literary performances, 16 film festivals, and 844 education programs with the goal of ensuring that diverse women artists are equitably represented in all forms of art. Women & Their Work helps meet an important need in Texas providing exhibition and performance opportunities and helping to attract critical attention to the work produced here; it is the only organization of its kind in the region and one of the few organizations in the United

States that dedicates itself to the work of women artists. Nationally recognized, Women & Their Work has been featured in *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *ArtForum*, and on *National Public Radio* and was the first organization in Texas to receive a grant in visual art from the National Endowment for the Arts. In 2020, the Smithsonian Archives of American Art acquired the 42-year archive of Women & Their Work ensuring that our entire history of the work of women artists and our website will be preserved in perpetuity.



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