

elegant *Salpuri*, the traditional shamanic dance that has been an integral part of Korean culture for thousands of years. The *Salpuri* dance is intensely appropriate to Roh's art in *The Tree Of Life* as, while it speaks to the sadness and splendor of life and separation, it also speaks to freedom, both spiritually and personally. The dance here, which is as a 'metaphor' for Roh's continuous individual search for "spiritual liberation" as she has said, is also, I suggest, indicative of a renewed purpose in her creative life, a fresh look at the world, inside and outside, of dream and reality, and of the memories that feed humankind's fearful psyches.

When one looks back at Roh's earlier *Tree of Life* works, one sees many clashes of the spirit through her use of materials, objects, and forms. Here with the white gauze-wrapped fiberglass of the tree roots in *Tree of Life VI* Roh addresses life's sturdy organic forces again but in a more fluid, less agitated, manner. This work, which seems to grow out of the gallery ceiling naturally, has a stillness to it that is reflected across all the strikingly colored works in the exhibition, all of which are of cast resin with LED embedded in the acrylic casing.

Where Roh's *Tree of Life* works are of the earth, her richly colored acrylic works suggest the world of the sea. Works in the triptych *Synaptic Tales* (2012–2013), the eight panels of *Untitled* (2015), and the large, elegant multi-panel work *Grace Project* (2014–2015) glow with the subtle shifts colors of forms that might live within the rhythm of a man-made aquarium or an underwater paradise such as the Barrier Reef. The forms that Roh has made hark back to the spontaneous colorful free-flowing forms made with paint dripped on rotating glass projected onto a screen or a wall, often seen in 1960s' counterculture bars. Here Roh has stilled that movement and, like insects in amber, her molded acrylic forms speak to earth's colorful ecological his-



Sunsook Roh, *Synaptic Tales*, 2012–2013, polyester resin cast triptych, LED embedded, 22 x 22 x 4 cm.



Sunsook Roh, *Grace Project*, 2014–2015, cast resin, LED embedded acrylic casing, 232.5 x 71.5 x 10 cm. Images: Courtesy of the Artist.

tory as well as something of the human spirit in flux. In all her art Roh endeavors to speak to life, to the visible and invisible, and to the majesty of the human spirit. Gone are the shadows of doubt and in their place is the light of eternal hope.

Ian Findlay

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THE UNITED STATES

New York City

Tiffany Chung at Tyler Rollins Fine Art

For the Vietnamese-American artist Tiffany Chung the return to her native country in the early 2000s enabled her to reconnect with her ancestral homeland and the opportunity to evaluate her position as someone living in "between." In the early period, after relocating from California, her art was an abstract mix of photographic and sculptural installations that drew from global pop cultures, showing life in a developing Asian metropolis.

Based in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Chung gradually returned to themes that centered her earliest exhibition pieces in the U.S. during the mid-to-late 1990s. Those works explored her family history within the context of the refugee community settling in America after the Vietnam War. Back then she also looked to the broader migrant community with an acknowledgement to America's Hispanic community.

Over the past decade, Chung has become best known for her sublime map works that have navigated Asia, the Middle East, and the United States. Her earliest topographical drawings charted the dynamic expansion of the Asian cities through an ambiguous intersection of urban and rural, focusing on space. They were also a psychological mapping of the inhabitants, questioning whether urban growth contributed to civic advancement.

The delicate topographic works have become more intricate and more generally connected to areas of conflict or natural disaster, with Chung researching the effects on a local populace. Her most recent manifestations are on view in the exhibition *Finding One's Shadow in Ruins And Rubble*.

Delving deeper into her family's history within the context of the Vietnam War, the solo exhibition comprises a brooding light-box installation, cartographic drawings, an audio piece, archival photographs, and video. Positioned to link three crisis environments, the display also charts the human activity resulting from natural disaster in the 1995 Kobe earthquake, along with the ongoing tragedy of the Syrian conflict and its refugee fallout.

Executed in oil and ink, the precise pointillist marks on vellum border on the abstract while the tactile cartographic renderings are exquisite in detailing. The most



Tiffany Chung, **Kobe urban planning map after 1995**, 2015, oil and ink on vellum and paper, 79 x 100 cm.

elaborate is the colorful *Kobe Urban Planning Map After 1995* (2015), whose biomorphic edges encourage viewers to contemplate the complexities and magnitude that such crises spawn.

Focusing primarily on incidences and memories connected to her father's involvement in the Vietnam War, the mapping also takes the form of a 12-meter-long biographic timeline, with branches to personal narratives as well as specific historic events. Against such an emotionally charged archive, the Kobe earthquake arrangement of imagery feels the least tabulated of the three components. This natural catastrophe is presented more as ongoing research with media-sourced photo reproductions pinned loosely to the wall and sup-

porting materials on a table.

Occupying the entire end of the gallery is the floor-based installation, *Finding One's Shadow in Ruins And Rubble*. Haunting and emotive, the light-boxes display scenes of war-torn city streets in Syria. The single light source within the boxes contributes to pictorial depth, particularly on images of derelict streets with distant horizons. With mahogany wood frames and muted sepia images, the aesthetic look of the boxes is reminiscent of vintage television sets, adding to a nostalgic mood of abandonment and of recorded images passing into history. Positioning the installation haphazardly on the floor further evokes a broken, crumbling country. As with the aesthetic appeal of her cartographic works, the visual

allure of the installation contradicts the somber subject.

The artist meticulously plots displacement, migration, and resettlement, and through doing so compiles a psychological chart upon the measure of trauma. While it would be convenient to sensationalize such catastrophic events, Chung's maps and research materials provide thoughtful ethnographic documentation into the reasons and patterns of forced population shifts, urban decline, regeneration, and topographic changes. It is an intriguing historical study and sensitive exposé into common suffering and the humanitarian consequences of disaster.

Steven Pettifor

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Tiffany Chung, **Finding One's Shadow in Ruins and Rubble**, 2014, hand-crafted mahogany wooden boxes, found photographs printed on plexi-glass, LED lights, electrical wire, dimensions variable. Images: Courtesy of the Artist and Tyler Rollins Fine Art.