



GALLERY GUIDE

YUNSHIN

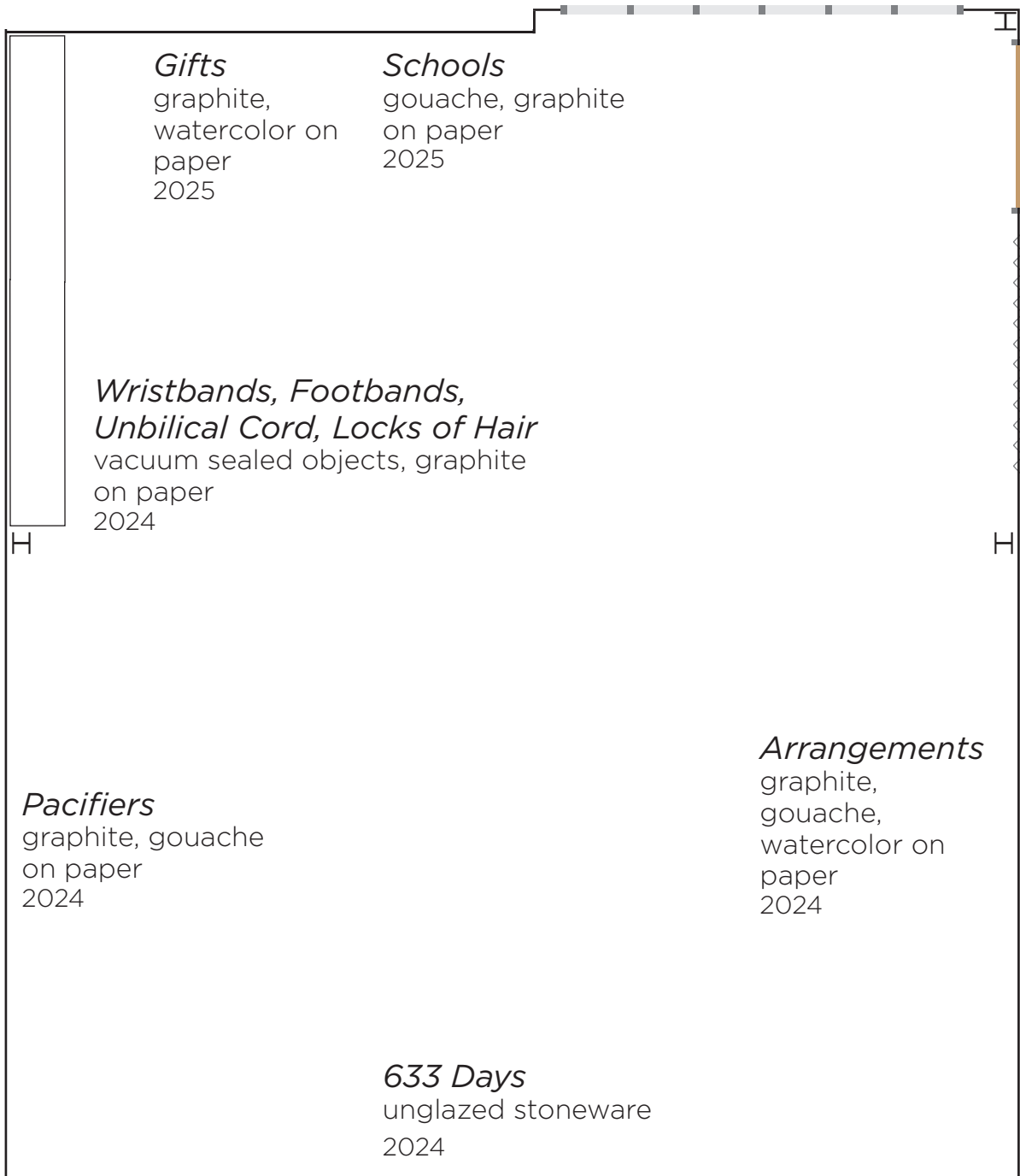
Record-Keeping

Jan. 21 - Feb. 7, 2025

with
exhibition essay by: Emily Stokes



The New Gallery acknowledges the traditional, ancestral, and un-ceded territory of the Yuchi, Shawnee, and Cherokee First Nations on which we organize, exhibit, listen and learn.



Exhibition Essay: *Record-Keeping*

Emily Stokes

Second-year Austin Peay faculty member Yun Shin's new body of work draws from her immersion in the unexpected cadences of parenthood. Shin and her husband welcomed their son Junhee in early 2022, and since his arrival, her visual work has shifted to reflect his impact on both daily routines and the breadth of emotions battling for her attention: love, a sense of feeling loved, and worry. An artistic practice once situated in extended meditative processes has adapted to become one focused on chronicling her son's emerging personality alongside the material implications of supporting a new family member. As an artist drawn to structure and repetition, Shin finds a kindred spirit in her son as she watches him investigate and invent changeable systems to sort toys and other objects that define his experiences. In *Record-Keeping*, Shin unites familiar and experimental approaches to making visual work rooted in documentation and keen observational skills to understand how her son engages with the world.

The prospect of investigating family through her visual practice is not a new one for Shin. Her artistic practice has historically explored notions of home through contemplative processes and familiar objects. A South Korean native, Shin moved to the United States in 2000 to pursue new educational opportunities after working for two years in industrial design. While nurturing her interests in materials and process-based practices at the University of Texas at Austin's Master of Fine Arts program, Shin began integrating personal objects from her family members into her work – most notably, a humble white work shirt from her father. She sewed over the entire garment with gold thread, elevating a disposable, mass-produced garment into one of grandeur, while in the process deepening her connection to her father through countless hours spent hovering over a sewing machine. Later, Shin began translating objects like her mother's bright pink embroidered quilts into subtle two-dimensional drawings. In doing so, Shin used digital processes in tandem with traditional drawing materials, a visual collaboration also at play in the work in *Record-Keeping*.

Upon entering the gallery, *633 Days* beckons viewers toward the distant wall to identify the small objects protruding from the exacting rows stretching across it. As the work's title hints, the focal point is a gridded installation of 633 clay pacifiers, each created through two two-part

molds comprised of seven pieces. These unglazed pieces are a rustic presence, stripping away the loud colors often synonymous with child-focused objects and instead allowing the pacifiers' overarching curves and shapes to emerge against their backdrop. Their neat arrangement on the gallery's longest wall imposes structure on an object far more likely to be recklessly tossed aside or tucked into the crevices of a diaper bag. Examining the objects from an angle reveals that each pacifier differs slightly in shape despite the mechanized process used to create them. The pacifiers' nipples, an infant's source of immediate connection to nourishment and self-soothing, vary in length to reflect the evolution of Junhee's needs and growth over 633 days. At a distance, the gallery lights permit a perfect crisscross of shadows to extend beneath each pacifier and weave them together into an abstract pattern.

Flanking the ceramic pacifiers are drawings from Shin's *Arrangements* and *Pacifiers* series. In her *Pacifiers* drawings, Shin uses the ubiquity of pacifiers to her artistic advantage, rotating and layering the same one in each image to build a dense cluster extending from the paper's core – a bustling scene reminiscent of bees gathering at a hive. After rendering an individual pacifier in graphite, Shin turns to Photoshop to compose her image, taking a neat line drawing with just a fuzz of value and multiplying, turning, and overlapping it obsessively until arriving at the right composition. After printing out a light-toned version of her composition on Arches paper, she enriches the image with additive drawing and spotlights a few pacifiers with gold gouache, a stylistic convention she has used in other bodies of work in recent years. Subtle shading adds depth and a human touch to a mass-produced object, while the gold gouache punctuates each cluster of imagery with a cleanly defined shape. While the first four *Pacifiers* drawings follow a common visual thread, in the fifth drawing, Shin tints the entire sheet of Arches paper with gold gouache before drawing on top with graphite and carefully extracting a few pacifiers from the central cluster with an X-Acto knife, leaving a delicate void in their wake. These individual pacifiers float on the wall next to her five drawings like fragile artifacts of a fleeting period in her young son's life.

On the opposing wall, drawings in the *Arrangements* series honor Junhee's unique understanding of how objects and spaces may interact – an orange sitting in a muffin tin, a playhouse with strawberries inside it, or toy animals perched on the edge of a chair. Each of these unexpected unions becomes fodder for a small drawing, and the accumulation of these drawings yields Shin's larger compositions on display. Graphite and Micron pens mingle in each drawing to construct a jumbled mountain of seemingly random items to the uninitiated. The achromatic color palette

allows Shin's line variation, which shifts from smooth and analytical to gestural and jittery, to shine. While directional shifts and methodical overlapping abound, she introduces compositional anchors, like a staircase coursing through a chaotic field of kids' toys and domestic staples, to impose order among the chaos that every parent knows.

In a similar vein to the *Arrangements* drawings, Shin's *Gifts* and *Schools* series capture her son's distinct and often quirky understanding of what words and patterns mean. Shin explains that Junhee frequently returns home from daycare and approaches her with unexpected combinations of objects he describes as gifts – a plum in stacked cups or a yogurt cup brimming with water. Shin's *Gifts* drawings collage smaller preliminary drawings of Junhee's gifts, linking objects that may lack an apparent connection to document a pure, unfiltered gesture of kindness. While Junhee is at home or daycare, Shin spends her time teaching and creating work at school, a destination her son visualizes through building blocks and Legos. Shin renders his conceptions of building-block *Schools* with the precision of an architectural drawing ready to be realized as a shiny, colorful building. As in her other drawings, clean edges and selective shading highlight the underlying geometry inherent in children's toys – and Shin's interest in finding the abstract within the concrete.

Shin's final series of drawings isolates notable objects from significant milestones in Junhee's life: his wristbands and footbands from the day of his birth, a lock of hair, and the remnants of his umbilical cord. Shin invites us to see these vulnerable relics of her son's earliest days in intimate images drawn from reference photographs. After photographing the source objects for her drawings, Shin vacuum-sealed them – an act of preservation central to her artistic practice over the past decade. Rather than contextualizing these objects in her drawings, Shin focuses on their defining physical characteristics and walks the line between abstraction and documentation. As is customary in South Korea, Shin and her husband shaved Junhee's hair a little over two months after his birth and saved it. After photographing the dark locks from multiple vantage points, Shin creates small drawings from these reference photos and stacks them on the same sheet of paper, letting the wisps splay as if dropped on the floor. Likewise, Shin stacks small drawings of the umbilical cord stump, which fell off during a routine diaper change, to create a column of folded shapes reminiscent of fabric studies. While these two drawings reside in an ambiguous space, their exact content unclear without a gallery label to demystify its significance, she departs from that approach in her final drawing. Shin highlights the medical wristbands synonymous with hospital stays, but differentiates this drawing from its peers through a carefully highlighted line of text: "it's

a boy.” The inclusion of these three simple words reads as a mother shouting with joy, announcing the source of all the curious configurations lining the gallery walls.

Shin remarks that her role as a mother has been an empowering one, and that sentiment emerges in her work’s confident execution. At the same time, Shin’s contributions to *Record-Keeping* exhibit a sense of role reversal, with the parent owning a sense of childlike wonder and fascination as she looks upon her son’s creations. Shin does not stray from her core interests in abstraction, process, and repetition that have been the backbone of her artistic practice for years. Instead, she indulges that attraction through content that is both playful and sentimental, personal and analytical, pushing the possibilities of what a drawing can describe.



Emily Stokes is an artist, educator, and writer based in Omaha, Nebraska. She holds an M.F.A. in printmaking from Arizona State University and a B.A. in studio art and English from Wellesley College. Stokes has over 14 years of experience in higher education with roles as a tenured art professor, gallery director, and full-time grant writer. Currently, she is a resident assistant professor of art at Creighton University.

Achievements include a Northwestern College Endowed Research Fellowship (2017), a Purchase Award at the 29th Annual McNeese Works on Paper Juried Exhibition (2016), and an Alice C. Cole '42 Alumnae Grant from Wellesley College (2014). Stokes has had solo exhibitions at: the MacRostie Art Center in Grand Rapids, Minnesota; the Washington Pavilion in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; the Krasl Art Center in St. Joseph, Michigan; the Evanston Art Center in Evanston, IL; Belmont University in Nashville, TN; Upper Iowa University in Fayette, IA; the Duluth Art Institute in Duluth, MN; and Creighton University in Omaha, NE.

Artist Statement:

The relationship among objects, repeated actions, and anticipation evokes a magical power and charged energy that is ironic and compelling. I transfer ordinary objects onto two-dimensional surfaces based on my interpretation to celebrate their emotional value, preserving the objects and my memories and relationships. My work aims to approach containment and preservation from an emotive standpoint by utilizing ordinary objects that lend a sense of history and authenticity to individuals' experiences. These objects connect to personal biographies and embody the essence of individual lives.

I seek to capture the quiet moments of ordinary life through objects that evoke a sense of home, memory, and connection. My artistic process involves ritualistic elements and repetitive acts, reflecting an interest in embracing the emotional significance of seemingly mundane activities. Labor and time are integral components of my work; the hidden investment within each object becomes a vital aspect of its significance.

About the Artist:



Yun Shin lives and works in Clarksville, TN, and is an assistant professor of drawing at Austin Peay State University. She holds several art degrees, including an MFA in studio arts from the University of Texas at Austin, a BFA in craft and material studies from Virginia Commonwealth University, and a BFA in industrial design from Cho Sun University in South Korea. Shin has exhibited her work in solo and group exhibitions in cities across the United States, including New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Austin, Omaha, Des Moines, Nashville, and Minneapolis.

Associated Events:

Artist Lecture
6 p.m., Feb. 4, AD120

Reception/Gallery Talk
5:30-7:30 p.m., Feb. 6, The New Gallery
Gallery talk to begin at 6:00 p.m.

The New Gallery will stay open late for:



5-7:30 p.m., Feb. 6

Curator/Gallery Director of The New Gallery:
Michael Dickins

Gallery Assistants:
Mai Mai Newberry, Lily Goodowens, Jordan Fulsom, Abbi Farthing

Special thanks and recognition to:

Lily Goodowens, installation/lighting / CECA performance scholarship recipient
Emily Stokes, exhibition essay writer / resident assistant professor of art at Creighton
University

FUNDING PROVIDED BY:

ART + DESIGN

