

LIVES OF GIRLS AND WOMEN

Three exhibits this autumn revel in different angles of the female perspective

The Summoning II (2013), by Saskatoon's Amalie Atkins



The catalyst for change so often in history is War (2010), by Winnipeg's Divya Mehra



Deductive Objects (1991) uses Korean door frames with Korean cloth fragments



Oh, the Range!

Showcasing the unplainness of Prairie art

THE ROAD TO *They Made a Day Be a Day Here* was a meandering one. Hong Kong-born, Edmonton-raised art critic Amy Fung spent three years driving around Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, meeting and writing about artists for her blog, *Prairie Artsters*, on a journey she describes as “looping and curling with no apparent logic.” The idea for the exhibit (*Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, Sept. 27–Jan. 5*) was inspired by the wealth of female talent she found in the vast middle provinces, often ignored on the greater art circuit.

They Made a Day Be a Day Here, named for a line from Gertrude Stein’s *How to Write*, reflects the Prairies in ways both true to life and abstract. Landscape comes alive in Amalie Atkins’ photographs and Brenda Draney’s paintings, where primary colours—girls in bright dresses, a red barn—blaze against sweeping blonde fields and bleached skies. Divya Mehra and Mary-Anne McTrowe riff on pop culture in their more conceptual pieces: Mehra paints “I don’t want to be friends” in Facebook blue-and-white; McTrowe crochets binary codes into white rectangles reminiscent of doilies, each named after a love song (“You Give Love a Bad Name,” “Born to Love You”). Fung made a conscious choice to include only women, but adds, “I don’t want it to be only understood as a ‘women’s’ show. I definitely support women’s work, but I think we also need to celebrate it as *work*.” —Michelle Higgins

Lean In, Lean Out

Korean artist Kimsooja gives Vancouver pause

THE TRANSCENDENT BUZZ OF being and non-being is more familiar at a yoga class than a gallery show, but that’s what the mystical, immersive works in *Kimsooja: Unfolding* (*Vancouver Art Gallery, Oct. 11–Jan. 26*) provide. This is the first career retrospective for Kimsooja, the 56-year-old Korean artist best known for her use of *bottari*, traditional Korean patchwork bedspreads given to couples when they marry, which she hangs and bundles to eerie, gorgeous effect, and for the video installation *A Needle Woman* (1999–2001), which shows her standing still while teeming populations of cities around the world stream past her. At the 2013 Venice Biennale (through Nov. 24), she emptied the Korean pavilion, wrapped its walls in translucent film to break light into rainbows, and filled it with the sound of her breath.

These works investigate how our personal stories (represented, for example, through the cloth-wrapped bundles of personal items) become universal, and how our individual existences are >

PHOTOGRAPHY: RACHEL TOPHAM/VANCOUVER ART GALLERY; COURTESY OF KIMSOOJA STUDIO (DEDUCTIVE OBJECTS). EDITORS: BRIONY SMITH (THEY MADE A DAY BE A DAY HERE), MIRANDA PURVES (KIMSOOJA: UNFOLDING).