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THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF UNION COLLEGE SINCE 1877

Kira Nam Greene brightens up Schaffer

By **Carly Bayroff** - Apr 7, 2016

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You think it's just another day in the library until you walk in and are unexpectedly greeted by the bright colors of the new art installation, "By the Patterns" by Korean American artist Kira Nam Greene.

Greene earned an M.F.A from the School of Visual Arts in New York City and a B.F.A from the San Francisco Art Institute, then went on to earn a Ph.D in political science from Stanford University. The installation in Union's Schaffer Library is the largest and most architecturally dynamic that she has ever done before.

What an outsider sees as mistakes are sometimes intentional decisions made by the artist, as Greene believes that there are no mistakes in art. One of the most noticeable elements of the installation is the bright colors and patterns.

Greene extensively studied color theory while attending art school, which made her comfortable with taking risks with using color in her art. She designed all the patterns first before choosing the colors for the background.

Greene says that there is always a risk when you use so much color because there is always the chance that the colors might not work together.

These bright colors have become a staple of Greene's artwork. While other artists may make decisions more deliberately, she makes decisions fairly quickly as she largely relies on her instincts.

As demonstrated in this art installation, the placement of the patterns on the columns, all created with stencils made by Greene, was intentional. The spacing of the patterns on the columns is anything but traditional, as some columns contain clusters of one pattern in one area while another area of the column is comprised of only two sets of a stencil.

This untraditional and uneven spacing may seem outlandish to some but is intentional in order to draw the viewers' eye to the artwork. In using patterns in her artwork for this particular installation, Greene explains that they are representative of the patterns of thought and of the mind.



*Artist Kira Nam Greene smiles at the reception held in Schaffer Library.
(Anna Klug | Concordiensis)*

Greene always wants people to look at her art more carefully as this gives the viewer an excuse to see the surprises in her art. Greene's idea to use multiple large scale patterns stems from the idea that decorative and crafty art forms, such as wallpaper, are seen as lower forms of art, one which she wanted to elevate in her installation.

Within her installation, Greene also wanted to include various food elements that she uses in a lot of her art. Sticking with the wall decoration theme, Greene made wall decals that look like decorations from far away but actually contain "junk food elements" in them when you look at them up close.

The concept to use junk food comes from the thought process that there is one sector of the population that is interested in healthy eating while there are others who rely on junk food and view it as comfort food.

The foods used within her art include staple American food, such as Ding Dongs, Ring Dings and pizza. Greene has not eaten a lot of the junk food that she uses in her art because she did not grow up with it, however, she has bought them to try since they are some of the subjects in her artwork.

This inspiration to use American junk food stems from not being able to satisfy her cravings for Korean junk food. A large takeaway from this installation stems from the central idea that risks are key when it comes to art. Greene had a deliberate intention for every artistic choice made in the installation.

While some people see parts of the installation as somewhat confusing, such as the use of junk food or the overly bright colors in a space such as a library, Greene believes that art should make people look at it closely to notice details that the naked eye might miss from far away.

Greene's art brings a sense of vibrancy to Schaffer Library that was missing before, making the Library Learning Commons a space worthy of visiting for more than just studying.

"By the Patterns" is the fourth installation of the Mandeville Gallery's Art Installation Series and will be on display from April 2016 through April 2017.