

# JOHNSON MUSEUM OF ART

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## PAPER PLAY BY KUMI KORF: PRINTS, COLLAGES, AND ARTIST'S BOOKS

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THIS EXHIBITION HAS ENDED.

OPENED June 8, 2013

CLOSED August 4, 2013

LOCATION  
 In the Kress Study  
 Gallery

*"It is a magic moment, each time when the dampened paper is peeled off from the plate, revealing the transferred image from plate to paper. I love the surface of the copper plate, polished, worked, inked, and wiped. My technique of intaglio printing is traditional, however the experience is more like painting than printing for me."*

This intrinsic feeling of magic suffuses all of Kumi Korf's artwork, whether a print, a mixed-media collage, an artist's book, or a sculptural piece. Paper is both her matrix and her medium, and in her hands it comes alive as she moves and molds it to her bidding, often into intricate three-dimensional tableaux, mysterious and enticing, or in books that are fanciful in appearance yet thought-provoking in text. Both artist and craftswoman, she creates art that is beautiful to look at and challenging in content.

Korf grew up in Japan during World War II, partially in Tokyo and, from 1944 to 1945, in Nagano Prefecture, a mountainous landscape where she made early watercolors, creating crude pigments from grass and stone. There she developed a close affinity with nature, something that continues to inform her work today. She went on to receive an undergraduate degree in architecture and later a graduate degree in printmaking at Cornell. The two disciplines and two cultures—east and west—can be detected in all of her work, blended seamlessly in the various forms she produces. Not surprisingly, she is also interested in language and the very formation of letters and typographies, bringing a calligraphic sensitivity to many of the broad gestural forms in her prints.

As important as paper and technique are to Korf's work, color shares equal billing. Her colors are lush and vibrant, or subdued and soft, in all the right places. They are like a visual dessert—rich, soothing, and palpable. From the pigments to the choice of paper—for both its texture and color—her choices make these works sing.

Korf has exhibited extensively around the world. Her works are included in many public and private collections, including the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Tate Library, the Houghton Library at Harvard University, the Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia, and the Getty Research Institute library, as well as the Johnson Museum and Cornell's Kroch Library.

**Nancy E. Green**

*The Gale and Ira Drukier Curator of European and American Art, Prints & Drawings, 1800–1945*