

Jung Hyang Kim

- Gerard Haggerty

" At the edge of the understanding: it's the secret.
You recognize not the content of it but the fact that it is there to be recognized."

- Thom Gunn

Jung Hyang Kim's art imitates life: not the precise details of Nature's bounty, though at least one panel of each diptych represents either generic botanical forms or, more rarely, certain specific flora. For instance, identifiable tulips bloom in the left hand panel of *Petals and Thorns*; precisely because they are *not* roses, the title gives us pause for thought.

Psychologists tell us that the incongruous elements in our dreams unlock their meanings. Kim's puzzling title reflects the essence of life - a paradoxical condition where phenomena as different as night and day combine to create vitality: East/West, man/woman, parent/child, growth/decay, being/nothingness... *Petals and Thorns* obliquely sums up life's long list of antonyms.

By juxtaposing representational and geometric imagery, her diptychs imply a problem that recurs throughout our lives: how do we reconcile all these polar opposites? The question is necessary, determined by each new situation we meet, solutions are as tantalizing as the elusive after-images of disks that dance across the gray and yellow right-hand panel of *Petals and Thorns*. Or, if you prefer, precise answers waver like the color vibration where coral and and chartreuse stripes meet *in Inflorescence* - a title that describes blossoming, though the term sounds as if it refers to luminescence, and often there is something about Kim's color which

recalls the look of sunlight passing through a lollipop.

One common element that connects Kim's paired panels offers a clue about coming to terms with life's opposites. This artist loves a beautiful surface - which should not be confused with superficial beauty - and our attention glides back and forth between abstract and botanical motifs in a way that suggests the possibility of skating gracefully through life.

Long ago, when Prince Hamlet needed answers, he found a way " to catch the conscience of the King." In Kim's art, the double play's the thing.

- Gerard Haggerty
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