

# arts

## Yunhee Min BY MALIK GAINES

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco CA  
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Painter Yunhee Min, whose combinations of oversized monochromes typically have much to do with where they are situated, maneuvers multiple layers of public and private space in her ambitious exhibition, "Out of bounds (from near and afar)." Currently artist-in-residence at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Min fills a gallery space with work that appears transformed in the educational materials, intervenes in the Center's architecture, and even becomes an emissary to San Francisco's civic space. One friendly concept put forth here is that abstract formalism can indeed serve a notion of community, though to what extent the city is truly served by this work is open to debate. Regardless, Min succeeds in boldly reaching beyond the museum's walls, suggesting that fine art need not pander to a broader populace.

Still, Min's strongest work appears in the show's gallery aspect. A large room is fully occupied by a giant architectural structure. Two planes lean against each other, joining at the top, resembling an asymmetrical, steeply sloped roof. Along each side is a row of equally sized vertical sections of bright, quotidian color. These foamy greens, rusty oranges, pale blues and the like are arranged to vibrate against one another, making an optical adventure out of looking at this gargantuan scheme. Furthermore, a viewer must take a lengthy walk to get all the way around this piece. For someone whose visual memory is as limited as my own, this means forgetting what one has seen on the first side by the time one has had an eyeful of the other. The paint is applied to appear very flat, as in the interior walls of a house. This technique, commonly employed by Min, achieves heightened specificity in this work, as the underside of these adjoining slopes reveals their construction: sections of Sheetrock and metal girders forming the piece's architecture are left bare. There are even a few visible footprints left by work boots near the top of this interior.

Min transposes the colors of her behemoth onto the postmodern courtyard that adjoins the gallery space, adorning its surfaces with adhesive strips. She also offers a booklet of swatches and sketches for visitors to handle in the Center's entrance and, most successfully among these ancillaries, applies matching panels of color onto a San Francisco municipal bus. While Min's monumental structure sits idly in its gallery, the bus moves through the city streets, wrapped in color, emitting fumes and taking people to and from their jobs, or to Yerba Buena Center itself.

Inherent in this protean work is a displacement of the fundamental character of painting. Of greater interest to a non-practitioner, Min ties her insider art critique to

the larger role of visual art institutions within a city's culture, staking out an experimental region somewhere between Joseph Beuys and Daniel Buren. Min's program is open-ended, offering no direct answers to the political questions that inevitably arise. Rather, she offers a range of options, presenting more than one unusual possibility for the role of contemporary painting in everyday life.