

September 6, 2005  
For Immediate Release:

## **sang-ah choi: moremoremore**

September 20—November 5, 2005

Reception: Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, from 5 to 7 pm.

Artist conversation with Barry Blinderman: Wednesday, September 21 at noon.

Admission to the exhibition, reception, and artist talk are free.

University Galleries is pleased to announce an exhibition of work by Sang-ah Choi, a former Central Illinois artist who graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2002. Featuring paintings, drawings, wall installations, and pop-up books, the artist's first solo museum exhibition will include several works created specifically for University Galleries.

Born in Korea and working in New York City and Portland, Oregon, Sang-ah Choi packs her work with a seductive blend of East and West, kitsch and classical, contemplative and commercial, plasmic and plastic. Her paintings—comprising glitter, holograms, paint, ballpoint pen, and a clear polymer resin coating—introduce a vision of contemporary culture filtered through the lens of her traditional Korean background. She borrows the notion of “immortality” from Taoism—especially ten nature symbols from traditional Korean painting (Sib-Jang-Sang-Do) and reinterprets them as symbols of contemporary America's insatiable consumerism. Through this transformation, the traditional symbols (Sun, Mountain, Cloud, Water, Rock, Crane, Deer, Fungus, Turtle, Pine Tree) become mass produced cultural icons: Bambi, a Ninja turtle, Disney mushrooms, etc., in pretty, confectionery colors, utterly lacking in any painterly nuance, and seeking a kind of “plastic” immortality.

University Galleries Director Barry Blinderman will participate in an informal conversation with Sang-ah Choi on Wednesday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at noon. Choi and Blinderman will speak about her work, creative process, and inspirations. A question and answer period will follow.

University Galleries is located on the south side of ISU's campus in room 110 of the Center for the Visual Arts. Parking is available at 80¢ per hour on the first level of the South University Street parking garage. Hours are Saturday through Monday noon to 4pm, Tuesday 9:30am to 9:00pm, and Wednesday through Friday 9:30am to 4:30pm. If you need special accommodations to participate in any event, please contact University Galleries at 309-438-5487. Please allow sufficient time to arrange the accommodation.

For more information, please contact Tracy Berner at 309-438-5487.

Choi uses a confectioner's palette in her work—minty aqua greens, bubble-gum pinks, marshmallow Peeps yellows.

Choi uses a combination of black ink and hologram stickers covered with glossy resin which imitates the look of traditional Asian mother-of-pearl lacquer work. The replacement of authentic materials with cheap, easy-to-use materials—mother-of-pearl is replaced with hologram stickers, for instance—also references the plastic immortality of contemporary consumerism.

In a series of princess paintings, Cinderella, Snow White and The Little Mermaid are possessed by rampant consumerism. Cinderella does not go to the ball but indulges herself with luxury commodities. Snow White (who now knows she is the fairest of them all), becomes a narcissist who constantly changes clothes and admires herself in the mirror. They are obsessed with insatiable consumer desires and hypnotized due to the super saturation of a commodity-driven culture.

(Her descriptions of the Vogue paintings are interesting but would be difficult to explain in a press release)