Amy Lee Segami
Suminagashi, Painting in Water: the Probability of Certainty

Kemper Room Art Gallery
Paul V. Galvin Library

September 21 - November 4, 2006

opening reception:
Thursday, October 5, 4:30 - 7:30 pm

exhibition hours:
Monday - Thursday: 12 noon - 6 pm
Friday: 12 noon - 8 pm
Saturday: 8:30 am - 5 pm
Sunday: 2 - 6 pm

art.iit.edu

With water as her canvas, Chicago artist Segami uses modern fluid engineering techniques to revive and transform a 2,000 year-old art practiced by Shinto priests; breaking historical boundaries of art to bring it to current times and expanding technological boundaries by redefining its expression.

curator:
Robert J. Krawczyk, Associate Professor,
College of Architecture

exhibition coordinator:
Caroline Morais, College of Architecture

gallery curators:
Amirhossein Ghoreishi, College of Architecture
Ayman Al-Musharaf, College of Architecture

sponsored by:
IIT Office of the President, Law Colliens, President
IIT Art Board, Judith Carr, Chair
IIT College of Architecture, Donna Robertson, Dean

Amy Lee Segami
Suminagashi, Painting on Water: the Probability of Certainty

With water as her canvas, Chicago artist Segami uses modern fluid engineering techniques to revive and transform a 2,000 year-old art practiced by Shinto priests; breaking historical boundaries of art to bring it to current times and expanding technological boundaries by redefining its expression.

Kemper Room Art Gallery
Paul V. Galvin Library
Illinois Institute of Technology
36 West 33rd Street, Chicago, IL 60616

September 21 - November 4, 2006

artist reception:
Thursday, October 5, 4:30 - 7:30 pm

exhibition hours:
Monday - Thursday: 12 - 6 pm
Friday: 12 - 5 pm
Saturday: 8:30 am - 5 pm
Sunday: 2 - 6 pm

art.iit.edu
312-567-5293

The Probability of Certainty: copyright Amy Lee Segami, 1996
Exhibition Coordinator
Caroline Morales

Gallery Director
Robert J. Krawczyn

Gallery Staff

Dean
Christopher Stewart

Assistant Professor
Research Professor
Chuck Owen

Associate Director
Nora Kyger

Exhibit Coordinator
Paul V. Galvin Library

SUNDAY: 2-6 pm
SATURDAY: 10:30 am - 5 pm
FRIDAY: 12-5 pm
MONDAY-THURSDAY: 12-6 pm

Kennedy Room Art Gallery
Paul V. Galvin Library

Nancy C. Anderson
Director, Office of the President

Philadelphia, PA

June 15, 2012

Art @ IIT
Illinois Institute of Technology

Amy Lee Segami
Suminagashi, Painting on Water: the Probability of Certainty
Amy Lee Segami
Suminagashi, Painting on Water: the Probability of Certainty

curated by
Robert J. Krawczyk, Illinois Institute of Technology

sponsored by
Illinois Institute of Technology, Office of the President

September 21 - November 4, 2006

With water as her canvas, Chicago artist and IIT alumni, Amy Lee Segami uses modern fluid engineering techniques to revive and transform a 2,000 year-old art practiced by Shinto priests. By reviving such an ancient art, Segami has broken historical boundaries of art to bring it to current times and with her professional understanding of fluid dynamics, has expanded technological boundaries by expanding its expression.

Suminagashi originated in China over 2,000 years ago. Like many traditional art forms, it was transferred to Japan and practiced by Shinto priests in the 12th century. Shinto priests would meditate in front of a pond, often for hours and days. As a way to empty their thoughts, they applied traditional sumi calligraphy ink to the surface of the water with a pointed brush, one drop at a time, to create a series of concentric rings, similar to stones falling into water. The intricate patterns were transferred to delicate rice paper and presented to the emperor, nobles, and shoguns. Prayers were inscribed on them, which were then burned in a religious ceremony as an offering to the gods.

Filling an oversized tray with fifteen gallons of water, Segami floats specially treated color pigments, both vivid and subtle, to create microscopic and macroscopic fractal-like three-dimensional images, reminding us of waterscapes, rocks, or mountains; liquidscapes frozen in time. Drawing from her knowledge of physics, she controls the viscosity and surface tension of the water to create laminar and turbulent flow on the same plane. Managing chaos and potential energy, she turns jet streams and wakes filled with color seemingly into images from nature or dreams which often possess a sense of movement. To give birth to a new piece of artwork, Segami tests over and over, experimenting with new concepts. As in dance and performance art, she rehearses until she gets the right sequence in laying down colors, the right rhythm of movement and the proper timing for capturing the image she hopes will be there. Once transferred onto paper, she never goes back to make changes, "Just like life", she explains, "you only get one chance."

Segami writes of her work: My paintings suggest the perplexity between probability and certainty, with a range of interpretations. You are invited to be an active participant, both in looking at my art and in your own life. Spend time with each painting and ask yourself what you see and how you relate to the image. Stretch your imagination and share your insight with others. Your reward comes when you experience the different depth: discovering what you did not see before and seeing the impossible possible. Just as in solving the problems of life, there is no right or wrong answer. It all depends on your perspective, your ability to recognize the facts and pattern, and then process your interpretation. That is the certainty of probability.

Nearly 30 years ago, the renowned Aerodynamics Expert, Dr. Andrew Fejer (1913-2006) published an article in the art journal Leonardo, proposed artists considering flows patterns as sources of their works. It inspired Segami to use the scientific images to create artistic expression. Fifteen years after that article was published, IIT hosted the first show of Painting on Water by Segami on campus in 1989. Since then, Segami’s works are in museums and many private collections worldwide. This current show will feature the development of the artist's work for the past seventeen years, from the traditional style to the contemporary three-dimensional effect. It is also the first show of the series for the entire academic year: women artists using technology to create art.

The unique and distinctive style art work has won numerous awards and inclusion in many juried competitions. Her works have appeared in magazines, on CD covers and corporate brochures. They are in the permanent collection of the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe and the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution in New York.

Born in China, she received an American education. Graduating with Pi Tau Sigma honors, Segami earned her Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering and Master's degrees in Mechanical Aerospace Engineering from the Illinois Institute of Technology with scholarships she received from NASA and IIT. She was nominated to Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Honor Society.

The Studio of Amy Lee Segami can be reached at: www.segami.com or segami@segami.com.