

AU professor's artwork on display at Atlanta museum

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The Golden River, a sculptural installation of handmade paper by Rie Hachiyanagi, assistant professor of fine arts in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Alfred University, will remain on display at the Robert C. Williams American Museum of Papermaking in Atlanta, GA, through Nov. 23. "Widely considered one of the most significant young artists working with handmade paper today, Hachiyanagi has created an exquisitely beautiful piece for Atlanta," Laura C. Lieberman, a museum spokesperson, said. "By suspending hundreds of tiny handmade paper boats, she transforms the museum gallery into a gleaming river of translucent carved forms, floating upon invisible currents throughout the space." Japanese-born Hachiyanagi explores contemporary aesthetic concerns and centuries-old craft traditions, using both Eastern and Western papermaking techniques," according to Lieberman. For Hachiyanagi, who says she is fascinated by the process of making paper, her art is a bridge between the cultures of her two countries. She first arrived in the U.S., 13 years ago as an exchange student, living in rural Kansas. To make The Golden River, Hachiyanagi worked with traditional Japanese fibers to make hundreds of paper sheets, delicately colored pale yellow, green and beige by the natural pigments of the fibers. The thousand tiny boats, each folded by hand by the artist, were suspended on monofilament lines so that they rise and fall in air currents, constantly in motion. The inspiration for The Golden River is also cross-cultural. Hachiyanagi says it is based in part on D.H. Lawrence's poem, "The Ship of Death," and the title refers to a Chinese legend about a mythical river in which the present becomes eternal. Hachiyanagi creates dramatic site-specific installations with very large handmade paper sheets and sometimes collaborates with dancers and performance artists in conceptual pieces. Recent presentations include exhibitions and performances in New York, California and the Netherlands. She spent this summer in Japan, identifying and translating historical texts on Japanese papermaking techniques into English, a research project supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities.#####