

AU professor to do research and art in international cities

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Mary Lum, professor of painting at AU, recently received one of 10 summer research grants given out annually by the University to help faculty do research that will provide students with a wider range of experiences to learn from. "The process I generally use in this work involves unstructured but comprehensive wandering through cities, during which time I make drawings and take many photographs. I translate this imagery into more complicated drawings and constructions. These parts are often layered on top of each other, cut out, reassembled and layered again. This process acts as [a] metaphor to the complicated way we encounter the city, bringing to it not only the present, but all of our pasts. Upon seeing the final works, the viewer will experience the idea of being in several places (metaphorically and physically) at one time. The work will point out once again, the inseparability between urban space and psychic experience." Lum is spending three months in residence at Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris, making trips to Berlin to use its urban spaces as additional inspiration for her work. While in Paris, Lum will concentrate solely on studio work. During her previous sabbatical, as well as her residency in the International Studio and Curatorial Program in New York, Lum determined that she is very productive in such an environment, and hopes to create a new body of work to show in the United States as well as in Europe. Several curators are very interested in Lum's work and have promised to review her new work once she has returned from Europe. Her previous work gained her recognition as she examined the urban spaces in Hornell, Chicago, Boston, and New York. In addition Lum is currently working on a project in Philadelphia with independent curator Susette Mim. While her work on U.S. cities is admired, Lum wants to expand her body of work to include international cities. "In my investigation, I will seek to make connections between the cultural, economic, and political contexts of the early 21st century in these cities, through an examination of urban space. Though we are only in the second year of this century, so much has happened to influence culture. I hope to elucidate something about where we are, now. The increasingly cross-cultural aspect of all cities allows for one to be in one place, but many places at the same time."