

THE AUSTIN  
**CHRONICLE**

Ambe's milky topography may make your aesthetic senses go snow blind in appreciation

By Wayne Alan Brenner, Fri., March 2, 2012

When Noriko Ambe's work was featured at the Lora Reynolds Gallery in 2009 for the show "Artist Books: Linear-Actions Cutting Project," we were transfixed by the polychrome beauty of what she had wrought (or perhaps unwrought is the better term here) by visiting her precise scalpel upon the thick hides and glossy innards of hardcover collections of artists' work. "Miniature caverns often extend inches deep and seemingly organically into the sweet thick sheets," we wrote, "graceful excisions do not deface but, instead, serve to eerily reveal the deeper faces locked beneath the glossy surface."

"White Scape," currently at the Reynolds, leaves the expensively published gatherings of others' work behind to present what Ambe has created from sheet upon sheet upon sheet of Yupo paper layered together. Yupo's a synthetic art paper created from polypropylene; these sheets are as white as sheets of milk, offering - in the wake of Ambe's careful incisions and excisions - nothing but shadow and stark topography to engage the eye. And there is that, in abundance: engagement - with a beauty so sublime, so exquisitely hewn in its white-on-whiteness that your sense of aesthetics may go temporarily snow-blind in appreciation.

Ambe's ministrations to her medium can present as miniature versions of centuries-long erosions, as if the most crazed of fundamentalists was right and it was some hand of God that created the Grand Canyon in a few days - only here, the canyon is represented by a thick brick of layered Yupo, the divine power that of a New York-based artist and her cleverest cutting tools. Or Ambe's paper cuts can appear to be the result of water spattering a surface of pure white mud - some bright, viscous substrate made from mineral oil and a million ground eggshells, impacted by a cunning stretch of rain. In many different, painstaking ways, this woman-with-a-blade's million cuts bring textural life to the plains, to the planes, of paper.