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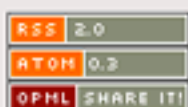
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## Review

### "New Art in Austin – 20 to Watch" at AMOA

by **Till Richter**  
March 2008



*New Art in Austin – 20 to Watch* is the third in a series of triennial art exhibits at the [Austin Museum of Art](#) showcasing contemporary art from Austin, Texas. But *20 to Watch* isn't just for the hometown crowd; it will also be traveling to San Antonio, Abilene and Houston. An exhibition of local artists has a built-in base of support, but will the show be able to catch and sustain the attention of the Texas art-viewing public over a period of eighteen months? Will it be able to cast a much needed spotlight on the Austin art scene or possibly even attract nationwide attention?



Eric Zimmerman  
"Observatory/Projector (Trouvelot's Dream)" 2007  
Overhead Projector, ink, wood, board, model trees, fluorescent light bulbs, paper and mylar

A museum show gives validation to work but, we should ask ourselves, does the work merit that validation? Are these artists really 20 to Watch? And how do we judge the works and the show?

Much easier to grasp, at least for people who – like the artist and the author of this article – have ever met the challenge of moving to another country and into another culture, is the work of the Korean [Yoon Cho](#). Cho's marriage brought her to Austin. Her three works tell a typically American story of immigration, assimilation and adaptation. *Hair in the Box*, 2007 and *Haircut*, 2007



Yoon Cho  
Installation view of works

belong together. *Haircut* is a split-screen video of Cho and her husband basically getting the same haircut. The change and sacrifice are bigger on her side for she had long hair before. The profile position is reminiscent of the famous wedding portrait of [Federico da Montefeltro and Battista Sforza](#) by Piero Della Francesca (1465-66, Uffizi, Florence). *Hair in the Box* shows still photos of the two spouses getting their hair cut and enshrines the fallen hair like relics.

Cutting one's hair can represent a new beginning or catharsis but cutting hair can also be seen as an act of humiliation. The photos and the video are, however, also very personal memories of a decisive moment in individual lives. Much more complex is Cho's 2007 video *How to Spell My Name*. Projected on the wall we see a chessboard of changing little screens. In each field of the grid, a friend or acquaintance of the artist tells the story of how to spell their name and how they feel, what they experience living in the United States. The perceptive viewer and listener will notice that Cho weaves individual narratives that form a universal experience. Perfectly adapting form to content, the voices overlap when their stories share a universal experience and become distinct when it is an individual's story.

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