

Valerie Yong Ock Kim and Billy Welker are as different from each other as male and female. Come to think of it this show could be called she and he. Kim's photographic work is multilayered, intellectually challenging, sensitive, deep, and stimulating.

Her photos are immediately engaging. One is drawn into each image. These are not photos that you instantly see and go on to the next image. The artist wants to have a conversation with the viewer. Her show is divided into three sections; still image, refractions and chasing photons. She also has produced an 8-minute video featuring her photos with great music from nose flute virtuoso Anthony Natividad and Congo singer songwriter Lokua Kanza. Kim has enhanced the experience with words from two poems; Light, Speed, Matter, A Still Place Waiting and Density. With lines like,

"the wall between is only a photon,  
As bright and quick as the tail of a shooting star,  
As deep as the black hole it becomes."

or this one from Density,

"Yet,  
    we are matter,  
    which is only  
    4% of the universe.  
        what is 96%?"

One gets a taste of the scope and depth of Kim's work.

Kim, who travels widely for her job, as a location manager for Hollywood feature films is fascinated by the juxtaposition between movement and stillness. Also she likes to explore the effect of raindrops on an image.

Another part of her work is pure magic. Kim presents a group of cast glass photos that are also part of still images. Cast glass photographs start out as a product of a laser printer that is "jury-rigged" to hold, instead of inks; glass frit(glass colors in the form of powder - crushed glass. She's been working with a sculpture professor and artist in the Midwest since about 2003. They take her file and put it thru the printer and obtain a "picture" made of glass frit. Then it goes into a kiln for three days. The result is a glass photograph.

These are displayed in hanging pieces as well as framed light boxes.

Her section entitled catching photons is a series of haunting underwater portraits. These, such as "The Kiss" have a distinctive impressionistic feel, and holding silence is almost like Rembrandt meets Monet. The light in this portrait gives it a painterly other worldly character and the almost focus reminds one of the impressionist masters.

Kim speaks about walls in her poetry and she says that the wall is a link that is both desirable and an impediment. In two images "Night Bus London" and "Upper Eastside

Cityscape NYC", she shows how people are separate but what we have in common are the walls between us.

Billy Welker's 15 oil on wood panel portraits and nudes are powerful, male images. Strong, direct, no nonsense. All of his paintings were created over the last three years, with nine being created last year. Welker is a retired contractor and carpenter who received his training in art in Detroit. His people stare right at the viewer or look sideways but the connection is palpable. The viewer feels like the portraits are looking at you as you are looking at them. It is disconcerting.

Welker's nudes are idealized images. His figures are outlined heavily giving them the feel of the 19<sup>th</sup> century artist Aubrey Beardsley meets Paul Gauguin.

As different as these two artists are from each other, there are some surprising parallels between them. For example, in "Between Worlds," Kim portrays only part of the figure and in several of Welker's nudes only part of the figure is visible. And then where Kim tries to catch photons, Welker spends a weekend with the bosons. Both dealing with principles of physics.

This show runs until September 21. For more information go to [mauitvnews.com](http://mauitvnews.com) and click on the link to coming attractions.

That's curtain call for this week, I'm Paul Janes-Brown A Hui Hou!