

THE BOSTON GLOBE

## Arts & Reviews

# Exploring the mysteries of 'Cosmoses'

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The final photograph Neeta Madahar made for her last body of work, "Falling," showed sycamore seeds pinwheeling through the night sky. The perspective — looking skyward — was deliciously perplexing. The inky background might have been as deep as the heavens or as flat as blacktop.

"Cosmoses," Madahar's lovely new work at Howard Yezerski Gallery, dances along that same edge. For "Cosmoses," Madahar fashioned scores of origami cosmos flowers, scattered them on photographic paper, and exposed them to light, making photograms. The origami flowers come in several colors and sizes; some are opaque and some translucent. She utilized different types of photographic paper: Some develop positive images, some negative.

### Unnatural: Neeta Madahar and Rona Pondick

At: Howard Yezerski Gallery,  
14 Newbury St., through Aug. 18.  
617-262-0550,  
howardyezerskigallery.com

Translucent flowers shimmer like vessels of light, sometimes colliding with their shadowy opaque counterparts. The glossy paper adds to the retinal fix; our eyes love shiny, glowing things the way kittens love string. In "Cosmoses Blue VI (Negative)," electric blue and violet flowers pulse against a black ground. "Cosmoses Mixed VI (Positive)" riots with pink, yellow, and orange flowers against a white ground.

"Cosmoses" has much in common with "Falling." Madahar dizzies her viewer with the suggestion of gazing into infinity, but whether the ground is deep space or flat is up for argument. Both efforts also involve mathematical patterns — in the folding of the origami flowers, in the spiraling descent of the sycamore seeds — while depicting things that appear disorderly and wild. Both invoke stillness and yet, with their quality of spinning and repetition, suggest a carnival. "Cosmoses" tweaks and expands ideas from "Falling," and the deeper this artist digs, the more mystery she uncovers.

Yezerski has paired Madahar's photos with "Fox," a single sculpture by Rona Pondick. It's a lithe and spooky stainless steel piece

depicting a fox whose long neck ends in a man's head resting on the ground. This coupling works better formally than it does thematically. Madahar's images, impossible to pin in space, make for a floaty viewing experience; Pondick's lean and grounded work is a beautiful anchor, even while its mirrored surface disarms our sense of reality. But Pondick's lone nightmarish figure tears at the fabric of Madahar's sweet, lulling dreamscapes. It's like finding a chili pepper in your milkshake.



Pondick's stainless steel sculpture "Fox"