Thirty woodblock prints by master woodcut artist Lee Chul Soo will be featured in an exhibition at Guilford College Art Gallery Jan. 12-Feb. 29 as part of the college’s Freeman Asian Arts Festival. The solo exhibition, entitled “Visual Poetry,” is the first in the eastern United States for one of the foremost contemporary Korean artists. An opening reception will be held Jan. 15 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. in the gallery, located in Hege Library. The reception is free and open to the public.

Born in Seoul in 1954, Lee Chul Soo began his artistic pursuits at an early age and without any formal training. His first major exhibition was in Seoul in 1981 and he continues to exhibit his work in Korea. He has had exhibitions in Germany and Switzerland, and his first solo exhibition in the United States was held in early 2003 at Davidson Galleries in Seattle, Wash.

The artist now lives with his wife on a small rice farm in a rural area near Seoul. There, he grows most of his own food and fills his days writing poetry, farming, and making prints by hand in the traditional manner. The artist’s woodcuts, characterized by laconic prose, reflect his life as a farmer, Zen practitioner and poet-artist. His themes express a deep respect for nature, family and a contemplative way of life.

Three related events are offered in conjunction with the exhibition:

- Jan. 21 – Demonstration of traditional woodblock cutting and printing techniques by Professor of Art Roy Nydorf, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Art Gallery
- Feb. 10 – Lecture by Jin Hi Kim, “Introduction to Korean Music: Melding Memory, Heritage and Passion,” 6-7:30 p.m., Gallery, Founders Hall.
- Feb. 11 – Solo Performance by Jin Hi Kim, “Komungo Muse and Permutations,” Noon-1 p.m., Art Gallery.

Jin Hi Kim is highly acclaimed as both an innovative komungo (Korean fourth century fretted board zither) virtuoso and for her cross-cultural compositions. Kim is an extraordinary musician who has brought a deeper appreciation for the historical contributions to world culture by the Koreans. Her work has been presented on the main stages of significant cultural centers in the United States, Europe and Asia.

*This project received financial support from the Freeman Asian Studies Grant and The Korea Society. The Korea Society is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with individual and corporate members that is dedicated solely to the promotion of greater awareness, understanding and cooperation between the people of the United States and Korea. In pursuit of its mission, the Society arranges programs that facilitate discussion, exchanges and research on topics of vital interest to both countries in the areas of public policy, business, education, intercultural relations and the arts. Funding for these programs is derived from contributions, endowments, grants, membership dues and program fees. From its base in New York City, the Society serves audiences across the country through its own outreach efforts and by forging strategic alliances with counterpart organizations in other cities throughout the United States as well as in Korea.*