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Orna Feinstein uses 50,000 exhibit invites in her a faux flower field

By [Jeanne Claire van Ryzin](#) - American-Statesman Staff



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It took Orna Feinstein nearly a decade to collect the approximately 50,000 exhibit invitations she uses in “Papellibrium,” her delightful installation at Women & Their Work.

The Houston-based artist fills the entire gallery floor with invitations that have been meticulously curved, folded and sewn into organic shapes. Stylized rosettes of circles and teardrop shapes bloom and crowd together as they spill across the floor. A winding path leads through the flower field.

With the gallery walls painted a matte battleship grey — and with the gallery devoid of natural light — the immediate whimsy of Feinstein’s fake flower field is nicely tempered. If anything, there’s a slightly — yet nicely — claustrophobic feel to the rather large installation that just enhances its artificiality.

Feinstein is anything but whimsical in her method. Though the garden-like installation is partially inspired by her own front yard, she also suggests that the expanse of manipulated paper resembles the cellular pattern seen in a cross-section of a plant.

There is nevertheless plenty of whimsy to “Papellibrium.” These are, after all, exhibit invitations — the sleekly designed, intentionally seductive cards and postcards that, even in our digital age, most galleries and museums still pour

resources into. Exhibit invites are the beautiful souvenirs, or the leftovers, of some measure of art world accomplishment.

Feinstein used invitations from Houston's Hooks Epstein Gallery and Lawndale Art Center, the Contemporary Austin and, yes, from Women & Their Work.

Though Feinstein may fuss with notions of geometric versus organic shapes and positive versus negative space, the source material for her splendid faux flower field can't be ignored. And it's what adds a needed dollop of irony without which "Papellibrium" would be a little lightweight.

"Papellibrium"

When: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday, noon to 5 p.m. Saturday through April 28

Where: Women & Their Work 1710 Lavaca St.

Cost: Free.

Info: 512-477-1064, womenandtheirwork.org



About the Author



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