

최명영

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2017. 11. 3 - 12. 3

Conditional Planes

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In terms of the preparation of Myoung Young Choi's work, only paint, a few painting tools and a canvas are used. But these elements are not so relevant to the outcome of his works or to the degree of completion. Further, the process by which such elements turn into an artistic objet through Choi is beyond description. Actually, his work is closely related to the volition which comes from the fluctuation of health, uncomfortableness, emotional amplitude, and the variation of physical energy. And such elements come to the front during the tumult of joy and agony, possession and desertion. Each time period has a particular form of the plane. In 1975, it was fingerprints on canvas; in the 1980s, it was awls penetration Korean paper as well as rolling on canvas; and from the 1990s to the present, it has been creation different conditions of the plane using brushstrokes. Since the foundation of the art society "Origin" in 1963, Choi has been working on producing similar artworks for over 50 years and the artworks have always been flat, simple-colored planes. With no particular event or noise, the artist has produced his works in his own way leaving only a monotone, simple-colored plane that seems completely irrelevant from his original intention. Following the rules that seem to have been made by himself - like a penance of an ascetic - his work would become a shadow of daily life.

Choi has been consistently creating his works <Conditional Planes> in order to engage in a close relationship with the materials he uses and to find an 'alter ego.' In creating his artworks, he gives himself into a bodily rhythm and momentary system that is long-lasting and renewable. At the same time, through his unique character of repeatability, he was able to develop the ability to protect subtle circumstances of his daily routines from being obstructed by external forces. In other words, this is the memorandum of 'delicate vertical/horizontal strokes' revealing the coexistence of the real world and the current life. This is an artistic method that artists have used for a very long time and it neither strongly insists on an idea nor suppresses it. Choi's work brings about a sensation rather than an interpretation by compressing the constantly-changing subjects, various problems, and different preferences into a 'particular space.' He uses strokes and layer techniques at the same time, and the briefness of such strokes, as a kind of a figurative form itself, tunes its body and becomes one with nature to create a non-image rhythm without space. This concept is at a level of asceticism beyond the scission of profound, and cursory discourse and has become an ideogram representing his entire life and the meaninglessness within his solitude. Consequently, the rhythm Choi's strokes have created become an evidence of life realized together with the lapse of time and rather than it being described as a blank space, it is more like a tremor existing between time and space and possessing a character like a sensuous breathe or a breeze. His strokes are a continuity of neutrality, which draws us into a world of inexplicable encounters.

There are some implications of seasons in Choi's works. While being one scent in and of itself, climate also acts as a sign sensitive to nature and shows subtle changes on the work's surface. Although there isn't anything that reveals seasons in his works, implications of them are indeed being realized through elements that cannot be described with words. Even though there is no verbal description of seasons, viewers are able to feel the sense of seasons to a surprising degree just by a few elements and air space. The sense of seasons being discussed here is not just a day's reporting of the weather but rather it is like the essence of human nature and also resembles the artist's life. Like so, his works clearly show a pathway to a new form in his life. Like a meteorologist doing numerous experiments to know the daily atmospheric condition, his works are the countless records, of this daily life, creating a weave of fluid strokes combined with a discontinuous network of time and space.

Choi distinguishes and individualizes each artwork and focuses on the nuance. This is a rejection of the uniformity in modern society and has begun from before the foundation of the "Origin" in 1963 when the Black Monochrome Paintings were exhibited. This is an act of self-esteem in order to acquire an autonomous language; and as a nuance that keenly captures things that change, it is an act that leads us to a place where nobody can destroy the things that surround and suppress him. This is a place where all miscellaneous verbal activity stops and no more interpretation or explanation is needed; it is a pure state and a moment of time where no more meaning is added, enabling his vertical/horizontal strokes and daily routines to co-exist. This is containing movement into immobility that is 'one but all' and 'stop but moment.'

In a nutshell, Choi's work is simple in form, not instructive, and clearly not sensual. It is not a fiction, not made up, but a creation of chemical activity aroused in his inner feelings. In this process, an element called contingency intervenes. This is the very stage of nothing(無) which appears naturally during the process of strokes and layers, making the work more sincere and faithful. The object, image, or the motive are evaporated and by virtue of his 'giving the body' absorbed into circumstances and then stopped for a moment, indicating the wavelength of the living reality. A small realization from this process is the attention to unfixed, segmented vertical/horizontal strokes, layer process weaving the routines, and a briefly stopped moment. The null, ordinary colors are blocked, and only indescribable monotone colors exist. Like a flickering monotone after numerous scenes in a silent movie, Choi's colorlessness is not an absence of color, but a subtle delicacy. Blocked out, scarcely seen, invisible, speechless, pure colorless. The crossing of the simplest strokes and the most complex emotions are stopped momentarily to revivify routines to become essential. At this moment, we encounter a stage of subtle delicacy where the most humane elements and the most inhumane objects are combined, and such enlightenment of strokes finally became a powerful present state along with the 'working with body'.

Kim Yongdae As the senior curator of The Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art from 1987 to 2003, Kim Yongdae has directed the 'Contemporary Arts Exhibition based on Korean Aesthetics.' He has also served as the director of the Busan Museum of Art from 2004 to 2006 and as the first director of the Daegu Museum of Art from 2010 to 2012. As of recent, he has been independently curating exhibitions on the subject of 'the encounter between the past and future.'