

Difference in Resemblance

Sang-Mi Yoo

How would we imbue prints with a greater aura of physical presence similar to the perception of a painting's surface?

Painters have worked on imbuing a sense of immediacy through the means of processes and translation. Alselm Kiefer combines painting, sculpture, photography and printmaking, creating uneven tactile surface with illusion. Sean Scully explores singular processes throughout the image, causing a contrast between printed media. Through this, his conscious understanding of blocks of color is immediately visible. Antoni Tàpies' work evokes the human presence through erosion, graffiti, and gestural marks, using found objects, embossing, collagraph, carborundum, flocking, etc. For Chuck Close, printmaking processes become a filter through which his images are investigated. Choosing labor-intensive processes in large scale yields complex and arresting results.¹ Except Young-Hoon Kim's work that is more of a sculptor's approach, these Korean artists' compositions share a look similar to Allover Painting. This can partially be explained by the fact that the majority of these artists studied Painting as their primary medium in college before stepping into Printmaking. Furthermore, they still maintain both practices.

As well as simulating the effect of the Allover Painting's pattern, the five Korean artists chosen for this exhibition have a tendency to work in series. Their prints as a group read in one integrated flow even if they can sufficiently be read as individuals. These artists' prints can be categorized in a parallel formation.² In the work of Young-Hoon Kim, Sujin Shin and Sang-Mi Yoo's, images yield conceptual strength when they are presented as a group. These prints are displayed in various orders, but they are arranged right next to each other. In Oh-Shin Kwon and Sanggon Chung's works, this parallel formation consists of diptychs or triptychs, which entails deliberate sequential reading.

Sanggon Chung's digital work is well known for erasing a part of his landscape to raise questions on deconstructed meanings through media distortion. However, the work selected for this show is not political. Rather, he addresses physical properties of human condition and the simulation of such, using texture, wrinkles of paper, pressure and spread of inks, which are realized through gestural digital means.

Sujin Shin's *Trace of Current* has the look of watercolor painting. The physical property of spit-bite is combined with the illusion of water drops and drippings. These intensive mark-making and etched forms may read as a frozen moment of snapshot photographs. When these images are arranged as a group, an odd sense of flow is created.³

Younghoon Kim's mezzotints are reminiscent of a religious iconography in the Middle Ages with their contrast in tones and dark silhouettes. According to him, he yearns to understand the unknown volume and depth of the space and realizes how small he, himself is as a human. The portraits in his prints maximize this absolute solitude through isolated figures within a large white space.

Elements in Oh-Shin Kwon's work appear as though they are actors in a theater set that are playing roles. Rooftop images are composed of balloons, dolls, garments, and a girl riding a bicycle. The world created by her reminds the viewer of a joyful journey to an ancient time. However, dark smoky strokes dispersed in the image cast ominous clouds.

Based on an archetypal architecture residing in her childhood memory and her perception of similar, standardized residential housing in West Texas, Sang-Mi Yoo's installation juxtaposes photo-based offset lithographs and lasercut wool felt. This match creates optical illusions through distortions of the original houses, which compares the notion of ideal home as a tangible subject versus illusion.

During the process of selecting these Korean artists, I found a common thread—repetition. Certain representational or abstractive elements reappear over and over across the series of prints. However this seemingly same repetition does not settle in stasis across the set of prints. Overlapping elements within the work and parallel displays that can be arranged and rearranged in different combinations add possible variables. These artists' painstaking patience in developing similar motives comes from acknowledging printmaking as a reproducible means. However, they work towards an ideal, looking for subtle differences between prints through this inevitable repetition. Their sincere attempts ask whether this is ever possible to realize.

¹ Paul Coldwell, "Painterly Approaches," in *Printmaking: A Contemporary Perspective* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2010), 65–80.

² Taisung Kang, "Inter-genre intervention" in *Intervened Flow Exhibition Catalog* (Seoul: Grimson Gallery, 2012), <http://www.artmail.co.kr/db/2012/20120229-shinsoojin.htm/>.

³ Gilles Deleuze's notions on difference and repetition is cited in Jina Kim, "Becoming: Repetition & Difference" in *Overflowing Exhibition Catalog* (Seoul: Bukchon Museum, 2008), <http://sujin.blogspot.org/writing.htm/>.