

A Tint of the Media Element Infiltrated Assembled Installation Art

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Kim Byoung-ho's recent work *A Host* is a wall installation made of trumpet-shaped aluminum tubes of diverse length, stretching out from the center in all directions. It looks like a Duchampian readymade, or mass-produced product, and may be misunderstood as a minimalist artwork due to its simple form. However, we soon realize it has a media art element by listening to its electric sounds, like a bird song, successively heard from each tube, rather than it being just a sculpture of form and mass.

Many of his pieces maintain sculptural form, but have a media art aspect, as they emit sound. Because his work highlights the sense of hearing and embraces other senses, it can be defined as media art. This definition is not always correct, because his work has no sense of non-materiality, non-casualty, or non-crystallization, often peculiar to media art, and often relies on its sculptural form. But, it is also beyond the definition of sculpture, as it shows no dexterity of hand or labor-intensive fidelity. His work focuses on concepts and ideas based on diversity, rather than on material and form. It also blurs the boundaries of genres, showcasing a clash between matter and idea; a confrontation or cohabitation of existentialism and metaphysical thought.

Through works such as *Floating Space*, *Floating Light*, and *Floating Land* displayed at his first solo show, Kim raised psychological aspects, and visualized intangible energy. These traits he has moved to diverse relations in the world, between himself and others, power balances, cause-and-effect relationships, relationships between work and viewer, sound and object, space and work, and artist and work. Elements produced by these relationships can be interpreted with the keyword 'fantasy'.

Fantasy and its ambiguousness derive from the reduction of perceptual, psychological tension between 'self' and 'others', moving beyond the world with a multiple-identity. Fantasy results from his assembled sculptures, by Kim, who refers to himself as a rational not a maudlin artist. (Kim's work does not define 'fantasy'. For him its meaning is diverse,

and offers many possibilities, interpretations, and impressions.) To this, Kim allows the intervention of media as mediator and conciliation between human beings and the world, firmly reinforcing these relationships.

In the process of visualizing the fantasies of man, society, and history, Kim uses media art to stimulate viewers' perception and their psychological reformation. Media art is effective in preventing the breakaway of viewers, caused by interactive art's excessive interaction. However, he is reluctant to highlight media art in his work. The proportion of sculptural and media art elements is 50:50 in his work, but its result is 99% visual, 1% media art! It means he conceals such a media-art element as much as he can, but helps it operate to the full.

One of the clues to read his work is he seriously considers which kind of work and role he has to assume, and where he has to position his art within the landscape of contemporary art. With this reason, his work does not pursue high-tech art. Kim tries to verify if a new medium he selects is appropriate to his work. In this respect, he seems to properly divide his work into two categories, 'reflected' media art and installation art.