

In Between Landscapes and Anti-Landscapes

After 2010, An Gyungso's interest moved from social landscapes to the everyday landscapes. To analyze further, one can see the process of change: from a sensuous surface to the inner reality, from the satirical and metaphorical to the explicit and immediate, from the theatrical situation to the contemplative manner. His gaze and attitude has definitely changed from the past. There is no exact reason for this, however, looking at the changes in his work all the while, and having met with the artist several times, my opinion is that it may be a result of having battled desperately 'in order to survive as an artist' through his experiences in the system of the art society(external impulse) and his inner experiment of self(interal impulse) after throwing his empty plate in the world.

He hovers around the inner conflict he is faced with, that is, the boundary of in and out of paintings he is constantly given with, in setting-up the frame of what must be drawn. In September 2009, he looks at the landscape drawn on the barricades he encountered inadvertently in the street of Changcheon-dong, Seodaemun-gu and is shocked. There were multiplex houses on top of a hill, at the front, a blue tent covering the whole building, which was left half-demolished, and barricades for reconstruction, and a landscape of nature drawn on those barricades, and these three landscapes overlapped and came in sight of the artist.

To the artist, this out-of-the-blue and shocking landscape is no more than an everyday and general landscape of reality where redevelopment had long been forming. Activist or observative disposition, which had already been practicing methods of painting and photography, conceptual approach on the public, and etc with a critical eye on redevelopment or artificial gardens from 15 years back, may not be such much of a fresh form in contemporary art. However, the capitalist power exercise keeps repeating and the criticisms and reinterpretations on building natural environments as artefacts for consolation can but beget endless meanings.

Unlike such position viewed from within institutions, to the artist, the discovery of a new external landscape gave a fresh stimulation and the 'aesthetics of discovery' provides a new clue of creativity. This outset means that the internal impulse manifests first, before the external impulse, recognizing new perspectives through his vision. In other words, the images painted on barricades are not something new. After looking, thinking, painting, experimenting, colliding, conversing and writing texts about the world within his continuous topic, I had payed attention to the point which the artist developed his own autonomous language by making his cognitive thoughts flexible after repeating and circulating such actions.

Starting from the barricade landscape in Changcheon-dong, the 'in between landscapes(the middle landscapes)' are those that are painted on completed landscape architectures or barricades in parks, apartments, public lands and sites

for redevelopment executions which can easily be seen in cities. Furthermore, the range of vision widens and even the traces which may be insignificant in residential ruins or street corners are drawn into aesthetic elements. With them, the artist masterminded the frames sensuously according to objects that he saw or had been shown, and expressed them in various forms of paintings from small sizes to large-scale paintings.

Their contents are also diverse. Looking at the objects, the artist rearranges the very small units of minute languages that lie dormant in his memory within his frame by telepathy-like instinct. The overall nuance is gloomy, melancholy and deserted like a social orphan searching for an empty spot. This may be why they fit well with the ragged feeling of the rough space in the pool. After finishing the paintings, the artist went searching for a specific place which they may be placed in and positioned them in the right place, the corridor and 4-5 rooms at the basement, which is going to be reconstructed.

They seem to be comfortable as if they were there from the beginning. The space, which has become useless, but is useful culturally and artistically, and therefore is more valuable, resembles the middle landscapes that can only be abandoned by the convenience of capitalism. There is doubt whether these spaces and lives, which can only live as marginal things like that of mayflies or time-limited lives, can ever regain their values in the whirlpool of rotating capital.

The history of the place created from the walls and space cannot be erased. As much as the layers of its time, the people, the memories, the traces or the illusions, and even the paintings that has embodied it, cannot be erased. Therefore, after the artist's 'landscapes' recreate landscapes disguised as nature, which is why they have to disappear, in their own frames(territory, area), wants to have their values recognized. It is because they are 'landscapes by landscapes'. It is the reason why landscape exists by anti-landscape, like the landscapes inside landscapes, and landscapes outside landscapes, even though they crisscross each other.

What was it that An Gyungso was trying to find beyond the 'membrane'(the retinae of perception) covered with artificial landscape within the real landscape? Beyond the membrane, there is actually nothing. An empty landscape: it might exist as an empty landscape itself. To the artist, the landscape may approach the artist as an instinct of return of infinite landscapes. Could it be the attraction of impulse which we had when we were kids, playing around without concept making houses and breaking them using the deserted fake walls?

He is now moving towards a little more unusual place, leaving the 'barricade paintings' behind. He moves towards an empty lot. This place is a formless place where time and space can remain more than any other objects of paintings. Consequently, overlaid meanings are gradually disappearing. People fussing about

in landscape places, then, reinterpreted meanings of landscapes are gone and only an empty space is left.

His next journey is unknown, however, at almost forty years of age, it seems that he has found out how he is going to use art by 'filling and emptying' and how he is going to fill his life's journey. The artist once said, "when I look at a landscape, I retrace the past, talk about the present and imagine the future." His general logic which has mastered the easy and clear solution through landscapes, touches on the meaning of may-be-abstract 'landscapes of landscapes'.

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