

Substantiating Fantasies of Human Desire -Artist Kim Byoung Ho

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Artist Kim Byoung Ho was born in 1974 in Seoul, majored in engraving art in Hongik University and graduated Art and Tech graduate school in Chungang University. Now he is a resident artist in National Art Studio in Goyang. His works focus on substantiating fantasies of human desire, and he adopts media in his art works to create new appreciation.

Q. Would you tell us about your overall work from the beginning up to now?

A. As a child, I was always interested in making something. I was more interested in making than drawing. I guess that's how ended up in sculpturing and craving. Engraving is a little different, but it's a lot of fun as well. Finally I got into graduate school, and that's when I started to ponder about my art work. Engraving is definitely attractive, but I wanted to extend my work to three dimensional space. I wanted to challenge myself beyond pure art and try to adopt media, because what I ultimately pursuit is to experiment upon art itself. As I had enough chances to experience media and screen during graduate school years, I have realized major part of domestic media art works already involved screen images. But there are various ways to combine media with art. Figuring out how media could be applied as a material and relating media to art is such a fun. And these are where my art works come from.

Q. After <Floating Space> from your previous exhibition, what did you want to say in your work like <Silent Pollen>?

A. I had to do project works in my graduate school. After the graduation, I had time to focus on my own work and my experiments and changes are getting set up. My first solo exhibition was a half year after my graduation, and my motivation was energy then. The titles of works were <Floating Space>, <Floating Light>, <Floating Land>, and I wanted to show visually how energy substantialize in real space. With magnet and electromagnet, I shifted two characteristics of those materials into sound, which is another form of energy, and into light movement as well. I mean I used media to catch the very moment of energy being diffused between space and sound, during movement of light, and between gravity and its reaction. At the time I was thinking maybe artist is someone who could stand on the blade of a knife. Like someone who could cross the border between the real world and beyond the real, and make invisible things tangible. And at my second and third exhibition, my interest is more into

'proliferation and expansion'. This is like a 'fantasy'. I wanted to substantialize fantasy of a society, my fantasy, your fantasy, and fantasy of art in the end. Art itself is one big fantasy, and my biggest interest now is how I can express those fantasies.

Q. <Silent Pollen> series applied flower as a metaphor. Why is that?

A. First of all, I thought of the reproduction structure of flower. Flowers breeds and proliferates in silence, and I thought human system is like that too. For example, like Coca Cola permeated all over our culture without people realizing it, something strong sneaks into people's mind and multiples. That's what I wanted to tell through the flower metaphor, the plant's silent and strong multiplication. Media programming was applied to express sound and multiplying process of flower.

Q. Tell us about your theme of desire.

A. My third solo exhibitions focused on visualizing desire of fantasy which I have been ponder upon. When fantasy rises, there is a lump of desire, instinct, to drive the fantasy. That's what I wanted to talk about. Desire itself is not a bad thing, and everyone has it. I see there are many kinds of desires, so I applied media into my installation work to produce sounds. The intervention of the media, however, was controlled so that the reproduction or multiplication structure which is silent could come out as small sounds. I personally think I sculpt media rather than using it. I wanted to inspire warmth into the cold objet I work on. It takes quite a lot of time to work with media, but as a matter of fact the media intervention is only a small part of my whole work. I spend more time sculpting the external look of works. My point is how to make media generate as a human brain in the cold sculpture.

Q. You said, 1% of media and 99% of sculpture. Can you give us some more detail explanation on this sentence?

A. It's a metaphorical expression. As I previously mentioned, media takes relatively a small portion compare to its time spending. I'm personally thinking to reduce the media portion because of my view point of media. I think media is such a strong medium. Media basically involves movement, which is its artificial part, so one may feel uncomfortable about the fact. The strong media in the work makes me feel a little nervous. Enjoying and using an art work rather than appreciating it are not what I pursue. Even 1% is still a critical part of my work. It may sound ironic, but I think media gets stronger as it gets more covered. I want consistent logical structure in my works, so I take media and switch its function into something different from its traditional role to apply in my work.

Q. Now, what do you say about interaction of media art?

A. I personally don't like compelling interaction, so I only let media intervene naturally in an installation. If interaction doesn't show up between audience and the work, it is fine only if that's natural. This is the way I feel media is free and light.

The installation work in Seoul City Museum's south Seoul branch reflects such ideas. Like a scenery in a temple, I wanted to create natural harmony with the space or the environment. Sadang station where the work is installed is full of city noises that I wanted to provide sound of nature from the scenery. If you look into the work, sounds from the installation is created by computers modulating frequencies in the real time space. The sound works like the nervous system, not from recorded sound.

Q. Artist Kim Byoung Ho's work has become a little different from the previous sculpture works. It may be the media, but it seems there is something more. What is it? I personally felt something warm inside of the work, unlike its cold mechanical external.

A. I wanted to apply media experimentally, which turns out to be a formless media. I was expecting visual art, my original genre, will eventually connect to media. Media work basically requires installation, so as I wanted in the first place, I am sculpting, and having fun out of it by inserting media. I think of media intervention when I work on my art piece, and people say my work is something different from other artists' sculptures. This is partly because I came from different background, and also I think differently about media intervention.

Q. Please explain about <Assemble Fantasy>, 2008.

A. It's a new work started last year. Like its title, I wanted to build a machine that assembles desires. Parts of the work show the moments when desires are assembled. The piece itself can be assembled and take to pieces, like jointed accessories without welding. This structure resembles of human desires tangled with many interest relationships, and I thought such desires can exist on its own or on assembled form. I guess for a while I will stick with this assembling and disassembling pieces. This form is also comfortable when you transport the results to my upcoming exhibitions abroad. ^^

Q. The work looks very impressive. When you consider the shape, what are your motivations?

A. I want to make something that looks like nothing on the earth. Of course such attempts also might come from my past experiences and thoughts, but I think the subject could be more strong when it's harder to expect the form and the function of a work. That's what I expect when I materialize fantasy of desire which is formless.

Q. What's your upcoming plan?

A. Very soon in May, I have open studio exhibition at National Goyang studio, where I'm staying right now. Also, there is my homecoming report exhibition at the same time. I went to exchange program to the city's cultural ministry studio at Frankfurt in Germany from December 2008 to February 2009. I will show what I have done there with some other works. Also, I'm planning to display my installation at Art and synesthesia Exhibition in Seoul Museum of Art.

Q. Thank you for your interview.