

Non-Subjective Work

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Contemporary society is said to be a society filled with tremendous amounts of information. People are exposed to vast amounts of information whether they want or simply accept them out of obligation. Visual information among them is gaining more and more weight. People have come to a point where they are faced with the problem of deciding how to accept this inundating visual information.

In the Visual arts of the past – especially in western modernity – the artist was recognized as a very important being. The artist was the very creator and therefore, considered to represent or to realize the actuality of reality through his or her own works. And the point of view that an artist was the one who stands at the avant-garde of time and leads the general public spiritually and realistically was also valid. The artist was thought to play the role of a subjective being through and through.

However, while undergoing World War I, II and the Cold War, the concept of the subjective artist could not but fall into serious skepticism. A reinterpretation of the things that were considered to be “The other” by the subjective artists were being attempted. America in the 60's was a place where such movements became actually prominent. It seems the successive flow of avant-garde – which has its root in Marcel Duchamp, and by way of John Cage finally seems to achieve success when it arrives at Andy Warhol – is largely associated with such an atmosphere. It also stems from the mass culture-Hollywood movies, rock'n'roll which is greatly indebted to black music, etc.- of the American 50's.

In the actual overflow of visual images, the past notion that the “artist as a subject communicates an objective and universal truth to the audience” is not possible anymore.

The many art movements since the 60's till today seem to be connected to the changed belief about the way of existence for artists.

In Korean art these aspects appear rather naturally in numerous works. Among Korean abstract painting which seems to embody the Taoist human views, hyper-realistic works that were immensely popular during the late 70's and the early 80's, and Min-jung art works a trend of realism that dominated the 80's, there appear works that clearly suggest a lot about the artist's standing related to his or her work.

I try to get the viewers to break out the passive attitude that simply trying to understand the artist's intentions and actively grasp the meaning of the work, and get involved in the reading of the work from their own standpoint without any social or cultural preconception (prejudice). The thought that the viewer must respect the artist's intentions and objectively investigated the artist's profound ego when they view (read) my work is meaningless. A work is not something that is defined and concluded by the artist but something that gains its grounds for existence by the active response and emotional participation of the viewer.

My work does not stem from a counteraction or rebellion against the art of the past. It probably received a very composite influence from numerous works of the past-Korean artworks occupying a large portion of it.

Such an attitude of work stems from doubting the notion of "artist as a creator" and bears in mind the works that go on forming a mellifluous system of meaning rather than unique system of meaning. In the contemporary sense, an artist is not someone who absolutely rules and employs his work but function as a "part" of his works. In a sense, a large part of the importance is transferred from the artist to the work, but this does not refer to a work with an absolute and inherent system of meaning but rather to a work that is formed while relating to other works and the outer world. None the less, it is not an extinction of being called an artist. The artist exists as if he were a part of the work and functions as a catalyst between the work, viewer, and the outer world as they react with each other.