

On the stage provided by the Spectacle Society : The exhibition of Choi-Moon and Kim-Min (Mioon)

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1.

I have thought about the reason we often talk about culture these days and I think it is because our way of looking at the world is constantly changing. Culture can be defined as 'a way of life', but defining cultures is not a matter of simple classification, rather it is defined by the social structure and concepts which form that way of life. However, a new frame of interpretation is needed as today, the social structures and concepts change themselves rapidly, sometimes causing a great deal of confusion. From this point of view, culture is therefore a text for reading the changes, and a mirror which reflects the current social structures and concepts. Therefore, when we see culture, we can also see the structural framework and social organization, essentially the paradigm through which people of different cultures view life and the world.

Many of the practical intellectuals help us approach one society specifically by emphasizing its culture and providing a new "way of thinking" for discussion. This can be likened to an area of art. Escaping from modernist logic, studded with inner expression and autonomous molding principles, and with restorationism based on substance and material, we face the challenge of casting a critical eye toward non-material work and culture, which defies typical conceptual examination and transformation. These changes don't simply mean the change in the way they occur, but create an active intervention in a changing society and culture, escaping the exclusive autonomous logic. The system of communication in our society is replaced with a culture of image, thanks to the development of technical media. In this cultural context, our unconsciousness and false-consciousness, latent desire, and restraint mechanism are spread seamlessly into the real world.

I assume that the thing Art concentrates on these days is the net of complicated meanings

scattered throughout our culture. The net of complicated meanings in our culture explains why the meaning of mass-culture and culture of image are actually quite complicated with only a superficial appearance of simplicity. Therefore, so to speak, the story of 'reading culture' has another practical application in Art. "Reading Culture" means to reveal the structure of the meaning of culture, and to 'disorganize' false-consciousnesses and ideological mechanisms in the structure. This practice of "disorganization" is no different form conceptual self-examination. This is why 'reading culture' is a major extension of the conceptual work of modern Art.

2.

The cultural scenery of this age, which Kim-Min (taking an active part by using the name of Mioon) and Choi-Moon capture together, is revealed as a type of 'Spectacle'. Isn't a "Spectacle" a unique expression during cultural industrialization? We 'view' the splendid and rich world of imagery, keeping a safe distance in the guest seats, as we watch the stage. Spectacle is an effective way to express both the realistic and non-realistic world. The real world may be reflected in the spectrum of the Spectacle. The scenes, revealing a number of desires both conscious and unconscious, are reflected through a spectrum to create another "real" world. The eyes of Kim-Min and Choi-Moon stay at the spot where the social scenes of the Spectacle exist.

Above all, they see the 'superficiality' of the Spectacle. Basically, the Spectacle is tremendously positive and not refutable. It is pleasant to look at and the good things remain as long as we look outwardly. The world of the Spectacle begins and ends in an outward aspect. Without the need of getting inside or having conversation, we just passively accept. It has no contradictions it has no need to touch them. It is self-satisfied.

Their installment, <Tourist Project>, shows the superficial way in which the Spectacle culture is expressed. It consists of three parts. Projecting images of traditional tourist attractions such as: Jakum Castle, Brandenburger Tor, the Pyramids, the Parthenon, the Colosseum and Petrona's Twin Towers in New York on a large screen made of feathers, collecting tourists and overlapping them on the monuments, and then taking everything away with a sudden wind. The manner of speech, which is simple, clear, and witty, and in the way of spreading the details, which is rapid and buoyant, is similar to the way of the Spectacle. However, it is not too difficult to reveal its true intention, which is not clear in the way of speaking, but becomes so when turning it over. Everyone can see that tourists are no longer people who want to actively engage in history and

culture, but rather that they are objects of the tourist industry, and the way they contact the world is a worn-out model perpetuated by their being objects. Numerous tourist monuments are just 'good-looking' marks in which cultural and historical context has been eliminated.

The fact that we are just wandering 'bystanders', not the ones who give meaning in the Spectacle culture, is linked to the essence of personal existence in modern society. <Piazza della Signoria> is a video work, in which people in a square in Italy are randomly chosen and given false names. They are chosen and given their names by the writer, but in the end they become 'nothing' but a group of people. <Gone Around> shows the process in which spectators come and go like ghosts by overlapping images. It also comments on the real world where the relationship between culture and the spectator is not actually formed. They go past each other passively and mix like oil and water. If culture doesn't help to make a true relationship between human beings, isn't it just an object of interest or an article of consumption?

3.

People in the Spectacle world can not directly grasp the meaning of the world any more. The world is revealed only through certain intervention. We can always see the filtered world through the lens of a camera, a radio, a TV, or the filter of thoughts. Furthermore, it can be manufactured with a certain purpose. In one sense, the Spectacle has the power to construct itself. It repeatedly transforms and produces itself in the way in which it combines the elements of its sight and hearing and elevating human sense. But the Spectacle doesn't want to have to talk with us. It doesn't talk about specific human activities since the purpose is its development through technical expansion. Therefore the Spectacle reflects infinitely repeated images, like a mirror-room, which is a virtual image never meeting reality.

<Oscilloscope> is a work in which the images of children, sliding on a slide in a playground, are made to go up and down like waves of sound. The principle of Oscilloscope, which shows scales of various elements of sound, such as long and short sounds, rising and falling sounds, and strong and weak sounds, technical graphs are replaced with the movements of the children. Combining these sounds with the cheerfulness of the children, who enjoy slides in the playground, provides a view into the visual world. But these movements can never be natural because there is someone who controls the sound. In other words, the movements are changeable in the same way as sound is tuned on your stereo. The whole scene seems to be exciting, cheerful, and

active, but it is limited to a relationship, which can be manufactured to support a specific purpose and is not a relationship with mutual communication just like in the Spectacle.

The principles in <Oscilloscope> are reiterated in <Singing-Room Project 2>. It is designed to be interactive. The pictures of Oscilloscope react to the sound of the spectators in the exhibition. When the spectators sing in front of the two screens, the people on the screen go up and down repeatedly depending on the volume and vibrations of the song. <Singing-Room Project 1> is part of the series of <We> (a former single-channel video work). <We> use the concept of a theater to metaphorically illustrate personal appearance. There is only one spectator in seats for guests, who comes and goes repeatedly like the spectacle of a card section and form a group.

<Singing-Room Project 2>, which will be open to the public in the Dae-An Space Pool, builds on the principles expressed in <We> and <Oscilloscope>. In a hall, two sides are filled with guest seats and there is a stage in the middle where a chosen spectator appears as a singer. When the singer sings, the people in the guest seats react accordingly. They may clap, dance, stand with excitement, etc. Unless there is a singer, the seats will remain empty. We make a Spectacle in singing-rooms all the time. The singing-room is a social area in which a Spectacle is made, or a Spectacle is the chief product of the society. The writer of <Singing-Room Project> asks a question about how Spectacles are made and consumed in this society.

4.

The work of Kim-Min and Choi-Moon is accomplished gradually. One stage of the work is a step toward actualizing the technical aspects and development of details of the next stage. Their work remains in process rather than striving to be a completed masterpiece. This allows their work to have varied conceptual examinations and practical changes of thought. After all, one of Art's basic, conceptual characteristics is to continuously question and to seek second thought. The work of Kim-Min and Choi-Moon contains another strong conceptual characteristic, which reveals the Spectacle society and to reveal the logic of alienation, superficiality, materialism and power.

Reading culture and concentrating on the present cultural situation and the structure surrounding its outer cover is the demand of our time. It is because the amplitude of social change is too big and the changes in the ways of life are too rapid. The role of Art is to react to these changes. It

reacts to the power leading the changes, not to the speed of the changes themselves. Nowadays the power behind making culture is invisible, and it may be an endless tendency toward desire. The purpose of Art is to reveal the invisible things, paying significant attention to clarify vagueness. Today its objective is an aspect of culture. This is why Kim-Min and Choi-Moon's eyes and attention stay on reality, which is complicated but bizarre, sumptuous but vain, cheerful but empty, delicate but sly, and happy but transient. In other words, this is why they work.