

## Private Advice Session of "Prof. Phallus" with "Vagina" Female Students

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Overestimation and distorted anticipation of university society and its members must have been generated by the exceptional enthusiasm for education and overall social atmosphere that prefers résumés containing records of higher education. Yes. That must be a uniquely Korean characteristic. Based on this idea, female university students are mistaken to embody intellect, beauty and sophisticated manners, and university professors are misunderstood as respectable individuals with broad and profound knowledge, according to the impregnable misrepresentation developed around them. However, if one observes closely at their ways of living, it doesn't take long to realize that a lot of them do not represent the idealism of the ivory tower, but actually are vulgar snobs who will do anything to succeed. The professor and the female student are beings that should live differently from what they really are, reflecting the expectations of people. What will be the result when two fictitious lives are combined? 'University professor and female university student.' Their essential significance is revealed when it goes beyond the lexical meaning of teacher-student relationship established through academic major. 'a professor and a female student' is one of the familiar clichés leading to lewd imaginations, and doesn't sound too different from appealing titles of some B-class adult movies. Also, it is a highly preferred icon that overcomes Korean particularity and gains global universality. The relationship between a professor and a female student is in parallel with those between a company president and a female secretary, a master and a maid, and so on, and is an upgraded version of that between a bachelor teacher and a highschool girl. In other words, the motivation behind this relationship is the secret dealings between a mean professor who holds the authority over academic grades and thesis examination and a childish female student who dreams of effortless enhancement of her social position. However, if this combination is refined through aesthetic imagination - as in the exhibition I am introducing now - it will go much beyond that. It is a branch passing down from the relationship between 'an artist and a model,' and may be considered to be a variation of the historical artistic icon of 'an artist's studio.'

Han Keryoon, who is a professor of an art college in his late 30s, might have realized that his status that requires him to meet female students in their early 20s all the time (I envy him so much!) resembles his artistic desire to occupy the objects of representation constantly. His solo exhibition jokingly displays uneasy self-confession as a professor and artist who holds the

superior position in front of the desire to command the objects of representation. Plots of the video works lasting around 15 minutes respectively are considerably simple. For example, a female student is waiting for the professor's advice holding her thesis in black cover in front of the professor in his office. The point of the advice session is the student undressing herself in front of him. The professor observes the process. No conversation is provided to help us guess their situations. This is the entire story of <Prof. Han's Advice Session for Thesis>(2007). With a narrow round table between them, a professor and a female student is sitting face to face each other. They are in the professor's office. He rummages through a file, which seems to contain the student's records, and then approaches the student. He takes off her shirt, skirt, and underclothes in turn, and comes back to his seat as if nothing has happened. After a while, he approaches the student again and dresses her in reverse order. Finally, he undresses himself. At that moment, a female assistant enters to deliver some green tea. The professor goes to her and throws off her clothes as if to help her slip out of her skin. As a consequence, the office is shared by two female students and a professor, all of whom are naked.

This is a scene that reminds of a threesome relationship. The professor's role in the video work is to tediously repeat undressing and dressing the students. Is that all? Yes, that's all. The process is described mechanically but in a dreamlike way.

Sensationalism apparent in all the works is packaged as if it's part of educational processes such as interview and advice session. All the works lack conversation or subtitles, and the only tool that can improve the monotonous story is visual trick. The trick can hardly be described in words, so I would like to supplement my insufficient explanation with reference images. They are still capture images from video works, and all the objects in the images are distorted. Refraction of images is a tool that alleviates the shame of naked human bodies. Also, by using this visual trick and not providing them with direct conversations that reveal the subordinate relationship between the teacher and students, the artist lead the viewers to seek the clues of the story indirectly and visually. The naked bodies of the professor and the student are tangled and twisted together as if those of two snakes. The principle of this clever distortion technique is as follows. This 'human cruller effect' is realized as a result of reversely manipulating the principle of normal HD screen play. A normal screen image is presented using 1,080 scanning lines. The artist separated all the 1,080 scanning lines and re-edited them with time differences for each of the line. For this tedious and time-consuming labor, ten computers at his university were said to have run overnight for a whole week. The time difference between scanning lines made the moving objects to float in the air in amorphous shapes as if they are stretched out rubber bands. The result made live people look like ghosts. The refracted naked flesh of the professor and the student induces optical

illusion of expanding like taffy and blending with each other. The two people's flesh is mixed! Instead of using humiliating dialogs from B-class adult films - like "I will make you a real woman tonight." - the video discloses the professor-student relationship and dealings much more effectively. Over the head of the female student who is sitting obediently, Professor Han approaches her floating like a 'monster.' This imposing spectacle is the result of stretching 1,080 scanning lines.

In addition, the interior of the professor's office seen using the wide angle effect of fisheye lens satisfies the voyeurism of viewers who look into it through a hole. The office has a closed-door system that protects the professor's 'study' from outside interference right from the moment the door is closed from the inside. (One never opens the door of a professor's office without knocking.) Regardless of what the study or research is about. The bookshelf that stands in front of the door also is a shield of intelligence that guarantees the intimate relationship between the professor and the student. (<Student Counseling>(2008)) Glances are turned again and again toward the breasts and body hair of the student who became naked by the professor. Firm breasts that demonstrate the age of early 20s and the wholesome body hair solidly overhung from the timid groin arouse primary eroticism. She seems almost ready to give in. However, nothing happens to fulfil the expectation. No, it is denied. The naked professor and student abandons people's anticipation and fail to move on to the next stage. They just sit straight and silently, staring the camera or throwing their glances here and there, not meeting each other's eyes. The film ends like this. What the hell is this? There is no female student kneeling down with parted lips, or professor who leaves his hardened genitals to her. There is no pornographic scene of the professor greedily approaching the student who is leaning over the table. Or any instruction of spanking that symbolizes the sexual subordinate relationship between teacher and student. What's it all about? In Han Keryoon's works, the professor and the student just repeat undressing and dressing each other and returns to their seated positions. He insists that this whole process is an interview, an advice session, and study. The provocative but somewhat insipid conclusion may be an aesthetic shock absorber that the artist deliberately set up, and the result of self-censorship. Similar shock absorbers are seen here and there. The artist who is dressed neatly in dark suits represents the stereotype on the profession of professor. Actually, such suits which look suitable for high-ranking government officials can be hardly found on art professors. It seems to be the same reason that Prof. Han's naked body never gives up black socks and sleepers. It is the trace of face-saving or making a caricature of himself. The shock absorber also appears in the exhibition title. The official title of <A Study on the Embarrassment of Nudity> that sounds like an academic thesis disguises and protects the subtitle of <A Professor and Female

Students> that moved closer to the essence of the works in a scholarly manner. His exhibition also bears critical and ethical burdens in the Korean context. This is because his 'results of study' conducted as a joint research with 'actual' female students at the university he belongs to risks the criticism of having abused his authority. I heard that he suggested his students who had volunteered to have time think it over, to fend off such troublesome denunciations. Lastly, Han Keryoon's <A Study on the Embarrassment of Nudity> is not based on his real experiences, and I hope there will be no misunderstanding. Hmm. However, there is also no guarantee that it can never have happened or will never happen in reality. Because this reproduced fiction is a cheerful joke on a certain feasible world, and because those who fabricated a social taboo as if it's a joke are a university professor and his students, one gets astonished, excited and sympathized. 'The interested parties' themselves recreated the internal desires that well exceed the socially approved ethical level. Moreover, the exhibition recreated the desires hidden inside the viewers who watch these works. It was a rather bizarre prescription to deal with desires frustrated by taboos. The exhibition closed in just nine days, and I would like to remember it with this essay.