

The Visible City

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In MIOON's "The Visible City," a visual dialectic develops. The night scene covering the entire wall can be interpreted as either heaven or hell depending on the social situation of the viewer. This misty and noisy city is the place that we live in. However, as we enter into the installed visual reality, we realize that it is made of cardboard boxes of various sizes, big and small, stacked and glued together. And audiences, whose faces are captured inside this virtual city, are like that of King Kong. The shadow-like desires of city consumers eat up the city like a monster. This city is full of commercial information propagating the illusion of happiness that can be bought with "stuff." This exhibition is from an international residency exchange program which was also featured in "Propose 7" (Guemho Art Museum), and the documentations of this was exhibited at Changdong Studios. For these artists, the realistic ratio was more important than the pretentious illusions, and by publically showing of their creative process, they warn against another type of illusion, an illusion of art.

A city is like a temple to material capitalism. Benjamin had once strolled around a 19th century arcade in Paris observing what capitalism was all about. A city has a prosperous angelic face represented by sky scrapers and bright lights, but in close view, it possesses dark demonic side with tired and worn-out workers and consumers. It is oppressive in that the only passage way for hope of prosperity is through consumption. The commercial billboards with product names in MIOON's wrapping paper buildings are substances of extravagant material gods that people worship. The false-paradise that is ruled by vague darkness is an ideal environment for visual material gods to appear. Just as Benjamin points out, the stacked goods have a "monadological structure" where all the historical efforts and interests are miniaturized as they are sucked into them. Here, the audiences are called to decipher the core rather than bedazzled by the spells of the spectacle. Enlightenment overcame myth; however, this modern-day society is once more under the spells of materialism. And we need to turn to history to overcome them. It is this kind of visual dialectic of MIOON's that we need.