

Jaeho Jung

Jaeho Jung's large wall paintings have been seen at the Plateau Gallery and Gallery b'one, as well as the *Up and Comers* (2010) exhibition at Total Museum. His works, which mobilize painting, contact paper, and digital print, are inundated by urban signs, offering viewers an intense experience. In the recent Plateau Gallery exhibition, Jung dealt with the space itself, while his Gallery b'one exhibition addressed a personal incident. However, both shows featured dense conglomerations of icons, creating a kind of claustrophobia that served to emphasize the potential mobility of such symbols. As the exhibition space becomes immersed in various icons of urban origin, time veers into a non-linear trajectory of memory and unconsciousness. For example, Jung's *First Accident* employs a dizzy expression of digital prints, involving collage and décollage, to address an accident he had as a young boy, when he fell down some stairs. The work does not describe the details of the accident, but it does deliver the shock which caused the trauma. In addition to wall paintings, Jung also creates small oil paintings which erase the boundary between the abstract and the concrete. From an aesthetic perspective, "abstract vs. concrete" is not necessarily a binary opposition, but Jung plays with the differences between the two. In both the large paintings on a wall and the small paintings on a canvas, the artist collects fragmented signs from our experience and the environment, and sends them racing out at the viewer. These fragmented signs cause any sense of stable narration to collapse, reflecting the urban experience. The result is like a condition of ambiguous memory, where clear meaning is lost and everything advances in a spectacular fashion.

Rather than narration, Jaeho Jung's works privilege primary characteristics of artistic language, relying on experiences that are seen and felt. In particular, the large wall paintings expand out into the environment, thereby inciting dynamic experiences which cannot be felt from small paintings. The artist once said that a site-specific work offers him greater satisfaction because it is impossible to predict its consequence. But at the same time, such works create more pressure on the artist. Site specific work can never be sold, so the artist cannot rely on established methods for heightening the commodity value of art, such as repeating the use of icons until they become characters or pursuing a production method until it becomes a trademark. Though he avoids such practices, Jung's works do share some common threads: scattered partial icons; a focus on cities rather than nature; and an absence of people, which makes it difficult to enact any narrative. The fragmentary icons bring a moderation and style that heightens the stimulus and tension in his

works, recalling urban experiences rather than an urban landscape. His works may be fragmentary, but they are not completely abstract, and they do feature identifiable scenes. For example, he frequently depicts marginalized spaces, like city alleyways. Photos often serve as both direct and indirect material for Jung to represent objects and scenes that quickly appear and then disappear, instead of depicting a wonderful landscape. His icons are not shattered bits of the same complete whole; they are a complicated mix of heterogeneous things of different origins. He aligns them vertically and horizontally within the frame to increase the visual intensity. Artworks that feature a more digitalized environment are able to divide time and space even further, and they do the same for spatial perception and temporal memory. In such works, the processes of production and appreciation cannot lock onto a specific aspect, invoking a problem of choice among a persistent flow of signifiers. **by** Sunyoung Lee