

## **'Seeing' and 'Being Seen'**

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1) 'A painting' is Art that you see with 'eyes'. Speaking in a refined way, it should be seen as 'Visual Art'. Everyone may speak the same way because they all have 'eyes'. But there is an artist who has been continuously studying and scrutinizing this topic who must be introduced. The piece that we are examining is being drawn by Suejin Chung. And because we are seeing it with our eyes, her story is being communicated through a 'picture' rather than with 'text'. This is why it feels fresh even though we already know these facts. We can say that we perceive it by enlightening our 'eyes'. The human 'Eye' always flows with the time and does not stay at a certain point of so-called 'history'. In other words, because we're alive, our lives move suddenly and unexpectedly. There is a saying "‘looking’ (to look) isn't the same as 'seeing' (to know)." This means that there is a difference between seeing what you see and seeing what you know. The important question concerns whether we really know what we see. The 'picture' itself contains a hidden meaning. To give an elucidating example, think of the foreigners who are able to 'see' this article (written in Korean) but are unable to understand its meaning.

Suejin Chung's eyes aren't that different from ours. She sees things as we do. The sky, earth, sea, mountains, vegetation, human beings, etc. But the central features of her vision are tuned to drawing and painting, which is informed by what her vision, changing 'seeing' to 'being seen.' We are looking at this right now with our 'eyes'. And this is her 'Painting'. Paintings do not require proof or explanation to be seen by our eyes.

2) Leonardo da Vinci's quote "Pictures (pittura = picture) are mental leads." is well known. He insisted that pictures (painting) are not simply reflections of our sensory receptors called 'eyes'. The zeitgeist during his time 500 years ago – the medieval period – could be characterized with incredible abstractness and use of conceptual space. Da Vinci was an example of how hard it is for a human (individual) to draw the overall mental picture only through one's own senses. Suejin Chung also suffered from this problem. Many people call works of art "pies in the sky." They remain in their ateliers and focus only on the world that is being reflected through their eyes. We do not have any political or social right to complain about this life. Take for example of the lives of Cezanne and Van Gogh. All they left behind are flat, two-dimensional spaces or canvases that they drew or painted on. The question is this. If these painting show the essence of our culture, then what are their roots?

3) On Suejin Chung's recent work, J. Donald, the New York-born critic, mentioned that, "She has the right 'eye' for 'nonsense'." He says that if you paraphrase the word 'Nonsense,' it means "will not make any sense", and thus can be replaced with 'no-meaning', 'stupid' and 'absurdity.' 'Nonsense' literally means that there is no sense, indicating that there is nothing that can be positively proven or instructed. . To make an analogy, it is the same phenomenon as the blind fumbling a 'thing' called 'art.' Simply put, the language is somewhat fictitious in a way. We are aware of the meanings of certain words like 'sky', 'sea' or 'human being.' We store the 'meanings' in our brain. This is a standard method of perceiving how we understand the world and mankind. However, when we are speaking of the 'sky', it would be odd for one to think of how the enormous physical universal space is stored in our small dark brain. When discussing brain functions and the various perspectives of our physiology, scientists call senses 'signs'. Signs themselves do not contain any meaning but catalyze the formation of such 'meanings'.

This is why Suejin Chung says that her canvas, upon which the picture is drawn, is configured from the standpoint of structuralism.

A canvas is a two-dimensional space. On the other hand, a 'structure' is made up of the whole, which is made up of units and conversion components. As an analogy for such a 'space,' we can use the ocean, which is often calm, clear, and blue and from which we derive pleasure. The unit that comprises the 'whole' is water. Water, which cannot be counted, collects and creates the whole ocean. The scientific composition of water droplets never change. They are the elements that constitute the whole. Whether the ocean is calm or violent, the unit remains unchanged. Because water droplets are always the units that comprise the picture of 'whole', they are the units that preserve the law of structure.

They always remain as self-controlling units. Let's return to Suejin Chung's painting. The various materials and human figures are filled in her paintings, working as a unit respectively. For example, each human figure is painted without any epic relation to another. These various figures are the units that configure the picture as a whole. It could be said synchronic balance. Like other artists, Suejin Chung has been thinking about the flow of art.

She said that she has been contemplating the flow of consciousness continuously. Like everyone else, she once collapsed under questions about the origins of art – how the 'flow' of art was created and structured with the eloquence that we recognize today. However, she stopped agonizing and started to observe the fraction of object. Just as one thread of water does not make up the entire ocean, numerous water fountains are

welling up all over the place to make the whole ocean.

Her interest in structure, flow of consciousness, began judging not from its origin, but from its aspect of consciousness. This is her canvas that we 'see' through our eyes. This two-dimensional aspect is our interest of 'being seen' and this might affect art history.