

Two Worlds, or Beyond

-Short note on Moon Kyung Jung's new works

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1.

"I understand at that moment. We are having a wonderful journey together but we are mere masses of metal destined to respective orbits in solitude. From far, it looks beautiful, like shooting stars, but in reality we are only beings like prisoners who are respectively locked up in one's own cell and can go nowhere. When the orbits of two satellites coincidentally being overlapped, we can face each other and may open our minds, be of one mind. Nonetheless, it occurs in the twinkling of an eye and the next moment, we are in absolute isolation. Until one burns oneself and becomes zero."

in *Sputnik Sweetheart* by Haruki Murakami

2.

My imaging of the thick *matière* created by overlapped layers of collages and the gravity of the intense color like 'Black' pictures, 'Light' pictures and 'Red' Series soon disappeared as I opened the door of the Artist Moon Kyung Jung's studio. The air in the atelier was light and its light was warm. It was, however, not only because of its physical condition, air or light. The unidentifiable warmth of ambiguity was vibrating from the new works on a worktable and it was close to the queer hospitality of the artist who welcomed me (or the other)—while I was approaching towards the works—but hesitated to show her face. Aligned one another, the canvases are made out of frames woven from silk, instead of canvas, and supported by wood panels underneath them; a single piece is comprised of a silk-woven canvas and another picture arranged onto the wood panel. A picture on a silk canvas called *Gyeon-hwa* and a background picture of collages and drawings, together with the space between them, create a combination that is ordinary but coincidental.

3.

For one month from November 2013 on, Moon Kyung Jung stayed in the International Residency at the Vermont Studio Center, Vermont, U.S. and it was the time that she initiated this new series in full-scale. Leaving behind daily life packed with lectures and home, the artist was inspired by harmony between the complete solitude at the countryside studio abroad and the vigorous communication with colleagues and visiting artists in Vermont; despite of its short term, she had an invaluable chance to reify and experiment with the new concept that she had conceived for new works. First used in her career in 2012 for the illustrations of a book about the traditional Korean dance, *Gyeon-hwa* practices are the same line of works with her use of traditional Korean

materials—*Hanji*, traditional Korean paper made from mulberry trees, *Madae*, burlap-woven bag but also differentiated from her previous ones. *Gyeon* or silk is transparent but semitransparent simultaneously, fragile but strongly present, traditional but modern material. The artist has inquired about her own way in the midst of polarities surrounding her—home and abroad, home and work life, Eastern and Western painting as her practices are in flux along the diverging and converging passages. Thus, the sophisticated and intricate layers of *Gyeon* become a metaphor for her journey and a symbol, at the same time, of the space that is inwardly open so as to step towards another world.

4.

Collage is Moon Kyung Jung's trademark, a strategy of imagery for conflicts between different identities in herself and points of creations emerged by these conflicts. It is another interesting point to observe how collages are transformed and repeated. On a background picture, pasting fragments cut from newspapers or colored papers, the artist combines collages with drawings at random—drawings about very mundane but fragmented memories—such as the uniform worn when she was high school student or the cornice of the old palace where the drawing contest was held. *Gyeon-hwa* reveals the traces that such past unconsciousness is edited and reconstructed by the present self. The space between the background picture and *Gyeon-hwa* embodies a kind of automatism collage underlying her oeuvres, which unveils the very mechanism of memory being consigned to oblivion and concealment through time.

5.

It is difficult that any one readily believes in truthness of pure art. Art may not be grandiose nor powerful. When myths around art being peeled off, what is left would be a confession about endless abjection on the existence of human beings and the incapability of art which becomes vulnerable to non-transparency of the enormous world. If still art can convey meanings, it is upon the endeavors to revolve without a halt around the space between the non-transparent world and the transparent self and record this process. The artist Moon Kyung Jung never stops the journey. In the process of harmonizing the two worlds and facing incessant discordances, she still finds her road and never stops her orbit to the unknown. It will be: 'Until one burns oneself and becomes zero.'