

Bang Chang Hyun - Monolog

The Phenomenological Reduction of Experience

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Life is endless experience. A mode of experience can be seen as the working of the mind, a direct reaction through the body senses, an integration of mind and body. Empiricist philosopher John Dewy asserted the integrated, monistic idea, that action and thinking all take place within experience at the same time. We often witness the artists visualizing their individual, integrated experience in formative language. Artist Bang Chang Hyun visualizes perception and recognition of memories. In this exhibition he addresses emotional perception of experience under the theme “monolog”. In terms of cognition and materialism, Bang presents a visualization of the emotion he feels in daily life, the senses with which he observes the body, and inner remains derived from the fragments of memories of long ago.

The crucial modeling feature of his work is ‘contrast’: as an object’s character is divided into yin and yang, elements such as tenderness and intensiveness, brightness and darkness, beauty and ugliness are in coexistence and also in contrast. First factors defining his work are architectural structure (space) and coexistence and transformation of animals, where geometric architectural structure is minimal. The concept of twofold space and layer is represented here with concise lines.

Seven years ago he began employing such form, but the failure ratio after firing has not abated. Despite many experiments with body clay, glaze, and firing temperature, ceramic remains too fastidious to meet the geometric composition he wants to attain. Completed works are rarely produced. Considering that different material features can be adopted, the artist mentioned “I was not much interested in clay and glaze during graduate school days in the United States. I liked very much American education representing artistic concepts by using diverse materials. However, my own identity was required to compete in the global art world. I came to have the confidence needed to succeed with ceramic.” There is an obvious reason why Bang persists in using clay despite materials easier to address perhaps, such as bronze and FRP. A way of modeling with material the artist can address dexterously can be a means to differentiate his art from others, and a driving force to unfold his ingenious art. A pig is the primary animal he uses alongside deer, donkey, and goat. While buildings in his work appear geometric, animals appear organic. Clay can be the best material to express animals.

The second element Bang uses is color duplicity. Black absorbs sunlight whereas white reject it. Red

is symbolic of yang, while blue of yin. In his work bright hues are applied to buildings while dark colors to animals. Distinguishing each plane, he uses a mixture of monochrome and floral designs. Glazes mainly used are cobalt oil and lust oil. The white animals and floral designs on a blue and green building are in contrasts of red, blue, and gold. As geometric and organic lines are in stark contrast, warm and cold colors, primary and monochrome colors are in exquisite contrast in each work.

The third factor is integration of sculpture and character, which is a visually significant device to conceptualize metaphor and paradox. As sky and earth, mountain and sea, external and internal space are distinguishable, a human being is defined by his or her exposed and innate properties. Bang reads a human's double-sided character with his keen sense, and an animal is used as a metaphor. Superficially employed are gentle, good-natured animals. He infers answers to such questions as "What does the donkey have in mind?" and, "What does the goat think about?" Characters are a means to transfer inner voices to animal bodies. *бoз e кyрβα* (God is a whore) is a Macedonian word that is not accepted with ease like Korean or English. Applied from a dictionary of archaic words, this term shows a form conceptual artists who enjoy linguistic amusement employ.

Five stories with the theme 'monolog' are unfolded in these works. Of them, *Pseudo Innocence* is a work gazing at the human soul. This work is a metaphor for vacancy and pain before power, while smiling or appearing superficially bright. Connoting pity and bitterness, this work represents my look within me. This is the artist's monolog and also ours. *Respect to All Inflated and Enlarged* is black humor. An undersized man is lying alone on a large architectural structure. A precariousness is sensed in his mouth inflating bubble gum to the full. At the moment the bubble bursts, an inflated mass of desire is maximized with a genital organ. The nature of incident is portrayed in contrast between a heavy yang represented with the genital organ and a light yin represented with bubble gum. In a moment, the perfect image of a successful man is damaged, as if trapped in desire. This conveys a message that is more witty than the warning "Curb your desire."

The Secret Garden of Memory has viewers look further into his clandestine monologs. The artist represents the trauma he can't remember but never forgets through his work. Traditional patterns often applied to ceramic decoration are adopted to express his floral forms. He observes chaste flowers' jubilation and the pain they feel when picked. He paradoxically depicts a situation, tempering his emotion for a long time. After, flowers bloom from a building. Floral patterns are imprinted on pigs, and unpropitious tattoos die out.

Our experience of an object refers to the most elemental, primal relationship with an object. Maurice Merleau-Ponty defines phenomenology, which tries to reduce to the object itself to grasp its nature as follows: "Phenomenology is a philosophy of unveiling the intersubjective, entangled relations between space and man, and trying to embrace an accidental incident as it is." Bang

Chang Hyun questions humanity's elemental two-sidedness through monolog, visualizing situations with metaphor and paradox through contrast. He represents the movement and mixtures of yin and yang essential to objects, clashes between the visible and invisible with black humor. The artist sees the world through a clear lens, and monologizes, meeting a falsity to be purified several times everyday. His accumulated monologs are a paradox awakening those who cannot shout "The king has donkey ears."