

World of Works of artist Min Mun

Restoration of disconnected communications and recovery of relationship

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In Easter Island located in the South Pacific Ocean of the western part of Chile, there exists a mystery stimulating the curiosity of the whole world. They are the Moai statues of Easter Island. These statues designated as UNESCO World Heritage are characterized in common by faces with wide foreheads and long noses, and most of statues are facing away from the ocean looking at one direction of the center of the island standing in a line. They look as if they were supplicating something with eagerness. However, it is not concretely revealed how, by whom and why not less than 900 Moai statues of the whole island were able to be made. It remains as an unsolved enigma and they are even discussed as a possible candidate of the Seven Wonders of the World.

The reason why I refer to the Moai statues in the prologue is that the motif of sculptor Mun's works showing in his first private exhibition deals with the very Moai statues. His works with huge and heavy sense of volume and aesthetic quality which are simple and rough resemble the Moai statues in many aspects. Artist Mun added a sort of divine elements to this. Then what messages would artist Mun like to give us through the Moai statues? Curiosity keeps growing. As the mysterious secret door to the Moai statues, it is possible for us to carefully open some suggestive and symbolic significance through Mun's works. When we intend to inquire into the meaning of his works, what attracts our attention first is the fact that all his works have eyes and noses except mouths in common; then, the heads of the human figures are cut and severed in whole or in part. What kind of meaning would they ever contain?

What artist Mun intends to basically propose through this exhibition is about "problems of communications and relationship". We can easily draw an analogy that the huge figures without mouths but with hard and cold facial expressions suggest modern-day people who are disconnected from communications and social relationship. They also connote people's wish of shouting at something in the middle of contradictory structure and repression of the modern society, as well as realistic restrictions and taboos that do not allow anything in effect. They are a sort of unspoken cry and scream of the artist towards the world. Like this, artist Mun's oeuvre basically connotes critical spirit of the modern society. Not only the humanity gradually losing its raison d'être in the stream of modern-day society with breathless changes, but also the negative phenomena such as disconnection

of communications and relationship can be considered as the artist's paradoxical attack or criticism of "conflicts", "antagonism", "contradiction" and "crisis" of contemporary people. Thus, as the Moai statues and undeciphered characters of "Rongorongo" of Easter Island known as the most isolated civilization on earth are equivalent to the symbolism of the contemporary people with disconnection of communications and relationship, the works of artist Mun also contain the identical meaning.

Artist Mun's exhibition is titled "Same Space, Different thoughts: Same bed, different dreams". This expression refers to the situation in which thoughts apparently seem to be in the same side, position and setting but in reality, they can contain completely different opinions or assertions. To borrow a line from the artist, this title refers to a hidden intention and it also expresses political and social structures, in symbolic and suggestive way, of which different thoughts are concurrent even in the same space. It eventually contains our realistic stories obliged to follow what the government says. It seems that the artist is deeply concerned and distressed about the individualistic aspect and structural contradiction of modern society in which different thoughts are concurrent in the same space. However, while the artist criticizes these phenomena of contradiction, severance and realistic crisis and conflicts, he is not just sitting on his hands leaving the situation as it is. This is explained by the fact that the works of artist Mun equally shows the hopeful aspect of intending to overcome and cure the problems. These coincide with the suggestive expression method of the artist demonstrating through this exhibition.

Let's pay attention to the manufacturing techniques of his works for a while. If we carefully observe the heavy and huge figures, we can see that his overall work form is completed made of many circles of diverse sizes from a coin-shape size to a big circle. This seems that each one is structurally connected and forms a completed living organism as if it were a living cell. For artist Min, the circular form containing the meaning as a living cell not only refers to the functional prototype of all living things, but also a structural basic unit, and it corresponds to "the will and manifestation of triumphing over the severance of communications and relationship" of modern society. Simultaneously, through smooth forms of circle, it also plays a role as a mediator connecting the relationship of modern-day people by circulating the stories of structural contradiction of modern society restricted, repressed and considered as a taboo.

Furthermore, it is interpretable that one of the most essential elements of the works of artist Min is the direct communication and respiration with the audience, in other words, the interaction with the audience. When the audience enters the exhibition room, the air (fog) fully fills the room by the detected sensor as if the air itself welcomed the audience. For all living organisms including humans, air is an indispensable element for life and the source of all nature, this way, air plays a role as a

mediator and means of sufficient communication with the audience. By way of the participation of the audience, his works finally metamorphose into a mysterious being as the Moai statues. Through such suggestive and symbolic manufacturing method and means utilization, artist Min dreams of “restoration of disconnected communications and recovery of relationship”.

His works simply expressed in heavy and huge the sense of volume as the Moai statues participating in this exhibition also resemble Dol Hareubang (rock statues) of Jeju Island of our country in terms of their “plain beauty” with simple and artless property. One different feature can be found from the material based on “iron” instead of stones. For artist Mun, the material “iron” serves not only as a means to contain the most natural expression represented by a solid material, but also as the most direct and effective method allowing the transparent manifestation of invisible cross section of time due to its naturalness and the derived artless property by the corrosiveness of iron with time. Moreover, his works described in this way contain not only temporality as a form of flow of changing time and accumulated time, but also spatiality. Even though the civilization of Easter Island disappeared into the legend, the Moai statues still remain up to now and constantly stimulate our imagination. In the same way, through his oeuvre, artist Mun provides us with the treasure of infinite imagination and curiosity. Now it is time to sail towards the Treasure Island.