

“Dialogue with Nothingness, Formed by Accumulation • ”

The World of Miyuki Yokomizo’s Sculptural Painting

It was about 15 years ago, in 2002, when I witnessed Miyuki Yokomizo’s work for the first time. It was in the exhibition SAISON ART PROGRAM “Slanting House / Statements by the Artists in Japan since 9.11” at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo. She was exhibiting an installation of artificial, resinous soaps, which had been molded out of real soaps prior to being colored. The transparent feeling of colored soap, which is actually fake, wrapped the entire exhibition area and created an atmosphere of extradimensional space. At that time I was visiting more than 300 exhibitions per year, and most of the works have since faded from my memory. The installation of Yokomizo, however, seems to have been stored in the drawer of my memory such that I still remember it well.

The next time I encountered Yokomizo’s work again was in 2005. Seeing her solo exhibition “Miyuki Yokomizo – invisibility –“ at the Galerie Aube of Kyoto University of Art and Design, I wrote the article “Art” in the cultural section of the Asahi Shimbun Osaka head office. There, she exhibited a huge installation of four items including photos and objects, contrasting the world of light and darkness. On the subject of my impression of this confrontation, I wrote, “In this beautiful space of light and darkness, it seems that space, time and light, which are the constituents of this world, are projected. She beautifully visualized the world of light and darkness, which encompasses this cosmic space.” What stood out as characteristic of Yokomizo’s work at that time was permeability and transparency in relation to light and space.

So far, Miyuki Yokomizo has worked as a sculptor and has been particular about time, space and light, excelling at installations. However, at this time, what she tackles is a two-dimensional work. Although two-dimensional artwork is generally thought to be a painting of sorts, Yokomizo declares that hers is a sculpture. Even though it is a two-dimensional work, it is one of matter; a painting created by this method of making sculptures will be a sculpture. In the case of Yokomizo, it is rather an act of accumulation; of stacking up rather than of painting. It is the point where countless horizontal and vertical lines intersect. A work with colored lines overlapping each other, forming a mesh surface that contains time and creates new space. On its surface, there is a feeling of trembling air. At first glance, the surface seems ascetic, but when you see it from a short distance, rises of splashing paints reveal themselves and the surface becomes expressive. The impression of the work changes, depending on the long or short span of distance between the viewer and the work.

Putting oil paint on a single thread and hand-flicking that thread fixes the paint on a support, such as a canvas or paper. The thread shows the horizontal and vertical, the warp and weft, and the painting is knitted almost such as in the process of hand-woven fabric. On the surface, marked with traces of time and action, there are surprising numbers of accumulated lines. The act of just flicking the thread is reminiscent of the act of a nun. When that act and her own physicality overlap each other and respond, time of nothingness spreads and wraps her. It is neither fixing the image, nor drawing. It is neither using the brush, nor touching the screen. The traces of the action, called "dialogue with nothingness", are formed by accumulating an enormous amount of time, which eventually becomes the artwork. Indeed: it is her breath.

When I saw these works, I had the impression that she is now transforming her installation artwork, which I had seen in the past, into reconstructed, two-dimensional forms. It seems to be an experimentation - an attempt - at visually understanding the relationship between space and time by replacing the relationship between the plane and time.

In this solo exhibition, by using the wall of the gallery as a support, there were splashes of paints and a vertical line on the wall, which shows a trace of one vertical thread from the ceiling to the floor. It is a glorious installation by using the space itself as a support, without relying on any existing rectangular supports. We can call these only five vertical lines and the splashes of paints the place or the space where the sculpture called "painting" stands. Recently, installations exist as "art of relationship", and today it has become fashionable as experience-based, as participatory types of work or as interactions with audiences, but Yokomizo is not in favor of this, or rather, she realized that she cannot become familiar with the "art of relationship". Probably because she wants to make her work complete and autonomous. In her work, there is a strength which prevents others from intervening into her own world. Firmly rooted in the earth, decidedly at her standing position, and being ready not to be shaken. On the other hand, it can be said that her own deep psychological world, which was unconsciously created, sprouts out. It is the sculptural painting world of Miyuki Yokomizo, confined by its materiality and time in the space of painting, which develops illusion.

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