

■ Oil painting: A Good Match

When I first entered college I studied an array of basic subjects such as watercolor painting, oil painting and charcoal drawing. While I was taking classes on installations and storytelling, I realized that I was most compatible with Oil painting. The smell of it, the layers of paint, the scraping involved, the brush used; I think it was the sensory aspects of Oil painting that made me decide that it was a good match for me.

Whenever I start doing something, I have the tendency to rush into it. This is when the fact that Oil painting needs quite a lot of time to dry comes in handy. While normally I would soon grow impatient, the paint forces me to wait. In that sense as well, Oil painting is well matched to my personality.

■ Painting Self-portraits

During one class I was given the assignment to draw a self-portrait. To think about myself in this way was fun. I tend to think in terms of “good” and “bad”. So for my first self-portrait I spat out all the things I hated about myself, the bad, the negative, onto the canvas. By doing this, only the good things remained inside me, and I was able to make sense of my own emotions.

Creating a painting while simultaneously reimagining yourself; it was that type of experience. At that time, I realized a simple truth. The line between good and bad is merely something I drew myself. The line wasn't there to begin with. By getting the chance to create something, it was as if this line was created, shifted, as if it grew stronger.... The first time my inability to erase this line manifested itself was when I created my first self-portrait.

■ The Death of my Grandfather

The first theme of my work took shape when I was 22. My grandfather died when I graduated from college. At this time in my life, I was thinking a lot about Life and Death.

It was the same as when I was thinking about the line between good and bad. Suddenly the thought that ‘those who die turn into light’ surfaced inside my head.

‘Ah, that’s right,’ I thought, and these words ringing clearly in my mind urged me to paint a picture, to express them. The objective of painting became clear. In the end, painting is about expressing the light you saw as it is, to capture it in color and project it onto the canvas. And somehow, at that time I felt as if I could communicate with my late grandfather. It was through this that I found meaning in creating art.

■ A Stone found at Sea

Why we are in body, why we are walking, why we are; this was the next theme that floated into my mind. The motif I thought of was that of a stone I found at sea. In the end, I was the one who picked it up and moved, though I’m sorry for that. It is this stone that caught my attention that I decided to turn into a motif and paint.

At that time, the stone wasn't floating or moving in the slightest. It just existed there. Simply put, there was equal pressure from both above and beneath, so it just stayed there. It wasn't moving. In much the same way, my body simply exists. As time passes, I get older. When this happens, my skin slowly wears away and its elasticity disappears.

In short, this is merely a matter of gravity. By considering the stone, its weight I wanted to focus on the force exerted on them. To find a point of similarity between me and the stone and paint this on a canvas was my goal.

■ First Impression

Recently, Dr. Stephen Hawking passed away. I had a great deal of respect for him.

According to Hawking, both time and space have an axis. When time becomes distorted, and space becomes distorted, this is when the universe can come into existence. This is what is known as the Big Bang.

You might go so far as saying that looking up to the stars is the same as thinking about existence. This got me thinking that creation, the beginning of existence, might be quite alike to me painting a picture.

After putting down the "first impression" on the canvas, the motive that first led me to painting, I think some more, and think some more, and because it's Oil painting, I can layer and overlap paint. By doing so, the initial motif becomes buried and invisible.

Painting a picture is a process that takes time, and layers of paint cumulate. As more layers are added, a sense of depth emerges, and what one might call a sense of space is born.

Next, I scrape off all the layers that have accumulated inside the painting, going back in time once more, returning the space to its initial state, while the last layers of paint added leave the picture somewhat distorted; this is how my pictures gradually take shape.

What is most important is the first impression, the origin.

■ A Reason to Paint

I feel that if I don't paint I can't make sense of my own feelings and thought. I found that painting is the easiest way of expressing myself.

While I don't know for whom I'm painting, I feel as if the result will mean something to someone.

In this age, you will see things you don't necessarily want to see. It's easy to grow confused, but when painting, you have fun, it gives you time to think, and project these thoughts back onto a canvas.

■ The Act of Expression

What expression is to me can be illustrated by the following: how would you fix an orb, an orb that could easily roll away, to its place? For example, would you cut a thin section of the bottom and keep things clean and simple, or could you try to create a stand for it? Or would you split the orb in half and display the halves side by side? Or, would you crush it? The alternations made to display something that cannot easily be displayed I feel are an expression in themselves.

■ Meeting People Through Art

What I want is to be able to meet people through my art. That's what gives me the most satisfaction. In the end, the most interesting part is the communication between people.