

## COMMENTARY

### **New Constructivism / Korean Classicism**

The sublimation of beauty as a result of pursuing truth within human nature revives in our space through artistic expression. The essence of beauty shown here is generic in nature.

#### **1. Korean Sensibility and Potential for International Language**

What can a Korean artist show to the world? Is what she wants to show what the world wants to see? It is meaningless to present what the rest of the world can produce after tweaking it a little bit. It should be something that deeply relates to traditional heritage and natural tendency of Korean people.

Kong Sookja's recent works contain the beauty of Korea in terms of material, productive techniques, monochromic expressions and compositional treatment of the void. The true "Korean-ness" is expressed when the people's emotion and energy rooted in tradition is presented to the world through such an internationally compatible medium as Ms. Kong's lacquer works. They communicate with an international language that transcends geographical and chronological boundaries.

The content of an artwork is the author's expressive intent. It may be an attention to the perceived world, or to human experience and emotions.

#### **2. Change of Perception and the Expression of Creative Value**

We often say the first qualification of an artist is to become a pioneer. The creative value of an artist is scaled by originality and idiosyncrasy of his or her contention, which is materialized by chosen media and technique. Human being and the world are changing all the time. So is the art, and if not, it is not art any more. Leading modern artists created admirable works through unceasing changes. It is never because of lack of originality. Their inner perception, with influence from outside, forces them to create new works.

Kong Sookja's exhibition is the result of her passionate change. Her past works were mainly constructive still lifes and landscapes with classical flair. Her recent works, however, reveal that she has been undergoing a major change through selection of new objects and evolution into a new expression technique with employment of lacquer, egg shell and mother of pearl. The variation in her perception and ensuing creative value

make her works look completely new, but linkage with her previous works is naturally detected. She has been actively confronting and accepting the changes.

In the midst of globalized trend of modern society, what is really a globalized Korean art? It is to establish a unique Korean style of painting with a grounding in Korean culture.

### **3. Intellectual Compositional Order and Objective Conceptualization**

The New Constructivist: The reason why they are called Constructivist is that they have strong linkage with Constructivist of early 20th century Constructivist in shaping and selection of media. This school intended to create concrete objects, which are not related to existing shapes or complex bodies. They use non-conventional canvas by forgoing the concept of easel painting.

Should I classify Kong Sookja's recent works, dare I say it New Constructivism. Even without her works with minimal and reductive style, she consistently showed the tendency of New Constructivist. She adopted Korean traditional lacquer and produces simple colored (mostly black and golden color) works on boards. The monochrome composition of pictures is based on New Constructivism style objectification of intellectual shaping. I have known Kong Sookja for a long time, as we have been working together in some artist group. She always is very challenging with unceasing passion for good works. I do hope that her exhibition will be of great success, and that she will continuously show us excellent works in the future.

Theodore Roosevelt said that art was accomplished when there was a freedom of being responsible by artists for their vitality and passion. Therefore, artists should be more in agony as they enjoy freedom, and through such agony, artists may approach greatness.

- Min, Byunggak, Artist and Chairman of International Art Association