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From hindrance to liberation

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Even if Seungean Cha's artwork is expressed on canvas, it's different from other artworks on canvas which are already perfectly ready for being painted. Cha's loose canvas shows wood frame holding the canvas that looks woven rather than painted with flaccid basic background because of gravity. The flaccid image with basic background will change when a spectator touch the surface. It's not a neutral background but a materiality itself. <Frame> dyed and woven as the way wood frame of the canvas was emphasizes the frame itself. The thing Cha displays through the canvas is not a frame which can show something over there transparently, but the frame itself. The materiality of language can be maximized when the language is read or heard. For instance, when an illiterate sees some letters on paper, the person regard the letter as aesthetic appreciation (formativeness) rather than letters. In other words, when people hear an unfamiliar language, musical elements like accent are maximized.

The materiality of language hinders figuring out a meaning and an object but it helps to find out another element which is a body of communication. Both art and life are obscure rather than clear. Since materiality of language makes its object and its meaning vague, modernism switches the hindrance to liberation by liberating the language tied by the object and meaning. The typical trait of modernism is the aesthetics of disturbance such as estrangement effect or defamiliarization. Thus Cha's works are unclear like hanging veil or drooping tape. Since the vague language can't define an object and meaning, the language becomes the object instead of defining the object. That is, a language is a object and the object is the language at once. There has been effort to minimize distance between an object and a language or sever between both since the distance became aware in linguistics and modern art.

As art history demonstrates, modern art shows a process disassembling painting referring to the elements of flat surface(two dimensions) instead of illusion. The

elements have been experimented by artists. It pursues the nature of the object and the language including ultimate aim while completed by itself. Art history, nevertheless, has shown modernism has something to do with decoration unlike the ideology of modernism. It is noticed not only The Arts and Crafts Movement in the late 19th century and an experiment in Bauhaus in the early 20th century but also modern artists like Klimt, Gauguin, Monet, and Matisse. For example, Matisse who thought art should be something like a good armchair in which to rest from physical fatigue has characterized 'expression'.

Expression is not a matter of passion mirrored on the human face or revealed by a violent gesture. The whole arrangement of my picture is expressive. The place occupied by the figures or objects, the empty spaces around them, the proportions, everything plays a part. Composition is the art of arranging in a decorative manner the various elements which the painter uses to express his sentiments. (Matisse)

In the light of research by Clement Greenberg, decoration is the specter that haunts modernist painting. Thus the aim of modernism painting is 'to discover the decorative insofar as it functions solely as decoration'(Greenberg). From Peter Warren's viewpoint, Greenberg concluded visual images can avoid being decorative by being dissolved in material support--A canvas will be material support for easel painting. Like wise a wall can be material support for wall painting--of painting. Greenberg has said cubism modified painting as a decorated objet and asserted decoration and painting would be transcendently united. Decoration would apply for canvas instead. Thus, the decorative will be legitimized while obtaining a higher value. Paradoxically, modernism that could acquire the purity of painting through a the perfectest flatness on canvas brought the things which had infringed the autonomy of painting in art history. One is the aesthetics concept for explaining vanished images and meaning and another is the decorative.

Aesthetics that has denied mythical, religious and literary narrative became full of the concepts of philosophy. At once, secondary things became foregrounding. Although the tendency caused other difficulties and complexity to be understood, it has proven that various differences organize the body of identity since modernism. Since mostly crafts is regarded as a part of functions, it was an outsider of art. A compromise plan of 'pluralism' referring to crafts as a category is hollow like pluralism itself. The aim of modernism standing for returning the flatness of

painting motivated Cha who doubted the ambiguity of textile art she majored in originally to combine painting she majored in afterward with textile art. It was not to quit performing textile art to perform painting work. It is meaningless to divide crafts and fine arts since there's no difference between them in modern times. Even though Cha tried to escape from textile art, it did not signify painting was an alternative.

In fact, The handcrafted have had an identity crisis in the age of mechanical reproduction. Within the framework of modernism, it was significant to discover a new use of textile art, which rather improved both than suppressed each other. Cha noticed that the importance of a canvas itself. Cha regards a canvas as a plain, twilled and satin woven fabric even though most people think the canvas as a just sheet of epicene and white paper. Cha performed experiment of materiality like 'matière' regarded importantly in modern art by weaving canvas directly. Each thread was extended from flat surface to installation and performance. For instance, Cha tried to establish a new communication structure among separated categories to connect different generations while hanging down transparent thread regularly at an exhibition center or lengthening eyelashes. It's a happening to weave space and body like weaving fabric.

The happening to weave space and body can be possible when the happening is regarded as text. From Roland Barthes' view point, he determined the characteristic of modern art. It was that text was 'the woven, kinkle, and the way of being woven' instead of work. Cha's work uniting background and image indicates a creation through the process of completing text rather than a representation. Text can be completed when the text constructs meaning instead of seeking the ultimate essence. When Cha is weaving, she might look elegant like Vega of the east or Clotho. It facilitates an art work, as text, can be expanded to network through successive union. Barthes has described an art work, as text, has unlimited structure and plural text. The text, as a medium, pulls the differences of several elements to itself instead of removing the differences.

Background is changeable like the sky and the land. The empty space of weave is the main factor of text. The background woven differently according to material, direction and density reveals the changing moment of meaning structure delicately. Cha's art work changes the most basic element such as canvas or frame. There is

no base like text itself because of 'supplements making up incomplete and raw thing' (Jacques Derrida). The weaving of several signs can expand the surface diversely instead of keeping the principle underneath the surface. Background and the image are united, which can create a meaning of the art work. The meaning is neither involving with image nor situational contingencies of journey for purity and autonomy.

The meaningful thing is intermediate zone rather than the two extremes referring to everyday life and transcendence. It helped Cha to realize 'an artist should interact with substances and materials(2011)'. In addition, Cha has defined a relationship between materials and herself as 'middle zone of hand-operated and active harmony'. The relationship between subordinates and superiors dose not exist in the middle zone between materials and her. Cha could figure out the relationship through deep though about modern art circuitously. A canvas is recognized a part of work instead of removing with something covered. Dyeing and painting regard as equal element with weaving. In the context, works combined weaving and painting could be created. There are lot of Cha's works woven with painting, dyeing and empty space. Images and patterns are blended. Cha has performed an artwork combined Burberry pattern and Mark Rothko's painting to discover a relationship between weaving and painting.

Both of them not always have something in common as only luxury items. It brings out to mediate not only everyday life and ideal but also material and spirit. The loom at the exhibition center clarifies that weaving skill plays a role to explore new field instead of crafts or painting. Although the woven images are inconsistent, it's basically the center of horizontality and verticality. Grid structure reechoing from the frame of tetragonal canvas is one of the ways to define the flatness of painting with collage. In case of Cha, the loom she uses also contains coordinate axis, horizontality and verticality, like grid structure but the horizontality and verticality of Cha's work is point of standard and violation as well. An artwork, <Tent>, woven like tent pattern was woven as a pattern of horizontality and verticality as well as diagonal line while showing another arrangement including empty space and wood frame on the back of the canvas. It is not woven from specific point but crosses the frame and the axis.

It is already beyond the frame as a fabric. In the light of A Thousand Plateaus by

Gilles Deleuze and Guattari, they compare fabrics and felt. Fabrics not only impose the order upon distinguishing forms between the fixed and the changeable but also organize new field between the melodic horizontal and the harmonic vertical. It becomes a model of work as organic order. They have also persisted a board(fabric) with a reglet of labor should transform into a flat board(felt). The flat board means an intersection of all detailed forms. The flat board is a ultimate gate which every formation can find their own exists as well. There are unlimited fine and anonymous pieces doing a variety of connections on flat board. Artists can create their art worlds variously on the flat board. The model established and collapsed consistently and the process expanded, collapsed and rebuilt constantly are important. The basic frame of horizontality and verticality is not used to outline objects but can change directions.

Through continual variation, changeable line points to living line without forms, backgrounds, beginnings, and ends. Mostly the line becomes various out of form. A new element Cha added and transformed in modern art is thread as line. The line can be expanded unboundedly over loom and canvas. Cha keeps performing art works and playing with separated basic elements of painting. Although artists have conducted these experiments in modern art as diverse ways, it is noticeable Cha's exhibitions show a loom as an experimental laboratory. Sometimes Cha's art work woven by heterogeneous things looks unstable but it demonstrates there's no essential language dividing purity and application. There's a contention among dominant languages entangled with power rather than existing universality of languages. A loom that can actualize various languages establishes coordinate axis for the plural universe through dualism dividing the center and surroundings.