Gods, Humans, and Devices
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Paintings are imbued with passion. I am not talking about some sort of Paleolithic cave paintings or arcane sorcery. In other words, I seek to place the theoretical and clandestine ideas as far away from passion as possible. Passion is an impression. Of all impressions, passion is particularly fiery. When we look at artworks, it is not that unusual to find a list of impressions such as love, hatred, pride, grief, envy, compassion, and hesitation. Usually lathered onto the canvas in the form of paint, passion appears from beyond the painting like a missile or its kinetic energy, ready to launch off the bowstring of the creator to reach the viewer. When this is misinterpreted as some sort of spectacle or sublime experience, the best way to respond is to think of certain body movements. Passion is the body movements of the painter. Such movements come shooting through the flat plane filled with shapes and colors towards the viewer.

Then let us think about these bodily movements. When we look at paintings, we often forget that although paintings are ultimately two-dimensional objects, the painters reside in the three-dimensional world. People familiar with flying remote-controlled drones will quickly notice that the endeavor requires a fundamentally different simulation from driving a remote-controlled car. It can take an extensive amount of time for novice drone pilots to acclimate to the new dynamics. Just as drones fly from one point to another as it receives the signals passed through the wireless controller, the brush extends towards the x, y, and z axes to carry out the will of the painter. In sum, to paint means to pour, swing, unsheathe, stroke up, splatter, and strike down, like martial arts scenes from Wong Karwai's films, in which every time swords clang against each other, we see the characters' love, hatred, pride, and anguish shatter. As one poet put it, "there is no clearer muscle than this."

Cha Seungean's images are cold. What does this mean? Precedent use of the terms "hot" or "cold" in art was derived as a form of expression to unveil several tendencies of the abstract. However, this contrast of temperatures does not visualize very significant differences in broad terms. Perhaps a cold painting is a painting that has become devoid of passion. The disappearance of passion means the disappearance of bodily movement. But hang on; is such a thing even possible? If the disappearance of bodily movement is an utterly unfeasible possibility and an impossible contradiction, what element or other bodily movement is substituting the supposedly vanished movement?

Cha weaves her paintings. One could even say she builds, weaves, or tethers them together. And quite literally so. When viewing artworks, one easily forgets that the backdrop of a painting is often comprised of white textile. We use textiles in many forms, casually wearing them over our bodies even. Therefore, it is not particularly difficult to conceive the notion of textile for what it is. Even so, we forget about the presence of such textile in artworks. Of course, just as some refined art historians would refer to something as hot or cold based on some minute contrasts of intuition, the trivial difference between woven and painted pictures is not the main focus of our interest. Instead, it is the bodily movement involved in the act of weaving that is the decisive factor here.

Weaving substitutes bodily movements with devices. This seems to result in largely two situations. First, assuming that no bodily movement can completely disappear, we now have a new bodily movement operating the machinery which substitutes bodily movements that would directly create art under normal circumstances. The person sits up close to the loom, a device reminiscent of a grand piano. She winds the weft around the shuttle and nudges it in, one thread at a time. She pulls the body to align each row into a stack. She pushes in one row of thread after another. She pulls again. She pushes. Pulls. Push. Pull…

As we observe this, we can begin to conjecture that the act of "painting" is entering into an entirely different dimension. The bodily movement of operating a loom goes sideways, front and back, horizontal and vertical. The weaver moves as much as she needs in order to cover the expanse of the textile being composed. Time flows linearly toward one direction within its limited scope. The predetermined sequence of actions cannot be changed (just like the size and shape of the picture being regurgitated by the loom already locked in with the yarn). The moment one set of bodily movement replaces another, the passion grows cold. What then, shall we call this blue flame? This is an *apatheia* that stands distinct from indifference. For the weaver sitting across the loom, her will precedes her passion. However, such faith is not some form of fatalism about salvation. The loom is merely a binary order that seeks to help the person differentiate the near from the far, to categorize the two polarities of providence. The bodily movement of operating the loom manifests the transcendental logos in the material world and thereby verifies its existence.

The second result is found in the machine's bodily movements that substitute the (human) painting movement from a stricter perspective. *Bodily* movements of a *machine*! As romantic as weaving sounds, there is something seditious about calling the weaver someone who "paints" with machines. Fundamentally, machines were invented "to overcome the resistance of the world" faced by work. Therefore, "a machine is good for accomplishing specific tasks. Arrows are good for killing reindeer. Plows are good for tilling soil. Windmills are good for grinding grain." Such statements then lead to traditional (religious) implications that "reindeers must die, earth must be tilled, and grain must become flour[1]." But the bodily movements of the machine that paints? Now that is startling. What good does that do? Does a better machine produce better paintings? The measure of "goodness" is a measure of ethics. Is it still possible for us to call an artwork "good" ever since 1790? Must paintings be drawn just as grain must be milled? According to Vilém Flusser, such questions place history into a quandary. History states that humans are the programs that change the world, and in order to carry out such protocol we must respond to the prophecy of truth (no matter what it takes). The painting machine crashes such placid order and suspends the entire process. Cha's paintings, or rather the paintings created by Cha and her device, are hurled into such antinomy, as they weave the bodily movements of sacred history and the absurd bodily movements outside of history into a single sheet of textile.

[1] Flusser, Vilém (Translated by Ahn Gyu-chul) *Gestures*, pp.19-pp.24, Workroom Press, 2018.