

Stay, lingering there

I work on video-sculpture using wood and monitors as if adding and removing a lump of clay in sculpture. As time goes by, I have asked myself, 'what work method do I like?' I have found it rewarding when I work up a sweat (make an effort) in building and creating something. And I habitually deconstruct and modify where I am standing with my imagination. The space that I transform is a video within the screen – I enjoy thinking and handling this in a material way. I also find it intriguing that my story is unfolded in the video and that another new story is created by structurally deconstructing, transforming and/or reconstructing the space.

I travel to an unfamiliar place when I need to recharge energy - for a few short days or for several long months. At the travel destination, I explore a subject for my new project or recharge energy to restart by reflecting on my time spent so far. I worked on another project based on my experience in Jeju where I visited for a break in 2019. One year later, now I have departed to find a quiet and tranquil time again amidst the chaotic situation due to the pandemic.

Before selecting such a holistic time, I followed inspiration by the visual factors as a visual artist. After all, I selected a time for introspection from a classic Korean perspective... I accidentally and inevitably chose to stay at a Korean traditional house (*'hanok'*), which happened to be a house built in the late Joseon period, consisted of a master bedroom, a separate building and a pavilion of the garden. It contained traditional Korean architectural factors and boasted its unique beauty and temporality.

My fortuitous stay at the traditional house for a few days consoled my state of being withdrawn as lately I haven't left home that much. The straight lattice system and elegant roof tiles (*giwa*) have outstanding finishes, in contrast to the cold, modern feel of Western abstract paintings. In this well-organized structure, I start imagining. Bend, deconstruct and reassemble... I feel such a sense of freedom in this space. When the wind blows, the wind blowing sound begins embracing the space... 'Consolation' is not something huge. This small thing (healing) gives me such a comfort.

Looking up the *hanok*, (there can be seen) the sky from a cozy garden... the ceiling beams, rafters, and *giwa* and the roofline overlooked from outside. Again imagining to tilt and bend further... I am amazed by the structural beauty of the house once again. Bird chirping and wind sound become the background music, turning this space into a stage even without playing a musical score. This is so elegant and graceful. I feel contented as if my mind becomes assimilated to this ambience, and I move this static space around in my head again. I deconstruct the axis and the crossbeam and reassemble them here and there, creating a new shape (or structure). On the small and big pieces, a video is unfolded in which the space is moving. This is the movement of the time this space embraces.

This house I stayed was where Chintan Academy was established in 1934 during the Japanese colonial period. Some kind of spirit of their time (*zeitgeist*) may have formed and moved in this space, and this spirit must have remained intact here according to my unscientific imagination. I think that the force that I feel and that moves the space will be the past time reflected onto this space.

Looking into a room beside the main gate, there is a cash box. I converted it to a door by shifting it vertically. Open it, then there is a narrow corridor which is moving. The walls are moving, its passages are widening and the pillars are twisting, thus making the space tilt. This goes against the layout of the *hanok* but is also amusing. The landscape outside the window is the same, while this little room rolling around here and there, which mirrors what I feel these days. The time when I stayed at the *hanok* is a time to pull myself together and also a free time.

I was thinking of a new change again at a travel destination for rest and relaxation. Human behaviors of

staying, remaining and further residing are to prepare for a change to the current arrangement and to recharge energy for rest, organizing, healing and a leap forward. During my stay at the *hanok*, I regained energy for another change from appreciating the structure and beauty, and restructured the long history of the house as a space and the time when people stayed. First, the characteristic of the traditional house I felt the most was that the structure of the garden as an architectural element of the house and that the natural landscape viewed through the door and windows are actively employed in order to bring rest and healing. No matter what they are, the sceneries, the wind and bird sound through the windows in the *hanok* had the power to bring rest and healing to the people who stay there. During my stay, I felt that all the elements such as wall, door, window, ceiling and floor serve as psychological and philosophical symbols, and I intended to restructure them in my own way and bring them into my experience. Furthermore, I came to think of what elements I can and should pursue for a space for living and residing, and also align this with the current social situation in which many have to stay at their own place for a long time.

Staying, and seeking after again (from traditional houses to modern houses)

Inspired by the architectural aesthetics of the Korean traditional house I stayed, I began searching for traditional houses in different parts of Seoul. However, I got to know that many traditional houses within the four main gates of Seoul have been modernized in style after having undergone the Japanese colonial rule and the modernization era. The houses such as BaekInje's House and Park No-soo's House have been renovated and modified in style and structure to a great extent, influenced by the Western culture which was introduced through Japan.

During my break looking for a sense of beauty from the traditional houses, I paused for thought on 'what made *hanok* changed into this structure' standing in front of the modified architecture. Then, I started identifying its characteristics and paid attention to the invisible force and influence in the space, which made this structure possible. The latticed door was a bit modernized, a long corridor was added, the open concept that enabled to enjoy sceneries through windows changed to a secretive structure to conceal and hide something, and the floor sitting changed to the style of sitting on a chair. Picturing all of these modified lifestyle, another emotion occurred to me from this structure, while realizing that the focus on rationality, convenience and the social situation drove this transformation, rather than spending time leisurely.

Conversely, I intended to contemplate the depth of such emotions occurring from the style and structure of these houses and the landscape I encountered through them. Due to my fanciful thinking that an undefined and invisible force lingering in this space may reappear, all of sudden I desired to identify the gap of some emotions between the traditional houses and the modern houses I visited and analyze them.

Surely, the house is not just a place where people live and take a pleasure in, but also contains the history of suffering and changes of the time and a dynamically evolving time. First, I imagine the time while recalling the emotions from the visual elements of this place - an era of suffering and rapid transformation, but endeavors to find time to pause during such a time. At the house where modern artists also stayed, I also picture worries and conflicts about the world and their works they must have had sitting in their studio, rather than ideology and zeitgeist.

Three years ago, I explored old houses, home to slash-and-burn farmers, and modified videos using the traces and sound of the people. In my exhibition in 2019, I reproduced videos by transforming human emotions I felt during my visit to Jeju Island into videos through programming. This time, I have planned to embody healing, relaxation, the free flow of ideas and my emotions I felt from the different structures and aesthetics from the Korean traditional and modern houses by converting all of them into electrical

signals and moving images through video-sculpture. Furthermore, I will make the movement more three-dimensional through technology and transform the space in the video using the changes in the values of the emotions within a three-dimensional animation.

In addition, just like the last exhibition, I will accumulate data based on the values of the audience's emotions when they see the traditional houses in the exhibition hall, and build a system of database for the next exhibition. In order for this, a survey will be conducted with the provision of images through an application.

The places where I stayed, resided and sought after will play as a motive for my work for some time and the feelings (values of emotions) of people in the space will be collected as data. Wherever the place is in Jeju or is a Korean traditional house, I will create spaces where the most of the audience can feel familiar and comfortable with. I will also actively employ the images and videos of the spaces and the materials related to those spaces as part of my video-sculpture. For example, I will use the old materials of *hanok* and elements with the similar quality of the objects in those places in order to embody my video-sculpture.

2020. Guem MinJeong