

On the occasion of the exhibition, *Final Taciturnity*(.....)

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Final Taciturnity (2014), the solo exhibition of artist Youngheelee held at the Kimchungup Museum in Anyang is full of the images harking back to the past. The venue of her exhibition is seen as an intermediate space to look into the gap between past and present, society and individual. In her new works whose motifs were appropriated from her previous pieces, she newly reinterprets her past activities in another form, looking back on the past. Such works include her work employing the text from the Chapter of National Education proclaimed in 1968 and used for the ideological education of all people, the project *12* (2012) that consisted of her own installations, drawings, and photographs the artist worked on while observing the rural area of Siheung for 12 months and *From farmer's flag* (1994) in which she reinterpreted a huge flag used to wish for a good harvest as a monument for disappeared exhibitions and unknown artists.

If reviewing her exhibition catalog published in 2011 we come to realize that her work from the early 1990s, that expressed the process of collecting and recollecting disappearing fragments and memories, is not much different from her work attitude today. Works on display at *Final Taciturnity* are static, flat, and retrospective. Her new pieces produced in 2014 seem to be a process of stuffing her previous works. These works are presented as the results of her actions to recall her past work, while arousing viewers' collective nostalgia. In this process we can discover our own self-portraits and look into each individual's uneasy emotion.

Six Isles, Six Dots (2014) displaying two-dimensional images produced in collage is a representation of her previous installation series *Crack* (2005-2013), space installation work using rice husks and twisted thread. At that time she made use of all spaces of the gallery including floor and wall. In this series the land wandered, fragmented space and the gaps between the fragments were replaced with the viewers moving in the surrounding spaces. The movement of the viewers played the role of disclosing physical beings in the venue, harking back to present temporality and working to complete their surroundings and spatial gaps.

In *Six Isles, Six Dots* however, she demonstrates some records and traces in the canvas frame. The images in the canvas look like the shadows of her previous work. In this work realistic texture

and various materials in her previous work are replaced with texts. The lumps of these texts are products of the joining of newspaper articles she clipped out from the ones that caught her eyes. The newspaper articles she cut out are piled up at a corner of her studio so we may ask if they have any meaning more than text. The lumps of texts or articles cut out form the silhouette of an "isle" on the canvas. The roots with soil that were revealed from the ground in her previous installations look like the isles of texts or the residues poured down from the lumps of texts. Lee seems to face a phenomenon that information we contact is so easily produced, obtained, delivered, and distorted, and its entity's lightness and fragility.

While collecting newspaper articles on diverse incidents and accidents as part of her everyday life, she was tremendously shocked by a grave calamity that occurred on April 16, 2014. Inspired by this shocking disaster, the sinking of the MV Sewol, she produced six isles with the lumps of texts she felt of no use before her vehement emotion, carefully listening to the information which poured down for 49 days until June 3 and gathering relevant news articles. These isles turn into the black dots spreading from the dead center of her video work, or spread tears in another work where the text suppressed by emotion passes away gradually. The tear is a visual device for the artist to express her strong emotion and serene lingering resonance visually.

The video work of *In the End, Ellipsis* (2014) consists of six scenes. What takes up the place where text should be in a government document, with the edge of the phoenix pattern, are special characters she arranged arbitrarily. The images in this video work are an extension of *In the End, Ellipsis-Phoenix series* (2014) showcasing 88 different images and colors printed in lithograph. Lee recollects memories of the time she had to learn by heart the Chapter of National Education by adopting the phoenix pattern most similar to that of the Chart, but its text is replaced with special characters she appropriated from the Hangeul word program. In the scene meaningless symbols float, gather, collide, and scatter, making explosives.

In *In the End, Ellipsis-Phoenix series*, documents with 88 images printed in lithography and decked with the phoenix pattern look like broken digital pixels or screen control patterns used

in past TV broadcasting. In the venue displaying digital videos and paper printing materials, the viewers of the same generation as the artist perhaps hark back to their childhood when they memorized the Chapter of National Education while younger generations may recollect a sort of computer game. In *In the End, Ellipsis-Flag Series (2014)* her early work *From Farmer's Flag Series* in which she interwove the strips earned by tearing banners used for the promotional purpose of some exhibitions in the mid-1990s, is reproduced into the flags with diverse fragments of vocabularies including parts of 393 letters, words of oath, written prayers, and special characters. A communal labor flag used at a farmer's music performance was an item treated as a personified being. People considered the flag a brother or a friend as the expression of their respect to the flag. The flag was also used to choose victory and defeat. The flag was a symbol of a group's identity and power. However, the colossal flags she made are hung in a solemn, tranquil atmosphere in a gloomy space as if disclosing long-held halted time. They shake the decorations on their sides as if weeping in a tranquil, gloomy mood. The flags that drew a circle with villagers and fluttered in the wind are placed in the space of this work as distant memories. The trail of tears left on their surfaces seems to exude sentiment and condolence they bear in quietude.

This exhibition *Final Taciturnity(.....)* enables us to face the gap between individual and collective emotion disclosed in the images of contemporary people who accept information prevailing in a contemporary society. Information has been conveyed in diverse ways and mediums such as oral transmission, sentences, educational materials, TVs, Internet news, and SNS.

Our emotion and behavior are influenced by such information transmitted, reacting diversely to information that is not collectively consented. Initial information is often concealed by more provocative information. These recurring reactions have become part of our daily lives. Lee comments on ways of reminiscing and remembering them. She has chosen an ellipsis for the images created through the gathering of wandering texts, replacing words with the ellipsis. She embraces surging feelings and numerous untold narratives in silence and tears generated from countless murmurings.