

Woolim Lee



What Woolim Lee's paintings convey, is the bridge that connects dream and reality

The paintings construct the bridge that connects dream and reality. If we could define the artist's world as such, we will eventually be able to discuss happiness since his works let us restore our rights of being able to dream. Lee's works have a transcending effect which relieve us from the psychological and the physical pain of reality by guiding us back to reality as well as the world beyond, that is, the dreamy and fantastic world. The special devices in his works, for instance, green meadows like soft cushions, and the surface of calm waters, invokes the serenity that viewers associate with this imagery when they look. This is supported by the fact that most of his recent works makes use of horizontal composition, which brings a sense of happiness based on a mild psychological state. It is natural for people to feel happiness by looking at an endless poppy flower field or yellow rape flower field, but not when looking at the roaring sea. His works come across as unrealistic and dreamy because of some special devices he has put on the canvas such as, unrealistic facial color of white or yellow, and actions like flying across the sky or even lying on the water. As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible to witness these scenes in reality. If they exist, it is caused by the actor's makeup or a magic trick.

Nevertheless, it seems like it is also true that his works are based on reality. If you look at the relationship between characters and the landscape itself, removing the devices that cause non-figurative features such as the pose and motion of the person, you cannot find any reasonable evidence to assert that it is not a realistic landscape. The calming plains, which are filled with tranquil forests, or filled with colorful poppies, and the rape flower fields painted all over in yellow, are enough to make a sense of reality even though they are not drawn with realistic brush strokes. But our expectation of this reality is shifted by adding a person into the work. The artist's willingness to pull us out from the harsh reality and into the ideal world has come up with this unique device that enforces a sense of the unrealistic. It is obvious, for example, his reference to Marc Chagall's musician or the use of the stationary landscape technique of Paul Signac, but it is quite unique when it comes to the back view of a woman lying on the water with her chin resting on her hands. He seems to be successful at creating a distance from reality through this series of painting devices. The reason why most audiences feel unfamiliar when looking at his works is these painterly devices rather than being lost in the background of characters. Once he gets a sense of

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distance from reality, he brings the audience to surreal horizons through another device on the canvas. It is revealed through the flying couple holding hands and the curved-bodied man who flies and kisses the woman with bouquet.

Another axis supporting Lee's art world is a so-called sensuality. This aesthetic feeling which is directly related to the enthusiasm of life is sometimes a factor leading to eroticism in his paintings. Take a look at the woman lying on the knees of a man dressed in yellow-green clothing. There is no exchange of perceptive eye contact between the eyes of the out-of-focus man and the woman wearing colorful floral clothes. The woman's gaze, which appears out of focus, also looks at three muscular men standing behind the man. The Dalmatian's eyes are facing the woman upside down, while the hands and face of the three men are reminiscent of the sculptures face down. The unfocused eyes on the paled face and red lips are pictorial devices that bring out his figures, but these are symbols that signify disconnection rather than communication in his paintings.

It is no wonder then, to wish for communication due to the interruption. The artist paradoxically depicts the state of fragmented psychological isolation of people, like feelings of loneliness in a crowd, with extravagant colors. And it seems to restore the right of being able to dream, as the bridge that connects the dream to reality. If we can fully understand his works, we will finally be able to discuss happiness.

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Woolim Lee (b.1972, Sacheon, Korea)

■ Educations

2006 MFA Yeungnam University, Gyeongsan, Korea

2002 BFA Yeungnam University, Gyeongsan, Korea

■ Selected Solo Exhibition

2024 Who am I on the grassland, Gallery Woojin, Daegu, Korea

2023 Between Remembering and Forgetting, Alpha Contemporary, Tokyo, Japan

Between Imagination and Reality, Haengbok Bukgu Cultural Foundation, Daegu, Korea

2022 Forest and Walk, LOTTE Gallery, Busan, Korea

2021 LEE, WOO-LIM, DGB Gallery, Daegu, Korea

Walking on the Edge, Atelier Aki, Seoul, Korea

2020 Sleeping in the Forest, Toma Gallery, Daegu, Korea

Walking on the edge, Yedamchan Gallery, Sacheon, Korea

2019 Sleeping in the Forest, Sacheon Museum, Sacheon, Korea

Sleeping in the Forest, J+Gallery, New York, USA

Walking on the edge, Fill Gallery, Seoul, Korea

2018 Sleeping in the Forest, Gallery Calaxy, New York, USA

Walking on the edge, Dague Art Factory, Daegu, Korea

Dream spectrum, [b]SPACE, Daegu, Korea

2017 Sleeping in the Forest, PYO Gallery, Seoul, Korea

2015 Walking in the Dream, Gallery Chung Dam, Cheongdo, Korea

2014 Walking on the edge, LOTTE Gallery, Bucheon, Korea

Walking on the edge, LEE & BAE, Busan, Korea

2013 Walking on a air, Finenart Space, Seoul, Korea

Seoul International Financial Forum Exhibition, Westin Chosun, Seoul, Korea

2011 Walking on a air, Gallery Bennett, New Jersey, USA

Walking on a air, LEE & BAE, Busan, Korea

Walking on a air, Bluesquare PYO Gallery, Seoul, Korea

2009 Walking on a Dream, PYO Gallery, Seoul, Korea

Walking on a Dream, PYO Gallery, Beijing, China

2008 Love in Dream, CAIS Gallery Hong Kong, Hong Kong

The space of Mobius, LEEAHN Gallery, Daegu, Korea

While asleep, Gallery Sun Contemporary, Seoul, Korea

2007 Dreaming on a Path Through the Forest, Gallery Wooduk, Seoul, Korea

2006 In the Woods, Kumho Museum, Seoul, Korea

2005 The Third Space, Debec Plaza Gallery, Daegu, Korea

2002 Dream, Han Ki Suk Gallery, Daegu, Korea

■ Selected Group Exhibition

2024 The Two Fantasias : Long Breath & Strolling, Gallery Da, Hanam, Korea

A sense, Alpha Contemporary, Tokyo, Japan

Art Jakarta 2024, JIEXPO, Jakarta, Indonesia

Art Taipei 2024, Taipei World Trade Center, Taipei, Taiwan

2023 BAMA 2023, BEXCO, Busan, Korea

Diaf 2023, EXCO, Daegu, Korea

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- 2022 The Essence of Painting, LEE & BAE, Busan, Korea
Diaf 2022, EXCO, Daegu, Korea
Leading Artists of the Year, Daegu Art Center, Daegu, Korea
Dialogue, HYUNDAI Department Store Glass House, Seoul, Korea
Hidden Artist Art Fair 2022, Art Nasal Gallery, Ulsan, Korea
BAMA 2022, BEXCO, Busan, Korea
- 2021 MANIFOLD : MANUAL, Seoul Arts Center Hangaram Design Museum, Seoul, Korea
REBORN, beom-eo art street Space 2, Daegu, Korea
FANTASIA BEOMEIO, Beomeio Station, Daegu, Korea
ART BUSAN 2021, BEXCO, Busan Korea
- 2020 Dream's Color, Dream's Light, Haengbok Bukgu Cultural Foundation, Daegu, Korea
Daegu Art Fair 2020, EXCO, Daegu, Korea
- 2019 KUMHO YOUNG ARTIST : THE 69 TIMES OF SUNRISE, Seoul, Korea
- 2018 Media, Person, Scenery, Daegu Art Factory, Daegu, Korea
2018 ACC ASIAPLEX studio, Gwangju, Korea
100 ALBUMS 100 ARTISTS, LOTTE Avenuel Art Hall, Seoul, Korea
Taipei Art Fair 2018, Taipei
Seoul Art Fair 2018, COEX, Seoul, Korea
- 2017 ASIA WEEK, Kang Contemporary, New York, USA
KOREAN - NOW AND THEN, Kang Contemporary, New York, USA
Art Miami 2017, Miami, USA
Art Jakarta 2017, Jakarta, Indonesia
100 ALBUMS 100 ARTISTS, LOTTEL Avenuel Art Hall, Seoul, Korea
Seoul Art Fair 2017, COEX, Seoul, Korea
Busan Art Show 2017, BEXCO, Busan, Korea
Daegu Art Fair 2017, EXCO, Daegu, Korea
- 2016 Context Art Miami 2016, Miami, USA
Busan Art Show 2016, BEXCO, Busan, Korea
- 2015 When Every Day Reveals Itself From Out of the Blue, WHITE BLOCK ART CENTER,
Heyri, Korea
Love in the Spring, Amway Museum, Budang, Korea
- 2014 Busan Art Show 2014, BEXCO, Busan, Korea
I Dream, LOTTE Avenuel Art Hall, Seoul, Korea
Daegu Art Fair 2014, EXCO, Daegu, Korea
Art Gwangju 2014, Kim Daejung Convention Center, Gwangju, Korea
- 2013 Bank Art Fair 2013, Island Shangri-La Hotel, Hong Kong
Busan Art Show 2013, BEXCO, Busan, Korea
Asia Conemporary Art Show 2013, JW Marriott Hotel, Hong Kong
Cool Running, LOTTE Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 2012 The 45th KUMHO YOUNG ARTIST, Kumho Museum, Seoul, Korea
KIAF Seoul 2012, COEX, Seoul, Korea
Daegu Art Fair 2012, EXCO, Daegu, Korea
Busan Art Show 2012, BEXCO, Busan, Korea
AHAF, Chosun Hotel, Seoul, Korea
- 2011 FLOOD OF COLOR, Crossing Art, Manhattan, USA
Commemoration of the opening, JS Sun Gallery, Manhattan, USA
- 2010 ARCO 2010, Madrid, Spain

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- Seoul Art Fair 2010, COEX, Seoul, Korea
X-Power Gallery, Taiwan
Muse See - Must Have, N Gallery, Bundang, Korea
- 2009 Hong Kong Art Fair 2009, Hong Kong
CIGE Art Fair 2009, Beijing, China
Seoul Art Fair 2009, COEX, Seoul, Korea
Singapore Art Fair 2009, Suntec Singapore, Singapore
KIAF Seoul 2009, COEX, Seoul, Korea
Daegu Art Fair 2009, EXCO, Daegu, Korea
Cheongdam Arts Festival, PYO Gallery, Seoul, Korea
AHAF, Hyatt Hotel, Seoul, Korea
- 2008 Art Chicago Art Fair 2008, Chicago, USA
Hong Kong Art Fair 2008, Hong Kong
CIGE Art Fair 2008, Beijing, China
Blue Dot Asia, Hangaram Art Museum, Seoul, Korea
Love & Love, Gallery SSAMZIE, Seoul, Korea
Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair 2008, Shanghai, China
Singapore Art Fair 2008, Suntec Singapore, Singapore
KIAF Seoul 2008, COEX, Seoul, Korea
SCOPE Miami 2008, Miami, USA
Love, LEEAHN Gallery, Changwon, Korea
Seoul Art Fair 2008, COEX, Seoul, Korea
Gallery Sun Nature Poem, Seoul, Korea
TREND, Korean Art Center, Busan, Korea
- 2007 Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair 2007, Shanghai, China
Art Basel Miami 2007, Miami, USA
CIGE Art Fair 2007, Beijing, China
ACAF 2007, New York, USA
Palma de Mallorca Fair 2007, Mallorca, Spain
Singapore Art Fair 2007, Suntec Singapore, Singapore
Real Seeing & Real View, INSA Art Center, Seoul, Korea
Pocheon Asia Biennale 2007, Pocheon, Korea
Another Home, CAIS Gallery Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Scene and the Unseen, Gallery SSAMZIE, Seoul, Korea
Scene and the Unseen, INSA Art Center, Seoul, Korea
CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE, Some 130 Artists no-bounds, Gallery Sun Contemporary,
Seoul, Korea
Sun Contemporary 0708, Gallery Sun Contemporary, Seoul, Korea
LOTTE Art Fair 2007, LOTTE Department Store, Busan, Korea
- 2006 CIGE Art Fair 2006, Beijing, China
Singapore Art Fair 2006, Suntec Singapore, Singapore
5th Cutting Edge, Hangaram Art Museum, Seoul, Korea
Brush Hour II, Gallery Sun Contemporary, Seoul, Korea
Gwangju Biennale "Fever Variations" The 3rd Sector, Gwangju, Korea
Korean Young Artists Biennale, Daegu Culture Art Center, Daegu, Korea
total . art . set, Gallery M, Daegu, Korea
- 2005 CIGE Art Fair 2005, Beijing, China

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New Acquisitions, Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea
Korea Art Festival 2005, Sejong Art Center, Seoul, Korea
2004 Life Landscape, Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea
Hands across the Pacific, The National Museum of China, Beijing, China
Reappearance & Embodiment, Daegu Culture Art Center, Daegu, Korea
2003 Escape, Gallery M, Daegu, Korea
New Frontier, Art Center Daegu, Daegu, Korea
Emerging Artists - Nature, Bongsung Gallery, Daegu, Korea
Story About CH14, Art Center Daegu, Daegu, Korea

■ Collections

Seoul Metropolitan Museum of Art
National Museum of Contemporary Art, Art Bank
Kumho Museum
Seoul Municipal Boramae Hospital
Severance Hospital
Catholic Hospital
Hana Bank
Korea YAKULT
93 Museum
Catholic University Hospita
WHITE BLOCK Art Center

■ Awards

21st KUMHO Young Artist Selection

■ Artist Residency

ACC Asian Creative Studio, Gwangju, Korea
Daegu Art Factory, Daegu, Korea