

福岡アジア美術館

Guide to
the works

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Collection of the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum

Asian Modern and Contemporary Art 【Contemporary Art】

Thu 29 June -- Tue 26 Sep 2000 Asia Gallery A

Special Section: Abstract Art in Korea

Western style abstract expressions in Korea are greedily absorbed from Japan before the World War II and from Europe and America after the war. It permeated into Korean land gradually and it was purified into a pure and original Korean abstract expression. Especially, the monochrome abstract paintings appeared in the 1970s and it is noteworthy in terms of its originality and quality. In this exhibition, the history of the monochrome paintings in the 1970s and the development of it are introduced along with various abstract expressions.

I Towards Monochrome Paintings

Many of the monochrome abstract paintings are produced during this period in such exhibitions as 'Ecole de Seoul' in 1975. At a glance, they give an impression like Minimalism paintings in Europe and America, taking off any form of figurative element. However, the attitude of being random cutting off the intention of an artist not to speak of colours and figures, is emphasized. In this corner, Kim Hwanki who tried the abstract expression from the period before the war, and representative artists of the monochrome abstract paintings like Pak Soepo, Yun Hyongkun and Chong Sangwha are shown. The trend started from Kim Hwanki who conveyed daily motifs into abstract form. Pak Soepo sought for media and space by repeating the same form and method. Chong Sangwha covered the whole canvas with irregular layer of paints while Yun Hyongkun left natural stains of paints on canvas. They comprised a big trend of Korean abstract painting and pursued their original monochrome paintings by eliminating intention and concept of their own.

II Development after the Monochrome Paintings

Different from the monochrome paintings in the mid 1970s who tried to be random, the movement of other artists intentionally involving themselves in art making appeared in the 1980s. The typical of the movement is "God of Valley" by O Suhwan and "Work 85-ki" by Han Kiju. In general they tried to recover colours, figures emotional expressions and themes in paintings. For instance, the paintings of water drops by Kim Tschangyeul was a starting point for the abstract paintings in the 80s regaining figurative images. Ahn Byeongseok combined nature with painting in "Wind Wave" while Hwang Juli humanity. Those trials for a new abstract expression are succeeded in Kim Sooja's installations who expressed women's daily life and memory using Korean traditional wrapping cloth or bed covers. And they expand towards various works.

■ Abstract Art in Korea before 1960s

It was from the late 1950s when new abstract expression was facilitated in Korea responding to French Informel paintings. Before that, abstract paintings are brought by such artists as Kim Hwanki who studied European abstract paintings in Japan. The Informel, meaning 'not formed', gave a large impact to the generation who graduated from the Art College founded after the World War II. Kim Tschangyeul, Pak Soepo, Yun Hyongkun are the ones who were influenced. Then, an artists group 'Origin' established in 1963 taking the initiative, geometrical abstraction and Hard Edge are introduced and extrication from the Informel paintings are tried. Among those movements, there appeared artists who inclined towards the monochrome paintings.