Kim Taejoong is an artist who is characteristically known for his sensitive paintings with bright, standing out colors and witty forms. Most of his works are completed with a variety of colors of acrylic paints that he himself creates by mixing the pigments directly on the canvas. Kim, who studied printmaking in college, delicately reflects the composition and linear quality of the print in his painting, blurring the boundary between the genres. This unique, unconventional composition now becomes the hallmark of the artist’s style that attracts young people who feel intimate with it.

Generally, Kim’s paintings are crammed with a seemingly endless series of figures that appear to be obsessive. The artist, who says he works to honestly express himself, puts the fragmentary images and ideas out of his mind without reserve and composes a landscape with them. The brush strokes as implicit and rhythmic as a poem go toward the artist’s emotional expression. However, contrary to first appearances, these paintings that are resonate with light and speedy tempo and mood are the result of his long refinement of countless thoughts in intimate time. If one takes a close look at the artist’s landscapes, he will catch both Kim’s gravity and wit to produce pleasure for the purpose of not being heavy. He serenely tells us his stories, without using any form of coercion. Thus, it would be perfect if you only look at his paintings with your own eyes and in your own way, like reading a poem.

According to Kim, his works are a kind of landscape. To speak more directly, it is a landscape that is built with the thousands of fragments of landscapes floating in his mind. His own experiences and thoughts serve as the basis for this created landscape. In fact, when it comes to the artist’s real life, one finds it full of activities in a wide range of fields, such as designer, DJ, Jazz singer, baseball player, and even car maniac. Furthermore, Kim had worked on collaboration with well-known brands associated with young and active lifestyle including Nike, Reebok, Basic House, SSamzie, and UNIQLO, as if striking against the stereotyped image of an artist. Some of the public who saw close at hand Kim’s works in the forms of diary, sneakers, and T-shirts call him Pop Artists. All these activities are not separated from his artistic creation. For this artist who wants to constantly add novelty and unfamiliarity to his work, even this unusual career trajectory proves an aesthetic incentive.

Kim’s recent works present a direct reflection of what he likes and what he thinks. The artist, who once had dreamed of becoming a car designer, produced various car-related works: landscapes with a Porsche and installations using auto parts. Though at times brazenly invaded by a Chinese character 心(heart), his canvases are always crowded with fragments of memories relating to his daily life and interests, such as an unrecognizable head or sexual images. Kim gave the title “Heart in a Raining Forest (雨林之心)” to this series of recent works that represented the landscape of his inner world. As is known, his paintings have been primarily marked by the strong impression of lines and the flattening, planar effect of lines defining the figures. Nevertheless, he still creates a sense of distance using color difference and recently, the unique beauty of landscape by boldly leaving a blank space within a picture.

So far, various journals and media have introduced Kim’s work only by locating it in the context of Western art genres such as Pop art or graffiti. However, his art, that has undoubtedly continued to make modifications in its own way, could be more easily understood as a personal space in which the hybrid aspects of the environment and culture surrounding the artist are struggling with one another. He gradually extended the range of his subject matter, which recently includes religious icons suggestive of Buddhism or Hinduism and other subjects familiar to the Korean people, such as traditional Korean patterns, the figure typically appearing in the so-called true-view landscape painting, and so on. Though put in the Western forms and the canvas frame, his paintings evoke both a familiar and unfamiliar feeling due to a curious combination of characteristic colors, cultural aspects surrounding him, his interest in the symbolism of African art, and so on.

Through his work, Kim talks about himself dealing with the things he found around him. He is also an artist who already has a large base of fans because of the popular activities mentioned above. Some may cast anxious eyes to the wide range of his achievements, but a careful look at the traces of the artist’s serious inquiries and experiments found in his works would be enough for you to turn down the old anxiety. This is why it is expected how in the future a far-reaching variety of the artist’s activities, that are as heterogeneous as his familiar and unfamiliar works, will be melted into his art.

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