

## Strokes project

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I have been majoring in painting since junior high school. In 1999, when I was discharged from the army, I first encountered digital world with use of internet. I am often classified as Generation X who grew up in an analog culture and later experienced digital culture. At first, I started working digitally using a scanner, and later produced images with a digital camera with post-production. Instead of taking just one picture at a time, numerous images were weaved together to create a familiar yet surreal scene which reveals the sweet and pitiful irony of the capitalist landscape.

Photography is a window into the perfected world boasting refined and smooth surface. The power of photography is to present 'surreality of hyperrealism' in scenery with ever presenting confidence as if it has never been shy. 'Surreality of hyperrealism' refers to a state that is too real to be transcendental (or more real than real), or to exceed reality (which is now far away from reality).

On the other hand, painting is a video that reproduces the process by showing off the tactually accumulated strata. The power of painting is in the presence of 'materiality of spirituality' which gradually reveals itself before our eyes. 'Materiality of Spirituality' does not refer to the two extremes, being overly materialistic nor overly spiritual. Rather, it refers to an intention (expressive manifestation) of using materials to make visualization, or to a status (impressive acceptance) of human condition confined and conditioned by materials.

I have been working on various projects including painting, drawing, installation, and video with focus on photography. In this exhibition, I present photographs and paintings. The two are visually quite different, but conceptually similar. Both express the relationship between the part and the whole and vitality of gestural energy. In particular, the painting works in this exhibition is a completely new project with further description as follows:

The Strokes project expresses a scene of vital energy where numerous strokes are intertwined. Seokdo(石濤, 1641-1720) said that 'one stroke is ten thousand strokes'. And for the same reason, 'ten thousand strokes are one stroke'. Because one stroke is within ten thousand strokes, and ten thousand strokes are nothing but one stroke. In the end, this project is a place for personification to focus on one issue and deepen it or derive it into multiple branches.

Four analogies aligned with this project are:

First, '**thought is life**'. One stroke is a seed, that is, a thought with its own life. For example, in my head, thought 1 suddenly rushes from one side to the other. Then thought 2 slides in this way. Thought 3 is secretly blooming as thought 4 is up and down over there, asking me to look. But thought 5 is firmly seated still. On the other side, thought 6 floats and squeaks. (Omitted below)

Each stroke is an abstract trace. So, it is like a function of  $x$  in which can be inputted with suitable contents at any time. It can also be viewed as clues left behind in a crime scene that can be inferred with extraordinary insight or a strange stimulus unraveling various narratives with artistic imagination.

If so, this project can be Pandora's box that are connected back-to-back, brainstorming triggered by a discussion, or deep learning through artificial intelligence algorithms that reflect a topographical map of collective intelligence. If you make a close observation, you may feel enlightened or more clarity.

Second, '**I am everything**'. Like everyone else, there are too many of me in me. In other words, there are many inner children in me, and their intentions and purposes are often different having full of individuality. They live in different universes, as if there were multiverses. It does not always mean 'fighting' with each other. Sometimes the way they live together makes a strange sense, presenting a beautiful orchestra of 'harmony and coexistence'. In other words, I am myself, no matter how often cell divisions occur and the parts and the whole are intertwined and associated in various ways.

Sometimes I have the experience of being elected as a temporary representative, even in a situation where discussions amongst multiple mes never seem to end. However, the caveat is that the leader can change at any time with a different point of view. Confucius emphasized that they should be faithful to each other's true self, saying, 'The lord, the lord, the vassal, the vassal, the father, the father and the son, the son(君君臣臣父父子子)'. However, my role tends to change repeatedly depending on the context in which I am in it. For example, sometimes as an artist and sometimes as a father, all is important in its own way.

Likewise, there is no reason why only one stroke should be the leader in this project. Today I am the leader, tomorrow you may be the leader. No, everyone is the leader. Or else you don't even

have to be one. What is important is the interactive dialogue itself, which produces meaning in each context and exchanges affection.

Third, '**exercise is muscular**'. If you exercise hard, your muscles will develop, and you will see visible marks. For example, when you do bodybuilding, you increase the 'volume', the muscle mass, and the 'texture', the muscle definition. If you apply oil to the body, the 'color' becomes shiny. In analogy to hair, 'volume' is a hair extension that makes hair ample, 'texture' is a bleach that brightens the hair, and 'color' is a dye that makes the hair color stand out.

Likewise, if an ambiguous concept is not neglected, and if it is contemplated and refined diligently, the logical structuring will gradually progress and finally the idea will become clear. My way of expressing this concept is as follows: First, the stroke initially is made by utilizing 'contingency' and 'spontaneity'. In a metaphorical way, it is an ambiguous birth without me being aware of. Next, it is refined over a long period of time to give it 'necessity' and 'intentionality'. Metaphorically it is the intended growth, which is the world I live in. You will gradually gain a sense of 'weight' and the 'voice' becomes clearer, as each stroke finally achieves its intended goal. In a metaphorical way, it is the achievement of perfection, that is, the world I am satisfied with.

Then, from a formative point of view, this is a 'figurative abstraction' that reproduces expression. If ordinary abstraction focuses on leaving a largely accidental trace through the magical power of human, I add the stage of post-production to make it inevitably real to induce a more vivid experience. On the other hand, in terms of content, this is an 'unavoidable justification' that forms meaning. In the past tense, everything that happened must have happened for a reason, or in the future tense, because it happened everything should make sense thereafter.

Fourth, '**images are stories**'. Face shapes emit different feelings. My books, 'Artistic Face Book' and 'Artistic Emotional Control', contain 'the 14 Yin-Yang Ratio'. These are the Balanced-Asymmetrical, the Small-Big, the Lengthy-Wide, the Shallow-Deep, the Round-Angular, the Winding-Straight, the Old-Young, the Soft-Strong, the Dim-Bright, the Light-Dense, the Wet-Dry, the Backward-Forward, the Downward-Upward, and the Inward-Outward Ratio. For reference, the first word corresponds to yin, and the last word corresponds to yang. Through this, we try to connect images and stories in concrete faces and abstract emotions.

However, this ratio is applicable not only to faces and emotions, but to all kinds of objects and phenomena. Each stroke in this project is not just an image. Rather, it is a story of its own. For example, according to 'the Lengthy-Wide Ratio', a vertically long stroke has a strong 'the Lengthy Ratio', so one keeps it to oneself. On the other hand, horizontally wide strokes have a strong 'the Wide Ratio', so one shares it with others. According to 'the Winding-Straight Ratio', a squiggly stroke has a strong 'the Winding Ratio', so it is tangled here and there. Straight stroke has a strong 'the Straight Ratio', so it is directly clear.

Therefore, each individual stroke is full-colored collective personalities with all kinds of emotions, i.e., individual portraits. Every Stroke is a multi-layered group, which is a group portrait. If you savor them individually or in relation to each other, there will be no end to it. Everyone is a narrator and a reader, and the Thousand and One Nights story continues on. Art is a story, and artist is a storyteller.

In essence, through this project, I constantly practice my mind by ruminating on numerous cries of one's own or in relation to each other, with the taste of various shapes, colors, and textures. In doing so, one can experience the thrill of magic, in which an image becomes a sound, a sound becomes an image, or an intangible gesture becomes a tangible material, and all colors become different minds. Sometimes it's so delicate. It's insecure. Sometimes it's so natural that it's a moment of bliss. The world really depends on what you make of it. Through this project, I hope you will have a valuable time to reflect on your own mind.