

Yun Aiyoung, who finished her studies at the end of the eighties, belongs to the nineties generation of the media image. After studying painting in Seoul, Yun continued her research into abstract, expressive pictorial space at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, in Paris, but was unsatisfied with her work. In 1992, she experimented for the first time with video and performance. For Yun, it was the discovery of two new mediums that would allow her to recompose memory and complicated feelings and to give form to the subconscious. She taught herself video techniques, including film and sound editing, so well that after a couple of years she began to receive invitations to different vidéo festivals.

Yun's career so far has been a two-stage development. The first, from 1993 to 1998, was a collaboration under the name *Cho & Yun* and consisted mostly of video installations whose theme was the limits and conditions of human existence, as well as personal resistance to these conditions. The second stage, beginning in 1999, has been Yun focusing alone on installation work that combines dreams with the real. Bridging the work

of these two periods is the image of the artist naked, first in a struggle to awaken from a nightmare, then, beginning in 1999, in a deeper and deeper dream state, or a dreamlike body that seems to awaken in a dream. Yun uses video to reveal her intuition about invisible, parallel worlds. She stages a daydream by mixing dreamlike images collected from the real. Just as the subconscious stages dreams with fragments of a real that reveals our desires and premonitions. It is a surreal space, where different times coexist. It is also a path for the artist that leads to a consciousness of the self.

*Dream*, the work that Yun presents in this exhibition, is a representation of different edited landscape images that have freed themselves from gravity, « like bird and fish ». As the title indicates, the artist has followed her subconscious, instead of telling a story with a linear development. *Secret Garden*, a large installation presented for the first time at the Metronom Foundation for Contemporary Art, Barcelona, followed by the Russia State Museum of Saint Petersburg and the Contemporary Art Centre of Basse-Normandy in France, is the most well-known work of the artist and encompasses the whole of her preoccupations.

The work combines different kinds of video projections and a garden of trees and flowers set in a reflective space that is illuminated by the blue or black light. In this landscape, the artist shares with others a process of rediscovering the self through an awakening of consciousness. In its combination of electronic and garden elements, the work is reminiscent of Nam June Paik's famous *TV Garden*, a work that combined real plants with color TVs, at a moment - the early seventies - when households were beginning to have them, Paik's work mixes nature with the brilliant color and movement of electronic images and announces the electronic art that has become second nature to us today. Unlike Paik's work, Yun's garden has nothing to do with nature. It is artificial, needing neither earth nor air. Instead of greenery there is pale white fluorescent light. Thus built, the garden is a metaphorical spiritual landscape. Only the sound of wind and water here and there, reminds us of nature. According to the artist, the tree standing in the middle of the garden symbolizes the soul of the artist. In the tree's branches, several hanging translucent screens present dancing video images like vague memories. Everywhere in the world, symbolic thinking, especially that of traditional Korea, links the soul to a straight and solid tree. On the path that leads from the tree to the soul, white flowers are in blossom, and here and there another time and space unfolds. Yun, who doubts she has an existence that is unique to herself, dreams of a dream that takes care of real life in different times and spaces, like in the "Butterfly Dream" of Chuangtzu. In doing so, she asks if remembering that we dream the dreams of one another now and in the past, and if collecting traces left here and there in the same place could be the path to a discovery

of the self as a whole. The artist seems to believe that even this is a fantasy. The truth she has found in her video images is that between shadow (the image) and existence the difference is but one branch of light, which always comes from darkness (empty space) and returns to darkness. Yet the artist, instead of giving in to nihilism, sees that the present is important as a kind of process, not because the present is unique and absolute but because it is a base on which we can imagine other lives in another space and time.

Since *Secret Garden* is too large to be presented in this exhibition, photos of installation views will be presented. What will be presented instead is Yun's *Floating Island*, a work she created in the same spirit as *Secret Garden*. *Floating Island* is a landscape of unconsciousness on, indeed, a landscape that reaches into the self-awakening.

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Kim Airyung