

Artist's One day and life memorized by Thinking Hand 一器;日記;一其; Thinking Hand

Kim Serin (art critic, lecturer at Ewha Womans Univ.)

Thinking Hand

Art craft and design theorist Robert Kavannagh defined the role and meaning of artist's hand as "the absolute resource of creation for the earthen ware laying on this place," in his book. The connotative meaning and function of the art work varies in terms of usability, identity, purpose, and inherent meaning according to the artist's intention and thought. However, the role of hand making is an essential factor for the completion of art works representing artist's skill and thought regardless the various intents and natures in art making.

An artist starts to work by hands after considering the way of how to represent a art work according to his/her intention. Artist's hands carry out the process of formation, refinement, decoration, and firing depending on his/her thought. Therefore, Artist's hands are both a type of visual language and a way-out, which represents all kinds of characteristics of art work based on artist's work skill and thinking. Thus, artist'd hands are often designated as 'Thinking Hand.'

Kim mikyoung's work idea begins in this context. She places importance on the inherent role and meaning of 'Thinking Hand.' And she thinks intensely over the externalization and expression of the essential plastic code of 'Thinking Hand.' So, she utilizes various factors and chances occurring in the work in progress as well as the final product finished by her plan. Her hands works precisely according to her intent, but, occasionally there are many different factors occurring in the process of modeling, sculpturing, and glazing, which turns out unintentionally. Likewise, we embrace unpredictable factors and chances occurring endlessly and repeatedly in the march of our lives regardless our planning, she admits also various improvisations, chances, and factors breaking out in the work in progress, as a part of work processed by her hands, in accordance with the final work completed according to her plan.

Given her glazing techniques, such as unequable thickness and width of glaze and marbling technique of irregular patterns of glaze, which is attached completely or partly to the rim of the round bowl, we can easily observe the upper-mentioned her intent. This glazing technique originated from an accidental error in the process of kiln firing. When she was doing kiln firing at the studio in State University of San Diego, in which she was in sabbatical, some bowls inside of kiln turned upside down unintentionally and some glaze flew out from the upturned bowls made the kiln a mass. The disheveled glazes, meanwhile, was also granulating very interesting patterns. Since then, she has been

repeatedly testing marbling techniques, which was made by the accidental malfunction. Currently, she continues to use this technique actively in her ceramic work and explore this kind of glazing technique. Even though considering one of serendipity, which is also a part of art working processed by artist's hands, this is a good example of artist's curiosity and his/her artistic practice of it through exploring a creative method or technique occurring from an accidental malfunction. In this way, Kim mikyoung continues to consider glazing, firing, carving, and other plastic elements of making after setting up a careful plan corresponding to her intent, and simultaneously she also continues to explore various aesthetic phenomena she encounters while experiencing the accidental malfunctions. This show testifies that she has been thinking over on the inherent nature of 'Thinking Hand' elaborately. In this show, she enables us to get a glimpse of her oeuvres through her daily memory, thought, and the physical endeavors for the beautification of objects

Artist's one day engendered by 'Thinking Hand': 一器, 日記, 一其

It seems that one day is the continuum of time and daily life. However, everytime when we are retracing memory, there is no same day. Even though we do the same things, those are dissimilar to the same experience and situation. Likewise, the people we meet and pass through everytime are not the same. A day is made up of the moments of feeling and coincidental events. So, everybody spends a day in different ways and



meanings. And, also, people look back and memorize the passed days respectively. Some people record a matter of the day in text, and also describe their thoughts regarding a day event irregularly and freely, such as the ways of figuration in drawing and looking back photographs, which were taken today. For her, there is no any defined rules or methods for documenting a day and the only way of representing one day memory existing in her thought is conducted by her hands in her own way.

Kim mikyoung, like an exhibition title, has documented the memorized one day event (一其, 日記) by making a bowl a day (一器). A group of numerous bowls spreaded out on the ground of second exhibition floor of Ujung Art Center would be a year diary, which is a collection of her daily record. These diaries were arranged in similar patterns in an exhibition, such as a pile type or group shaping, except some bowls installed individually. For this reason, viewers might receive a impression that the arrangement of ceramic bowls was represented the same as they felt that the groups of bowls were similar to their daily lives passing by when they looked at those groups at the very first. However, you may wonder if you look at the every bowl in detail, then you will find every bowl does not have exact same shapes, textures, and color glazes by examining every bowl which was made deliberately by hands one by one without utilizing a mould technique. Then, we can get the answer regarding the implicit meaning of seemingly same—look but different bowl shapes, which represent her identity inherent in her entire works.

The common basic form in her entire works represents both a symbol of identity and connotative meaning coming from her life. The pointed bottom shape of bowl like a comb—pattern earthenware symbolizes woman's breast. The meaning of breast represents the beginning of life. With breast, babies start to experience a life energy, which are both the feeling of existence and instinct through contacting skin texture and



with breast-feeding. Although woman's breast is a part of human body, it has more symbolic meaning than a body part and represents motherhood and symbolizes eternal love and warm mind for her family, mostly her children. Kim is not only a daughter who was raised with love and care, and but also an artist and wife and mother who cares and loves her husband and children all the time. In this sense, Kim has transfigured her past diary into a form of breast, which is rooted in her primitive instinct and identity. And Kim continue to include a day memory and thought in this form implicitly by putting different coloring, glazing, and patterns on outer crust of a bowl.

Although we may feel a day is same to any other day, time, people, moments, and experience intrinsic in a day are different. Even more so when applied to a day and moment when we feel special. For these reasons, a basic diary form is same as a art work, but figurations of daily record expressed on outer crust of a bowl are different respectively.

Some bowls remain as only dried forms sculpturing directly from clay without firing.

Some bowls have the crack(氷裂) on the outer crust intactly happened according to the level of contraction of glaze and clay in the process of drying and firing. And, as upper explained, some bowls remain to a complete form having various patterns came from firing and others remain to dried forms after filling the inside of bowl with the combination of various colors of glaze by utilizing various techniques occurring in the process of artist's work practice, and others remain empty inside without glazing.

Besides, about 300 bowls were embellished with various glaze pattens by artist's creative method and technique. In addition to this, each bowl has a making date on the outer layer of the bowl. The date indicates artist's a day memory, record, and thought. And, after all, each bowl reminds the viewer of the figuration derived from artist's life being made up of day to day.

Life consisting of a day, and identity

Basically, everybody has a role and identity in nature.

With birth, everybody becomes the child of parent as a member of a family and also becomes the parents of a child through a marriage and giving birth. And their roles, both as a worker and a member of community, become a pivot on the figuration of daily life by assigning their identities on their lives, respectively. Because the figuration of their lives are different individually, although seemingly those are similar, the meaning of a day and a form of life they spend can vary. In this exhibition, Kim Mikyoung shows a record of her life and thought in the fast lane regarding her identity and a role as a daughter, wife, mother, artist, and teacher. The artist's record made by 'Thinking Hand' does not miss unique aesthetic nature and technical and plastic characteristics inherent in ceramic art. And Kim hands down a meaningful message which suggests we have completed an art practice through our identity and daily life, which is made up of a mundane and repetitive day.





