

Every Bride is Pretty

The exhibition *Every Bride is Pretty* unveils Hyeonkyeong You's distinctive approach to painting and perception, encompassing figures, objects, and landscapes. Her artworks defy easy categorization such as portrait or still life, featuring expressive brushwork and abstract forms, even when depicting figurative subjects. Executed with minimal strokes, the paintings purposefully omit certain external features, fostering the illusion of swift execution while, in truth, demanding substantial amount of time and thorough observation. This intentional omission imbues the works with a sense of emptiness, yet the heavy colors and tones, rugged brushwork, and bold compositions maintain a tension between the artist and the objects.

The paintings featured at Enseoul do not merely depict the exteriors of objects; instead, they invite viewers to contemplate their essence and project themselves within. Anyone can empathize with the figures depicted in You's paintings, whether it be the one in difficulty or the pretty bride. When confronted with You's portrayal of "roads," one can envision any path within their own mind. This approach places You's works on the ambiguous border between completion and incompleteness, while allowing for a deeper understanding of the object beyond surface judgments. She believes that refraining from making subjective judgments based on appearance of an object allows for a better insight and expression of its essence. In this sense, *Every Bride is Pretty* epitomizes this ethos, prioritizing dynamic and expressionistic gestures over conventional expression of bride's beauty, challenging viewers to transcend mere appearances and pursue something inherent.

In her recent solo exhibition, *The One in Difficulty*, You demonstrated her perception of the subjects of her painting, particularly humans. To her, being in difficulty transcends mere financial lack; it stands for a refusal to be subordinated to the huge societal structures, instead, navigating an inner path firmly. In this exhibition at Enseoul, You's empathetic portrayal in pieces like *The One in Difficulty #2* makes it impossible for visitors to judge or evaluate its appearance. Instead, they are encouraged to empathize with the anxiety, failure, and frustration that the person in difficulty, depicted beyond the heavy colors, rough brush strokes, and dark, deep eyes, must endure as they follow their own path.

You meticulously ponders the conclusion of each piece, seeking a delicate equilibrium between restraint and immoderation before putting her brush down. Across all of the paintings in *Every Bride is Pretty*, You implies her prolonged anticipation for the moment of completion, where beauty and darkness resonate beyond the surface of the object, culminating in the collapse of boundaries between the object and the artist herself. _ (Yeni Ma, Independent Curator)

Hyeonkyeong You

b. 1985

Lives and works in Berlin (DE)

Hyeonkyeong You received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Seoul National University and completed her Master's degree at the same institution. She has been selected for overseas residencies at Schloss Plüschow in Plüschow (2011), Rote Fabrik in Zürich (2014), and Doosan Residency in New York (2016). In her artistic practice, she explores the relationship between the artist and the object, oscillating between abstraction and figuration. Although her fast and dynamic brushstrokes can be interpreted in an expressionist context, her bold use of blank space and gestural abstraction is reminiscent of oriental painting.

You's recent solo exhibitions include: *The One in Difficulty*, 2GIL29 GALLERY, Seoul (KR); *Painting, as another method for a meeting*, Hori Artspace, Seoul (KR); *Attractiveness*, JN Gallery, Seoul (KR); *Your transparent and resonant soul*, Gallery Mark, Seoul (KR); *Nobody Hurt by Painting*, itta Space, Incheon (KR); *It Was Beautiful Days*, Gallery Now, Seoul (KR); *be happy*, GALLERY2, Seoul (KR); *New Days*, Spacemom museum of art, Cheongjoo (KR).