

'The Secret of Forest' by Duri Park

Visual language that encompasses
the beauty of nature and mystery of life

Hangseop Shin | art critic

Mother Nature is the repository and source of artistic creation. In particular, realistic genre painting, which represents nature or the beauty of nature, becomes immediate subject and material in the course of creation. For the beauty of nature, it is a symbol of perfect beauty by own. Whether they are animate or inanimate, each form of nature has an impeccable beauty. It is no exaggeration to refer nature as original version of plastic visual art. Nature imbues artists with principle of creativity and energy to move on, stimulates, and encourages their creative passion constantly. Therefore, stepping toward nature simply can evoke new creative inspiration. We cannot argue that nature is an inexhaustible treasury, which bestows inspiration of the creative work.

The recent works of Duri Park are triggered from forests. From the thick forests, her painterly inspiration arose and worked on. Apparently, the forests are filled with green trees and form a part of the mountain. On the other hand, when it is looked from inside, the colorful flowers and grass, all kinds of animals and insects, and microorganisms exist in it. It is the garden of life for all kinds of creatures living together with trees of various shapes and sizes.

Yet, she limits the presence of those beings by an implication. In other words, she does not allow realistic representation of the forest itself. Instead, vertical lines to fill the space that suggesting upright trees. Although not a stem or a branch or leaves are shown, viewers would not miss the image and feeling of forest. In fact, we could feel more forest than the actual one even though the flat configuration of vertical lines stands as an indicative of the stems. Our consciousness is capable of imagining and restoring the actual forest through such a simple image even.

Duri Park chooses the woods as subject matter to express the mystery of life garden, which it possesses naturally. It is a realization that the origin of the painterly inspiration comes from the law of nature, which leads the cycle of life with own unique beauty in each form. The beauty and the way of being in each life conceive the artistic thinking. It may be an intrinsic nature of beauty, which the creatures exist for different purposes and draw harmony in unity, obeying the law of life.

However, the artist does not follow the realistic reproduction of the natural beauty to admire. The works rather speak the secret of life, which the artist believes the essential value of nature as it is observed through. Nevertheless, flowers, trees, or birds that are the actual forest dwellers, do not emerge in her paintings. Because, it is the statement drawn out of feeling not a record what the artist saw. This is not a feeling for what appears to describe a statement that tells you. It may be so. Spectator could have a deep impression and feeling of forest even though any specific figurative of forest are hidden. The image of forest reinterpreted with an adumbrative implication gathers an effect more realistic sense. The images and its impression of the woods we experienced and accumulated in the past are vividly reliving in detail today.

Visualizing certain feeling after an optic scene is not an easy task. In fact, reproducing nature figuratively is depend on the technical delineation, however, the feeling after the optic experience brings the matter of expression itself. In that sense, her work can be said of the visual expression of mindscape. At the beginning, the experience is based on optical facts, but it moves onto the emotional reaction and continue to process the development of consciousness. Speculation means the process of inquiry over the matter, not only the beauty bestowed to nature but the mystery of life within. The process of speculation is based on reading invisible fact underneath from what appeared to be on surface. Therefore, the speculation is an important method in determining the contents of the work.

The expected images visualized on the canvas after such procedures are often non-figurative and abstract. It is because the aesthetic image lingering in the mind of the artist's consciousness is extracted while avoiding the figural forms. Filtered with the aesthetic consciousness, simplified images are emerging on the canvas that is presupposed by restricting the emotional part. At the time, any direct images to point out are not visible. Only enough of images that to hint actual thing are left, or, we may even see no signs at all at times.

Thus, her work is not about an impression or its reproduction gathered from external stuff. Neither does she expose simply the mindful image only. Soaked with the intrinsic value of the work, the content is expressed with the visual beauty. While the specific form is restricted, through non-figurative and abstract images she seeks the plastic beauty in the works. Therefore, definite forms are hidden to yield colorful abstract expression instead. In-depth representation with harmonizing various colors requires a certain way of understanding the aesthetic quality. Sometime, the work flows with a stream of brilliant colors expressing waves of emotion. Over the course of time, the works process several stages to deliver deepened color field. Thus, the colorful formation of layers get thickens: Not of the thickness of paint to emphasize textures but the visual depth that weighs down.

Such an implication of depth and thickness displayed by colorful layers stands as a metaphor for the subtlety of nature. In other words, by posing the delicate color images as a metaphor, the artist embraces the presence of numerous organisms and their natural courses taken in the forest: Her consciousness goes steady with the images of each creature from the forest and their presence covertly permeates into the layers of paints. She repeats working on the abstract image that does not expose definite figures. Such acts bestow her the hour of sympathetic yet indirect communication with the lives in the woods. In the actual works, myriad of small dots, lines, and stain-like images are overflowing as if they speak of all kinds of creatures from the woods. Those different hues of colors subtly blended in misty air are there to create a mysterious atmosphere. This is not the world of the imagination: A guide based on the reality since then.

The works of Duri Park send forth to us the pleasure of visual sensibility alongside the image of the forest by importing diverse colors. She picks a particular color and placing various colors around to achieve an overall harmony. It seems she represents the colors of the seasonal changes in diversification; or, it is more likely an outcome from active expression of the pure image of color. Significantly, her elaborate sense of managing pure colors allows to a broader interpretation of the forest image. As a result, richer color variation came in instead interpreting the image of it to the place of stereotype color of green forest. In recent works, the artist put herself a task of visualizing the image of the forest and the sea together. Mountains and the sea: Somewhat contrasting image of the forest and the waves rises as subject matter of painting. The manner she treats the abstract image of a ripples and waves are not very different from the method interpreting the forest as a subject. The image of the forest is vertical while the waves are stretched horizontally. Green hue centers forest when blue variation does for waves. The symbolic color image expresses the impression from the sea. A series of works on the sea reflects the surroundings of the artist's daily life, which the fact marks her artistic development in the future.

This denotes that Duri Park's abstract and non-figurative visual language is not just an outcome of intellectual manipulation. It is more of refining and simplified non-representing language transformed from own experience accumulated upon the fact. Likewise, it is grace of life, which is real face of forest her visual language intends. Ultimate language the artist strives for is expressing the beauty and mystery of life bestowed by nature.