

1. Cat human

3 years ago, I disappeared. I disappeared from my friends and family. And I locked myself in my small room. No TVs, no cellular phones. I was afraid of going out of the room, even to the supermarkets around the area. After I lived like that for one and half year, just when I started to get bored and to think about stepping outside my room, there came this cat. I was left with a cat which one of my remote relatives suddenly brought me.

I had to take care of it. At the beginning it was so weird and interesting to see a cat around my room. So I began to draw it. As the time goes it became a part of my everyday and in my drawing the cat actually became united with my self portrait.

–‘A Cat human’

In my drawing, the eyes of the cat are looking different directions or firmly closed. Its figure and legs are abnormally bent or crooked. The objects(a house, bed, plant, space etc.) are broken or combined with the body of a cat.

The Cat human has become no more a cat neither a human. This weird and unknown creature sometimes fills up the picture obsessively or settles right at the center of the picture. The composition is often symmetrical that can be found in the traditional Buddhist painting, which was my major in university. The Mandala-like patterns inside the eyes are turning round and round like a saw-toothed wheel. Inside the confused eyes there is certain consciousness, but the world that the eyes are looking is too complicated to understand. Both the ‘self’ and the world where the ‘self’ belongs are creating an anxiety, but the anxiety actually comes from nowhere. The fact that you don't know where it come from creates the anxiety again.

2. Black lines digging into the inner side

The Conte pastel is fascinating medium. It's simple and instant. So usually, it used easily to make simple sketches and croquis. But I found contes could do more than that. When the lines lay on and fill the surface, it gets very unique depth, which cannot be made up by a brush. I feel more like scratching than drawing when I make simple lines repeatedly and obsessively. I draw lines, and spray the fixative onto it, and then draws more lines on the top of it and so on. I repeat this procedure until I get the deep and rich black. The lines become the surface and space. It makes the texture of the hair of the cat and people often say it's so touchable that they could actually stroke the cat; I had to find out to fix the contes perfectly so that it wouldn't be smudged out when they stroke the cat. I have tried various grounds, colors and fixatives and I will explore more materials. And I want to see what else I can do with contes.

3. ‘Anxiety Virus’

When I stayed in my room for one and half year, the internet became the only access for me to the outside world. I did web surfing and visited hundreds of blogs of others. And I found the vague anxiousness hidden in many of them. It gave me some kind of relief that I was not the only one who was unrest. Korea is a country blessed by the internet, everyone has their own online space. On the internet it is easier to talk about one's personal feeling such as anxiety with others just like everyday conversation.

The Anxiety Virus(2007) is a project began with the idea of communication. It involves both online and offline exhibition. First I explored a thousand blogs. Then I sent my drawings to a few selected bloggers. I chose a certain work among my drawings for each of them. And they sent me back their messages which was either simple comments about my work or their own story about the anxiety. Each drawing has got an individual room that people can keep visiting. In each room we communicate with each other by comments or ‘track-backs’. It is an on-going exhibition that requires people's participation. I don't want my drawings to be just one-way conversation but an access to anyone who will bring up their own story.

The Anxiety Virus is a project for me to look keenly the inner side of myself. It is also an opportunity for me to step backward from myself and contemplate my inner side as well as my works. I'm going to continue the project for 3 years.

For an artist, the art work is a ‘language’. (S)he communicates with others in the work, and I think the Anxiety Virus project maximizes this idea of communication. My work was started from a private and personal story. But on the other hand, it was not just a story of mine. People derived their own stories from my work. “One's anxiety does not just belong to oneself.” – This is the main concept of my work.

