

이은희

Lee Eun-hee



종이예술가, 국가무형문화재기능협회 회원

1955 제주 출생

Paper artist, member of National Intangible Cultural Heritage Association

1955 Born in Jeju

1995 프랑스 파리 〈The Art World of Korean Paper〉 초대전

1996 독일 베를린 ufaFabrik 〈The Art World of Korean Paper〉 초대전

1997 미국 하와이대학교 〈The Art World of Korean Paper〉 초대전

1999 일본 동경 갤러리 〈The Art World of Korean Paper〉 초대전

2003 청주 공예비엔날레 전시 〈감물조각보〉

2005 일본 오카자키 센토미술관 초대전시 〈줍치 오배자〉

2008 제5회 일본 나고야 아이치현 초목비엔날레 심사 및 초대전시 〈紙千年 I〉

2010 교토문화박물관 전시 〈The Sheep Palette Kyoto〉

2016 제36회 한국중요무형문화재 기능보존협회 전통공예명품전 〈紙千年 II〉

2018 (사)국가무형문화재 전시 〈한지 감물비웃〉

1995 Invitation Exhibition: The Art World of Korean Paper, Paris, France

1996 Invitation Exhibition: The Art World of Korean Paper, ufaFabrik, Berlin, Germany

1997 Invitation Exhibition: The Art World of Korean Paper, University of Hawaii, USA

1999 Invitation Exhibition: The Art World of Korean Paper, Tokyo Gallery, Japan

2003 Cheong-ju Handicraft Biennale: Persimmon-dyed Jogakbo (Patchwork Wrapping Cloth)

2005 Invitation Exhibition: Jumchi Obaeja, Okazaki Sento Museum of Art

2008 Invitation Exhibiton: 紙千年 I (Thousand Years of Paper), the 5th Aichi Vegetation Biennale, Nagoya, Japan

2010 The Sheep Palette Kyoto, Kyoto Culture Museum

2016 紙千年 II, The 36th Masterpieces of Traditional Craft Exhibition, Korean National Intangible Cultural Heritage Association

2018 Hanji Persimmon-dyed Raincoat Exhibition, National Intangible Cultural Heritage Association



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이은희, 한지공예의 멋

Lee Eun-hee, the Beauty of Hanji Paper Art

작품 설치: 까띠 라뻡

Installation: Cathy Rapin

2020.07.17.FRI — 09.13.SUN

제주돌문화공원 오백장군갤러리 기획전시설

Jeju Stone Park Obaek Jang-Goon Gallery Exhibition Hall

오백장군갤러리 기획전 The Obaek Jang-goon Gallery Exhibition

제주돌문화공원 JEJUSTONEPARK

Pause and Resonance of a Moment; Artist Lee Eun-hee’s Hanji paper art

Lim He-gyeong

Honorary Professor of Sookmyung University, Drama Critic, Director of Francophonie Theater Company

Artist Lee Eun-hee has publicized the beauty of Korean hanji paper art called ‘joomchi (paper felting)’ to not only domestic but also foreign countries such as Japan, Germany, France, and the United States for over 30 years. This exhibition shows her long journey of artwork on a large scale. Her diverse works are so large that even she is often amazed. There are works reproducing important traditional items such as costumes for rituals, raincoats, sacerdotal robes, male and female Korean traditional clothes, shrouds, haenyeo women diver clothes, persimmon-dyed clothes, pouches, eyeglass cases, and wallets. On the other hand, there are other numerous works created freely with modern style, which show the world of abstract paintings. Traditional or modern, wherever they are placed, her works create a certain mystique that dominates the space. Moreover, hanji artist Lee Eun-hee has created a vast collection of works of a tradition that was nearly cut off from contemporary interpretation. Now, this exhibition spotlights her complete works.

The artist’s varied works have shown off the possibilities of Korean hanji, thereby garnering admiration from Korean and others overseas. As the proverb says, “Nothing is complete unless you put it in final shape.” In this case, Lee has collaborated with Cathy Rapin (professor of French, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and standing director of Francophonie Theater Company) in order to ensure an outstanding exhibition. Both collaborated 10 years ago when Lee participated in the opening exhibition of Obeak Jang-Goon Gallery at Jeju Stone Park. But this occasion marks something quite unique because the French director is intent on spotlighting Lee’s works in a simple and unconventional way, trusting that the works by themselves will reveal its true weight and depth. Based on the nature of the material and the artist’s kneading (or felting) and shaping the paper, her works are like play. Her installations suggest the feelings of a house, the sky, clouds, rain, forest and a maze. A breeze makes the works flutter and allows light to shine through the transparent areas. Viewers thereby engage in an encounter on an unfamiliar path with another language. One feels the energy, experiences fantasy, humor and irony, which are generated by the friction between art, poetry and philosophy. The director’s vision, therefore, has been to not only spotlight the artist’s works, but to honor the duration of hanji paper that Lee has kneaded all her life.

What is the “joomchi technique?” According to the artist’s explanation: “It is the technique of felting or sticking two sheets of hanji paper together only with water. Then, bonding them together by strongly kneading out the air. As the hanji paper is soaked in water, kneaded and pounded numerous times with bare hands, the fiber eventually becomes fused and strong like cotton cloth and even as strong as leather. This unique Korean craft technique embodies both softness and strength.” In addition, “This way of treating soaked hanji paper, creates a primal and instinctive kneading activity. It looks like the simplest and repeated work, but it requires endurance, sincere time, earnest longing, and energy.” When we are invited into her world of creative consciousness, we can appreciate the primal substance of hanji through the artist’s hands unfolding endlessly. Through the process of knitting, drying, dyeing, and coloring hanji paper, the last shape of hanji is beautiful like ramie fabric or thinner than a dragonfly wing. Then the artist blows into the fine texture looking as if it is about to break like a spiderweb. Wind blows. Dewdrops form.

The artist believes that each work requires pause and resonance of the moment. Works are created at the moment of pause, neither more nor less than that. Only the artist knows when to pause. If there is no resonance in the completed work, it is simply an example of technical skill. The artist says she feels echoes when she works with hanji paper. She transforms hanji paper bearing in mind that the echo must have its own resonance by dismantling, emptying and purifying the work through kneading and felting,

Therefore, the theme of this exhibition, which is a unique collaboration between artist Lee Eun-hee and poet Cathy Rapin, can be expanded to a life of an artist, a life of a woman, and a life of a human being. In the five rooms that have been designed according to the theme, the artist’s diverse art world is unfolded in its fullness. If viewers have a delicate sense, they can see different themes in each room such as childhood play in the first room; encounters, love, and the others of an adolescent period in the second room; adulthood and marriage in the third room; pain and a maze in the fourth room; and death, transcendence, and rebirth in the fifth room. However, viewers are encouraged to simply feel as they feel. This exhibition hopefully will show the essence of beautiful hanji art, which has acquired universality of human life beyond the dimension of an individual artist.

