Jang Chi Gil

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Chi-Gil Jang is a Korean painter based in Korea. He most often makes use of Korean themes or imagery in his art. It is not always easy for the Western viewer to understand the implications of an artist like Jang, whose skilled use of pigment on Korean paper results in pictures of unusual beauty and subtle form. Indeed, the compositions often might be characterized as decorative—a word not usually associated with extraordinary accomplishment in painting. But in the Korean classical tradition, as in the other East Asian traditions, the ornamental is part of a larger vision and system. In the case of Jang, who is not alone in his current practice of deliberate beauty, we see an artist committed to a kind of painting that reflects Korean art history even as it makes its way toward contemporary life. Often his images are strengthened by both present-day design and even bits of formalist abstraction; and so we remember that current pictorial practice is now an international phenomenon, with artists borrowing from cultures and epochs not necessarily their own. The poetic beauty of Jang’s art may well owe its structure to the past, but the luxuriousness of its effect cannot be written off simply as historical. Instead, the melding of tradition with a contemporary voice anchors the latter, so that the perception of the painter becomes entirely new.

In much new Western art, there is an emphasis on the conceptual—the intellect shapes and forms the visual content of the work. There are of course many artists in Eastern Asia that make use of such a methodology; however, Jang is not one of them. He relies instead on an aesthetic of lyric disclosure, albeit one in which the terms reveal unusual technical skill in the traditional Asian method, as well as an exquisite hand specifically in the painting of flowers. Often the background consists of a flower-like design, hand-painted and repeated as we might experience the design of Korean textile. The real point facing Jang’s audience is whether or not to accept such historicism as valid so late in esthetic time. He might easily be criticized for a tunnel vision that bypasses modernity and makes its way into a legacy in which scholarship trumps any new insight. But this would be a facile judgment; in today’s world art culture, where most anything is acceptable most anywhere, Jang’s scholarly review of his culture’s painting practice can be seen as a new historical outlook, one in which the sharp break of modernism has not distanced the artist from painterly origins.

One can experience the dual impulse of Jang’s imagination in the diptych entitled Taste for the Arts: The Pear Blossom (2016), constructed of a red vertical panel—a scroll, really—on the left, and a blue panel of the same size on the right. In both scrolls, about two-thirds of the way down in the compositions, is a sharply, beautifully rendered pear blossom, with the petals in white and the leaves in green. The flowers are supported by red patterns on the left and blue patterns on the right; stippling the background of both scrolls are the designs of constellations rendered in dots connected to each other by lines. The overall effect is that of a momentary apotheosis of nature, emblematic of the hidden models that govern the expressiveness of the natural world. As someone who has spent much time writing on Asian art, I take the unabashed embellishment of the painting (pigment on Korean paper on panel) for what it is: a homage to the past, but one which takes its learned impulse as a springboard for modern art. The isolation of the two pear blossoms is by itself an acknowledgment of a certain kind of loneliness, which cannot be assuaged by the attraction of the flowers alone.

Another remarkable painting is a diptych, a seascape with an island and a bay that mirror each other on each panel. Named Tongyeong: Special Melody (2015), the work is a rendering of where Jang comes from. The upper two-thirds of both panels are covered with an abstract design done in two blues, while the lower third is composed of a green island and a bay that duplicate each other. What a mixture of formal design and lyric landscape! The line separating the two paintings ends up accentuating the similarities between the two. One senses that Jang has fashioned a visual homage to his home, with an active awareness that culture, in the form of the textile-like patterns, and nature, produced in the curves of the island and bay, merge in the best examples of Asian fine art. The settings in Jang’s art bring about a structure that is as formal and analytic as it is inspired and intuitive, but the real achievement is found in the merger between established structure and quick insight. He has thus found his own, new path, even as he recognizes its support from his country’s great inheritance of classical painting.
Profile of the Painter
Jang Chi Gil

Artist and Writer based in Korea
1961 born in Tongyeong, Korea
1986 BFA department of Painting, Kyemyung University, Korea

Solo Exhibitions
2015 Taste for the arts, Lotte Gallery, Daejeon
2014 Taste for the arts, Gallery forest, Changwon
2013 Korea International Art Fair-KIAF, Gallery A, COEX Hall, Seoul
2012 Real Landscape painting-Painting exhibition-the southern island, Gallery A
2011 Real Landscape painting -Tongyeong landscape, Gallery Tongyeong
2011 Real Landscape painting -Geojе landscape exhibition, Seom-dal gallery, Geoje
2011 Korea International Art Fair -KIAF, Dongseo Gallery, COEX, Seoul
2010 Celebrate the Prime Minister of Dongseo spasmodysis, Dongseo Gallery,
2010 Korea International Art Fair -KIAF, Ms. Gallery, COEX, Seoul
2009 Wind-As flowing, Tongyeong Citizens’ Culture Center
2009 Korea International Art Fair-KIAF, Myeong gallery, COEX, Seoul
2008 Under the sky, Shinsegae Department Store, Incheon
2007 Over the border-the transmigration of souls, Tongyeong citizens’ culture center
2006 Over the border-Popular use, Montmartre Gallery, Busan
2006 Over the border-communion, Gallery Korea, Berlin, Germany
2005 Korean mythology-People who stand, Gongpyeong Art Center, Seoul
2004 Parting-meeting, Dusan Gallery, Daegu
2003 Auspicious-Dreams, Open gallery, Busan/Ulsan Hyundai Art Gallery
2002 Spirit & symbol, Kyung-in Museum, Seoul
2001 Korean mythology-Dream of a butterfly, Yerim gallery, Jinju
1998 Korean story, Kyung-in Museum, Seoul
1997 Tongyeong story, Tongyeong Koryo gallery
1992 Exhibit paintings of Jang, Chi-Gil, Tongyeong Koryo gallery

Group Exhibitions
2017 Asia Contemporary Art Show(Hongkong/Conred)
2015 Tongyeong artist cello exhibition-Twinkling sound of Tongyeong, Tongyeong International Concert Hall
2014 Special exhibition “Celebrate the Gwangju Biennale”, Gwangju Museum of Art
2012 Residence 2012 Scent of nature, Masan Art Center, Changwon
2008 Museum of art to look-Geojе, Geojе culture & arts center
2008 Cannot forget in a dream, Museum to look/Tongyeong writer exhibition,
National Museum of contemporary art, Korea
2007 The Aspects and Prospects of Korea-Turkey Contemporary Arts, 50th
anniversary of diplomatic relations, Istanbul, Turkey and Bucheon History Museum, Korea
2006 Natural exhibition of the country, Gyeonggi Cultural Hall of Fame
2005 Landscape exhibition from me, Museum of Art, Gyeongsangnam-do, Korea
2004–2005 Museum to look, National Museum of contemporary art, Korea
2000–2003 Korean Environmental Art Festival, Culture &Arts Center, Ulsan
2000 JAAL exhibition, Museum of Art Tokyo, Japan
1999–2004 Art exchange exhibition, Gwangju, Mokpo, Ulsan, Yeosu
1998 in the Dangun Era4331 Tiger a special exhibition, Posco Art Gallery, Pohang
1990–1991 Print exhibition message, Imok gallery, Daegu

Published
COLOR DNA: Hyeong-Jun Jang /morning fill inc. design-2008
Shamanistic Characteristic in Contemporary Art Korea, Myeong-Suk Iee
(a master’s thesis - 2003)
Saekdong Modern Korea Research study on the center, Im-Seok Oh
(master’s thesis and 2008)
Art textbooks for middle school, (Jihak Publishing Co., Ltd - 2010–)

Awards
2015 The 3rd, The Medici Prize awards, Association de ’ Medici, Changwon
2010 The 20th, The Dongseo Prize awards, Art Promotion Committee, Masan

Profile
Profile of the Painter
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Collections
Busan High Court
Eastern Branch of Busan District Court
Changwon District Court to visit Tongyeong support
Tongyeong Changwon District Public Prosecutor's Office, District
Tongyeong City Hall
Tongyeong the police
Community Health Center, Tongyeong-si, Gyeongsangnam-do, Korea
Tongyeong The tax office
Gimhae Police Station
Gimhae Police Station
Gyeongnam Province
Sangmyung University Museum
Kyungin Museum of Fine Art
New World Museum
Hanjin Granville Apt., (Tongyeong)
Purgio 2 Cha Apt., (Tongyeong)
New Core outlet, Changwon-si
Roots of the folk museum (Cheongju)
With a Pearl District Court
Sungwol gallery (Changwon)
The Kyongnam Newspaper
Tongyeong International Concert Hall
Jang Chi Gil
Work

a special tune-communication 4 별곡-교감
9 half × 49 half panel, korean paper, pigment 2006
Jang Chi Gil
Work

taste for the arts-The pear blossom1
panel, korean paper, pigment, powder, 61x61cm, 2017
taste for the arts-The pear blossom2
panel, korean paper, pigment, powder, 61x61cm, 2017
Jang Chi Gil
Work

taste for the arts-The pear blossom3
panel, korean paper, pigment, powder, 61x61cm, 2017
Jang Chi Gil

Work

taste for the arts-The pear blossom 4
panel, korean paper, pigment, powder, 61x61cm, 2017

taste for the arts-The pear blossom 5
panel, korean paper, pigment, powder, 61x61cm, 2017
Jang Chi Gil

Work

Attain a real-Dal-A Port (달아항)
panel, korean paper, pigment, powder, 61x61cm, 2017

Attain a real-Of Dawn Hallyeosudo (여명의 한려수도)
67 half × 24, panel, korean paper, pigment, 2015