

## **KIM, Bong-Soo ( 07.07.1977 )**

2003 Graduated from Department of Sculpture College of Fine Arts KyongPook National University

2006 MFA, KyongPook National University

2009~ BFA, KyongPook National University

10<sup>th</sup> Solo Exhibition

17<sup>th</sup> International Sculpture Symposium

2013. Hasra Art World International Residency

### **Invited & Group Exhibition**

2018. International Sculpture Festival, Hangaram Art Museum, Seoul

2017. Fine Art Asia, Exhibition & Convention Center, Hong Kong

2017. International Sculpture Festival, Hangaram Art Museum, Seoul

2017. Seoul International Art Fair, COEX, Seoul

2017. 'Divide the space of sympathy' (Superior Gallery, Seoul)

### **The Present**

Member of Korean Sculptors Association, Member of Moon Sculpture

Instructor at Kyungpook National University

## Statement of

### KIM, BONG-SOO

The main theme of my work is selfish duplicity of human beings in desire. At the beginning of my art work, I only focused on showy decoration in most of my pieces to catch people's eyes, aiming to get on the fast track to success. However, I couldn't make myself satisfied with those kinds of effort, which were not in my nature and my true feelings. I started rethinking deeply about what I really wanted to express in my pieces. After reflecting on myself, I realized I might be Pinocchio in this society. I ignored and hid my natural purity to fulfill my wants, and became selfish, greedy, and injudicious to achieve them. By doing so, I lost myself and wasted my precious time. In fact, we maybe all are like the marionette. Many of us seem to masquerade themselves with lies and cheats for money and power in this very competitive society.

I have highlighted these characters of human beings in my pieces. People in my works look gentle and intelligent, but have a long nose. They are being quite, but lying at the same time. They look smart, but do not know what the truth is. By conflicting characters, I represent duplicity of human being in desire.

#### **Kim Bong Soo's work**

#### **Metaphor of Desire**

#### **<Untitled> and <I am Pinocchio> Series**

##### **1.**

Kim Bong Soo's works in the mid and late 2000s were an attempt of abstract space modeling with such materials as marble and bronze. The curves and straight lines of a bronze cross organic three dimensions of a white-colored marble. The contrast of material versus shape and combination of lines versus ambiguous mass looks like geometric abstraction, depending on the direction you see. As straight lines cross the lines that are close to a circle, the difference between color and material causes visual effects between geometric line and

organic shape. In other words, he attempted geometric abstract sculpture by excluding the space of optical illusion under the contrast between color, material, and shape.

About ten years ago, his abstract sculpture was to highlight the difference in materials or the contrast between color and shape clearly. What can be seen from such an attempt is that his sculpture is close to poetic combination through the dramatic contrast that is based on the difference in material and shape rather than being for reproduction and suggestion. To express in another way, his sculpture can be called as a pure abstract sculpture that is based on lines and shapes. When it comes to the method, his abstract sculpture is that the bronze which constitutes space with planes as well as lines crosses the organic shapes of a stone. On one hand, his abstract sculpture becomes space drawing that is based on lines, planes, shapes, and volumes, as well as three-dimensional abstract painting that depends on perspective. The author's concern about exploration of materials such as bronze and stone that must be cut and polished, materials and shapes of modern sculpture as a method to constitute space, and construction of space are seen in such series of work.

He was invited as a young artist of this year in 2009 (Daegu Culture & Arts Center) after going through a series of work seeking for spacial flexibility in geometrical shapes through the basics of traditional sculpture and material-based experiment. During this period, <Untitled> series focused on linear sculpture emphasizing a sense of rhythm. It is the sculpture whose inside cannot be distinguished from the outside. It is the sculpture whose rhythm in linear shapes is emphasized. It is the sculpture of singular surface whose inside cannot be distinguished from the outside as if it were a Mobius strip without its beginning and end. During this period, he made a sculpture of similar but different curves by using marble and granite as materials in large quantity to create a landscape full of linear rhythms on a wide floor and walls of the exhibition place.

Kim Bong Soo's <Untitled> series attempted installation sculpture ensuring flexibility depending on situational sculpture and place and time through labor of cutting a heavy and hard marble or granite. From a distance, it was an optical illusion by materials because it was thought as soft material rather than stone. In other words, white linear shapes around the walls at the wide exhibition place was a large three-dimensional drawing. At this point, pictorial elements were more emphasized. The relationship between lighting that shines a beam at the installed three-dimensional sculpture and shadow is suggestive of soft and rhythmical drawing on a large wall. It doesn't look like a stone although it is a stone. It doesn't look like a sculpture although it is a sculpture. So during this period, his sculpture was a painting as a sculpture without inside and outside, in other words as a sculpture without inside and outside through linear rhythmic sense, or was a pictorial sculpture. It was a sculpture that consisted of achromatic lines. It was a landscape with the third landscape that was soft but hard, linear rhythms of sculpture, relationship between real object and shadow, and light and shadow combined.

## 2.

After 2011, Kim Bong Soo's major theme was 'desire.' In a larger sense, it was modern people's desire and in a narrow sense, the author's private desire. And the symbol or metaphor of the desire starts from borrowing Pinocchio. In particular, borrowing the 'nose' of Pinocchio is the frame to determine the meaning of desire through the symbol of desire. In other words, it is private desire under social relations, simultaneous reflection of 'me that is seen' and 'I who see,' boundary point, you who look like me or I who look like you or the third

person singular who is neither you nor me, or 'he,' or mirage, the third space. The dictionary definition of mirage is "an optical effect that is sometimes seen at a wrong place, because light is refracted at sea, in the desert, or when the atmospheric density becomes different layer by layer." The third zone exerts a strong power to replace real object or reality with optical illusion or hallucination. One of them is desire. Desire and optical illusion can easily fall into loss and futility, the farther and deeper the distance between body and mind and between reality and ideal. One can sometimes experience optical illusion in real life, like a mirage, a thing that can be seen when one cannot control out of one's own will. It resembles the life of modern people.

'He' appears under the relationship that you are you and I am I, now here, at the place of life of modern people, in other words, where I live on my own way or you live on your own way. 'He' is the third person singular and the third zone where you are not you and I am not I. There are humans, spirits, art, and god. The place where there is Pinocchio without eyes and mouth will also be the third zone. There occurs an optical illusion in the perspective seeing the third zone. 'Optical illusion' is an illusion that occurs due to perspective(or sight). Illusion is commonplace in our everyday life knowingly or unknowingly between you and I. Illusion sometimes is a poison or a medicine. It does me good, but does you harm and vice versa. So 'he,' the third person singular exists in history and politics and culture and art. History and politics are made by many rather than you or me. Culture and art are also the third zone where individual's emotions are gathered and shared by many, in other words, 'he' is me or you.

Above all, one of the most important part of art is that it is based on 'optical illusion.' The most representative thing is realistic picture. Realistic picture is different from realism. Realistic picture can be drawn as if it really existed, with a realistic technique by imagining what does not exist in reality or is impossible. Photography or movie shows our imagination in front of our eyes through computer graphics as if it were real. Mixed images with reality and unreality and real thing and fake combined through Internet appear on the screen. We might be living in the era that it would be gradually more difficult to distinguish them. The distance between what we experience actually and what is seen like a real thing is close but distant space and time or has a difference in meaning. The gap is much deeper and wider. In the view of seeing the close but distant difference lies the most basic desire of humans.

Kim Bong Soo presumes me or you via 'he,' the third zone, through Pinocchio. 'He' is me and simultaneously you. In the fairy tale, Pinocchio's nose grows longer and longer if he tells a lie. But in reality, it is impossible to live without telling a lie, whether it is a white lie or a malicious one. Truth and falsehood can depend on situation. Every country or era has repeated its lack and excess of desire under its own complex culture. This is why Kim Bong Soo presents Pinocchio in asking these questions: what is it related to the desire of modern people? and what do they desire?, and how can we reflect you and me into the desire as a thing that can be seen? More precisely, the nose of Pinocchio that grows longer and longer when he tells a lie in a fairy tale is to look into his desire reflected in it and visualize it.

"<I am Pinocchio> is a work that was started to look into the desire inside me. And I borrowed the symbolic meaning of 'lie' that the nose of Pinocchio had. The symbol of nose of Pinocchio is about human desire," said

the author. Yes! Anyone looks into what he/she desires and tells a lie in the process. The author reflects such a private desire, social position or relationship between you and me into the unanimous modern people.

In <I am Pinocchio>, there is a nose only in Pinocchio's face. He does have neither mouse nor eye. In the face made with stainless steel that is felt hard and cold contains landscape with the person that Pinocchio faces. It is not that he is reflected on the plane mirror. It is also not that it is different from the shadow on the surface of flowing water or stagnant water. The head is made with stainless steel that is cold and hard. The reflections on the face and nose that are premised on lack of seeing and talking are distorted, elongated or separated. It is me reflected on Pinocchio's face. It shines a light at the point where eyes and mouth are omitted to emphasize nose. Pinocchio in silence with nose only stands between seeing (eye) and talking (mouth) and between truth and falsehood. At this very time and place, my shadow is reflected on the face of Pinocchio that I face. The shadow distorts, twists and elongates the real object. It faces my real object reflected on the shadow. What I see in front of 'him' is an refracted image. But the real object of the refracted image is me or you.

Pinocchio's nose lies between real object and reflection. The third zone where human desire is reflected might be in between. The nose of Pinocchio set by Kim Bong Soo acts as a metaphor of human desire. Nose in which human desire is projected, me or you reflected on 'him,' and 'I' living in 'him' are an optical illusion on 'him,' or a place that breaks prejudice or stereotype. It is a thing that can be felt with body and mind rather than eyes and mouth. Kim Bong Soo, standing between truth and falsehood, met <I am Pinocchio> there and saw one aspect of modern people there, i.e. modern people without mouth and eyes. The symbolism of nose of Pinocchio borrowed to set up the standard or criteria for truth and falsehood is the revelation of refracted image of modern people.

### 3.

Pinocchio's nose into which modern people's desire is reflected is the substance of desire lurking behind modern people, i.e. sad portrait of modern people that truth and falsehood are not distinguished in the society of limitless competition where winner and loser are not distinguished, in other words, in a very competitive society. The figure that appears the most among Pinocchio series is a pot-bellied middle-aged man. Sitting or standing in white shirt with a necktie suggests a typical office worker. It suggests a white-collared intellectual worker.

In <I am Pinocchio>, sitting or standing on a book appears many times. It is the very point that connects nose with book. It is also a part that symbolizes intellectual work with increasing industrialization. That he is tamed to intellectual worker or capitalist is revealed through the pot belly. The middle-aged Pinocchio suggests ordinary people between excess and lack of modern people through the body of intellectual worker or middle class, i.e. modern people between capitalist and worker. The life of ordinary people is that they are petit-bourgeois in body but bourgeois in mind. The author's perspective to look at the point of depression that occurs by the difference between body and mind can be his own self and simultaneously modern people.

<I am Pinocchio> contains modern people as ordinary people and perspective on human desire and loss. There are modern people's desire and relationship between self and other lurking inside the author, nose symbolizing the distance between falsehood and truth, and unanimous modern people standing or sitting on the elongated nose. What is noteworthy here is 'relativity' between Pinocchio's nose and book. Title or sentence engraved on

the book asks essential questions about art: 'What is art?' and 'What is sculpture?' and setting the relation between nose and desire is noticeable, as shown in 'excuse for intellectuals', 'desire – duality of intellectual being', 'desire and art', and 'desire theory.' The author specifies the meaning of title of nose and book more in texts and simultaneously contains duality of desire for his intellectual exploration.

By setting these two things, you and I become 'we' as plural and ordinary people are set as Pinocchio's nose. Where should 'we' go? Isn't it that this place where 'we' are standing lost its direction due to optical illusion of the third place? How about the modern people lying on the nose symbolizing falsehood? What about the tension on the way you and I ought to go? and finally who am I?

The title of Pinocchio series is <I am Pinocchio>. The author started with borrowing the nose that had the symbolic meaning of Pinocchio because it was the point where he could set up the relationship between me and others who see it. Setting the relation between 'I' as an author and 'you' as a viewer implies the relation between individuality and collectivity, particularity and universality, and subjectivity and objectivity, boundary that opens and closes depending on time, space and place that occurs in between, point that crosses the boundary, or time and place where I am standing. Symbolism of nose, metaphor of desire, dream and alienation of ordinary people, desire and loss, and life of modern people who lie in the relationship see 'him' into which you and I are reflected in the relationship between shadow reflected in <I am Pinocchio> and real object. One pair that is different each other, between you and me, or human desire in the third zone that is you or me has flexibility depending on time and place, but the symbol of nose returns to the nose that becomes longer and longer if telling a lie. 'I am Pinocchio' is the author's starting point and point to which he returns, connection from speaker that starts from me as objective criteria to receiver as subjective me. It is the very metaphor of desire <I am Pinocchio> set by Kim Bong Soo.

( Kim Ok Ryeol / Representative of Hyundai Institute of Art )

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