

Fractal World, Where Shapes Strut Along (2014)

By. Sun A Moon (independent curator)

Nature is the ground zero of Cheolwon Chang's work. It always starts in observation of the world. And here it goes to this question: Does a pattern exist while objects are alternatively moving to somewhere? For instance, there is no such thing as a core inside a single orange, but when you cut it in half, you are able to see that every pulp grain is arranged towards some point around the center. Moreover, they seem to be related to each other making a shape which is what we called a pattern or a law of the nature; what an incredibly astonishing truth! Those are why he, Cheolwon Chang, has tried to use a geometrical figure to embody this amazing law. This is quite the same approach that all of us can think of the hexagon out of honeycombs or imagine the Fibonacci sequence from sunflowers, geometrical figure always symbolizes the shape of nature.

Here are the processes of his artworks. Once the observation of the nature or the other objectives in the world finishes, he extracts very fundamental shapes out of the objects and uses digital graphic tools to turn them into a simple and well-balanced figure. And those simple figures are put to rotate or overlap in order to create a certain organic body that consists of balanced constructions. Therefore, the final image of his work is basically intended to be simplified, but it contains quite complex structures. Chang calls those processes compounding, not producing. As anyone all around the world can make David's star with a common and a reversed triangle, but they are not able to own the copyrights of it; likewise Chang insists every first image that he create should be considered only to be a slice of the nature, and nothing more.

On that account, Chang doesn't stop, but steps forward. He imparts handcrafted properties to those images that he creates, but according to his words, his creation might already exist in somewhere around the universe. More like some kind of ritual, he sharpens his pencil and draws something from what is in his mind or his laptop considering a canvas as the present state in front of his eyes. Of course, this is hard work collecting several straight lines to make a shape and rounding up those shapes to create a simple figure, and then bringing up the image of those processes

to pile up the layers and embody the structural image on a canvas. Because a single mistake during making a space out of some features divided by those straight lines causes a complete failure of his work. In spite of that, the reason he keeps up with the sophisticated drawing without a plan B seems more like an ascetic practice in art.

An intuition based on geometrics is the most important condition of Chang's work. The beginning of his interests in geometrics trace back into the past when he was studying in the United Kingdom, and it has amplified ever since. He was very into the equation of time, and that made him come down to a concept that there was a spatial figure which connected the United Kingdom with South Korea. He realized that the geometrics was, of course, very substantial and organic, and it also had a potential of transformation, but no more to be an exclusive property for mathematicians. For him, geometrics and nature are not to be opposed to each other constituting the binary structure, but to complement one another. Furthermore, they could be messengers that tell about the law of nature and its theory. He also insists that a simple figure should contain an unlimited possibility and the sublime in nature.

In recent days, Chang had an opportunity to straighten up his works and introduce them during his solo exhibition. Throughout his [Macro and Micro] series which is delicately created by hands, he completely transmitted the sublime in nature to people. After an overlap of small shape images builds up a large structure of nature, nature give orders to those images to become Macro or Micro structure at the same time. The new pieces that Chang chooses out of the previous work, scales up and redraws explain that geometrics is not based on Bitmap images, but on the system in conceptual Vector images. No matter how much you enlarge an image, in the Vector system, point, line and plane are not broken any, and which brings us to the infinity of our rational thinking and the nature.

His work reminds us of 'fractal' which is one of natural science notion that simple structure constantly repeats and makes a complex and intricate whole. The fractal that can be microscopically contracted or macroscopically expanded, and no matter how many times you cut it in pieces, it keeps creating another of the same structure itself, and it seems more like having a circulatory and permanent structure. The conclusion of this theory is 'everything in the universe is based on fractal system,' and that brings us to think what Chang's doing is creating the universe on the canvas with his little hands.

He also wishes to install a geometric pattern of people's relationship in the motivation of 'relation lines' besides his video project where plane drawings are geometrically moving, but considering a solid design drawing has to be prepared in advance, he decided to keep focusing on the plane drawings. However, as he has written down all the ideas thoroughly in his working journal, the day that he carries on three dimension works above the plane works will come in the near future.