

In 2010, Shim began making an ongoing series of works on canvas entitled *The Presentation*. Known primarily as a sculptural artist in the decades prior, this material turn coincided with the artist's relocation to childhood hometown Tongyeong in 2012, after a five-year sojourn in Paris (and prior to that, in the suburb of Seoul.) The return to familiar bodies of water and a slower pace of life not only allowed the artist to reconnect with the seascapes which has nurtured his curiosity and sensibility since childhood, but also allowed for a vital reengagement with the core of Shim's personal and artistic belief. What gravitates Shim towards the sea is its permutations between mundaneness and infinity. To Shim, the universal experience of the ocean as a landscape, and the emotional specificity of ocean-watching subjected to each viewer, do not present themselves as paradoxes; rather, they consubstantiate opportunities to "reveal to, share with, and invite others to engage in mutual resonance."

A member of the seminal A.G. Group (Korean Avant-Garde Association, 1969-1975), Shim's indelible contribution to the constellation of Korean experimental art began in the 1970s, when he made series of sculptures which spatially reveal modules of drawing, painting and performance. What unites the diverse forms in Shim's near-five decade-long oeuvre are the works' tendency to reduce, challenge or even negate the very grounds which sustained their structural and conceptual wholeness—often through elements of surprise. For example, Shim's 1971 seminal work *Relation (Place)* presents a torn paper canvas, with the upper half affixed the wall and the lower half anchored by the gravitational weights of rocks. In doing so, the work presents a three-dimensional configuration with an intense planar awareness. For the artist, the gesturally minimal, yet radically transformative intervention to materials and site are precisely what allows for sculptural materials—be it canvas, wood, or rock, or steel—to reveal their true properties and relational specificity with the site which they share.

In many ways, *The Presentation* and *Re-present*, works on canvas and paper made in the recent decade, continues Shim's exploration of three-dimensional forms which reflect the history or continuum of its flatness—a concern which the artist has held and systematically explored since the 1970s. Using a "brush rather than a hammer," and "canvas rather than wood," Shim sees the seascapes as cognate twins of his provocative sculptures, in that both bodies of work address the shared contingencies of plastic techniques and the allegorical potential which emerges out of the forms' mutual acknowledgement.

The cross pollination between drawing and painting, intent looking and mnemonic rehearsal, the calling 'out' and calling 'in,' reveal themselves through multiple, layered actions. The mixing, erasing, redrawing, and layering of paints and marks are analogous gestures to the ebb and flow of the ocean, or waves breaking, colliding, and gathering. There are times, however, when the light source underneath the measured densities reveal the illusionary depth of the pictorial plane, presenting the canvas as a screen flat as ever, once again. As Shim never fails to put so elegantly: "color makes its own voice, canvas plays its own role, and artist performs as an artist."

- Felix Ho Yuen Chan