

Sewn Face, Statement of Arachne

Arachne is a protagonist from Greek mythology, and she is still well known to us. She boasted of her weaving skill and competed with a goddess. She was then doomed to become a spider. She wanted to surpass her own fate and destiny with her weaving skill, but her desire was paid for with an unbearable and irreversible punishment, cursed to being a spider to spin her web for the rest of her life. Once turned into a spider, she does not desire anything else but to weave. Since ancient times, weaving, needlework and sewing were regarded as women's work and treated with contempt. The purpose of needlework was simply regarded as either for ornamental or practical purposes. Yoon Ji-seon's works allow us to reflect on the meaning/concept of weaving which have immanently born limitations and restrictions since ancient times.

Yoon has adopted weaving techniques since 2007. She put her photographs on a textile, then repeated numerous sewing processes on them, creating/transforming her new faces. The newly created or woven faces connote the complex identities of the face as an idea. They could be either the inner landscape of one person or other faces that exaggerate or disguise such as masks. Such faces deviate from traditional sewing techniques in adopted works that consisted of orderly patterns of needlework. Yoon destroyed/punctured photographed images with a needle, and the threads became the flesh that comprised a face. With the weaving method, the face can be easily traversed or destroyed. Such methodology allowed Yoon to create <Saw me> and <What am I to you>, which distorted and varied institutionalized and formalized social norms with the notion of 'face' images. All the while, her recent work, <Rag face>, boldly shows somewhat primitive and subconscious imagery suppressing one's inside deprived of any chance of representation. The title itself suggests that this work creates/discloses woven, worn out faces in the course of history, embedded with the pains and scars of the past.

In Yoon's <Rag Face>, she maximized and pushed the visual effect of the weaving to the extreme by putting forward the 'weaving process' itself. From this, her work departed from simply borrowing the weaving method

to produce imagery. The weaving process itself was baldly represented on the front, actively reflecting her desire to emphasize the concept of needlework. The weaving method in her recent works was unfolded in two categories. As for works that used her self-photographed images, Yoon artificially changed and distorted minor factors in the images such as expressions, gazes or hairs. This is relevant to traditional mask plays or Africa's shamanistic masks that aimed to portray inner desire that were uttered and used outside/beyond the realm of language. For this, Yoon accentuated excessive or irregular weaving on the face image, approaching the primitive vitality of humanity as if aiming to expose the human's potential power or desire. Her works still utilize photographed face images, but destroy the archetype with excessive weaving, betraying the original. These processes affected later works created simply by weaving without archetypical original photographed images.

Yoon's recent works are somewhat contrary to the method used before. Yoon now refrains from 'excess' and seeks 'absence' or 'deficiency'. In her latest work, <Rag Face>, Yoon loosely sewed together textiles and Korean Paper, revealing binding threads, then placed the work into water so the Korean Paper would melt away. With this, the holes punctured by needles (produced by chance) were revealed, becoming part of the work. When the dichotomy of inside and outside is abolished or deterred, the work is entwined in the external landscape as part of the textile work. At first glance, Yoon's <Rag Face> seems to be portraying the absence of a finished image, but this work is much more flexible and pliable, embracing the exhibition space as part of the work.

The myth of Arachne was a warning from the gods with the message that humans should never attempt to cross to the realm of the sacred, despite a strong desire to do so. Here, the desire is manifested through the steady weaving process, comprised of weft and warp threads. The origin of the word "weave" comes from a Greek word, Grammata, meaning 'tie/weave together' or 'write.' As the word connotes, the action of 'weaving' allows one to write. The 'weaving' process is relevant to the action of uttering something and is a metaphor of textualizing the unuttered with body. In this sense, the action of 'weaving' endows one to

re-use or discover the power to use/write what has been suppressed, veiled and invisible. The threads stemmed and over-flown from Yoon's sewn faces are condensed forms of the moment when the oppressed come to the light. Also, the holes and chasms spotted in Yoon's faces embrace deprived, abandoned and alienated realms and boundaries which were neither able to nor previously put into any form of language. From this, we can see the new face reveals and writes hidden scars, concealed ecstasies, agonies and silences unuttered.

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