Nature through sculpture

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Nature Through Sculpture

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I. Introduction

“Human beings were born from nature and in death they return back to nature.”

This quote express how closely we are connected to nature which is defined a word as all the plants, animals and things that exist in the universe that are not made by people. We first came from nature, and in this complicated society, we sometimes feel like returning to the peaceful, magnificent and tranquil side of nature. Through my work, I would like to show his interpretation of how nature is. For example, a person can look at the ocean and feel peaceful, but someone else can look at the same ocean and feel depressed. Therefore, in my pieces I would like to show how I see different parts of nature.

Another goal of in all of my work is to evoke the landscape of nature, as in painting, and force viewers to feel how nature breathes. To instill the breath of nature into lifeless object is what I strive to achieve in my work and in my life.

The works are divided into two different parts that could be described by words like mountain, ocean. Most of my works, entitled Nature Through Sculpture, are composed of copper sheets and are simplified shapes of early Korean mountains in paintings, through modern Korean mountains in paintings. My works challenge viewers to discover an entirely new perspective of traditional sculptures realistically through contemporary sculptures.
almost as if they were futuristic.

Sculptors and their work reflect and create the culture in their own way in modern art. Therefore, artistic works are a kind of aesthetic reflection of the culture. Art as defined by the Korean dictionary originally means, “to join or fit together” and “culture” comes from cultivation and growth. I believe the purpose of art is not to honor and increase its complexity, but to simplify the world and our place in it. From this perspective, sculptors’ functions have changed from time to time and age to age. Though my works, I intend to express lyrical Korean nature. These pieces raise the question of the image of the nature in today’s society. I encourage viewers to answer this question when seeing my emotional works.
II. Symbolism and Vital signs of Mountain

People tend to believe mountain has supernatural power and they had been admired the supernatural power of mountain. Especially, Korea has many spiritual mountains as its geographical feature and this feature have made Korean to worship and believe the supernatural power of mountain. Usually, when people see high mountain peaks they would feel solemnity. Cloud and mist covered mountainside, queer sound from mountain valley and echo would make people to feel the mountain as a mysterious presence.

Tangun, the founding father of Korea had formed society under the Sindansu of Taebak-Mountains and he became mountain god after he died. In Korea, the mountain god had been believed as tutelary spirits of a village or country. During wartime, people pray to mountain god for victory of the king and peace of the nation. It has become a traditional religion that to pray for their health and protection from the drought, floods and diseases to mountain god.

It is seen conspicuously from the birth myth of Kaya, Shilla, Koguryu and as well as Tangun Gosun that a sovereign descents from heaven and meet the mountain god. This process (sovereign $\rightarrow$ descent $\rightarrow$ mountain god) shows Korean notion of mountain god. Especially, in Shilla dynasty, people worshiped the god and performed religious ceremony
to the mountain god and in Koryo dynasty; there were several shrines in the mountain. Also, in chosun dynasty, several famous mountains were named as protector of nation and people put Guardian Mountain in the province and county to perform religious service. This custom spreads out all over the country, each county build shrines and performed religious service every year and remains until present. The continuous belief of mountain god comes from people’s belief that the mountain has supernatural power. They also believe that as earth has its own goodness, the mountain has its own. In other words, people believe that the mountain has its own spirit and it helps people in many ways. Also, they believe the mountain god answers people’s earnest request.

The magnetism between positive electricity of sky and negative electricity of mountain would make the mountain stand high. That is to say, magnetism of the positive electricity makes the ground to rise. Since the mountain is continued part of the ground, the mountain gathers powers of the ground and the gathered power represents the typical type of the region. In another words, lofty mountain has more thunder and thunderbolt in rainy days because they have higher negative electricity than the ground.

The mountain has the same ability as a living being. The animated power of mountain has both negative and positive effects to people. As plants have different result
according to its soil and nature, the positive and negative vitals would affect conditions of
people’s mind and health.

Famous people are born near famous mountain and greatly affected from these vital
signs of mountain. Each mountain has its own size and unique features. Therefore, to find
the good site for house and company, it is necessary to figure out which mountain has high
vital signs. The place with a famous mountain would mean it has high vital signs to person
or group to have better environment but the opposite place is the other way around.
III. Discussion of Work

A. Emotion of work

mountain

I

As a mountain is friendly approach to people,

He leads with his foot to enter the village.

But if people live in disorder,

He draws himself back with his head standing still as a snail does and

Returns to steep peaks.

II

With a method to grow trees

On a cliff no one can scale

He rules people.

III

When lonely, he soars high to become a peak.

When he is dying to hear the sound of water, he comes down to become a gorge.

Angry roar that gives
Mountain its height and name.

IV

Spring comes first on its foot

But summer a little above

Two seasons are in one place and

Staying on good terms.

I. As mountain friendly approach to people,

He leads his foot to enter the village.

But if people lives in disorder,

He draws back himself with his head stand still as snail does and

Returns to steep peaks.

The image of this stanza of the poem describes the mountain as a friendly subject rather than an isolated one. However, when life falls into disorder, it teaches people by the provisions of nature. Through these sculptures, I express friendly affection from the mountain. To show the sublimity and magnanimity of the mountain while applying images
of it, I used as many soft curves as possible. These pieces personify the mountain when it is disappointed by people as a snail draws back to a steep peak. (Mountain 1)

II. With a method to grow trees

On a cliff no one can scale

He rules people.

This part represents how the mountain either shields or rules people. Other times, the mountain carries things in its bosom and holds them inside. There is no restriction or intervention. It just waits without a word. However, it doesn’t just wait for any good reason. When life falls into disorder, it teaches people by the provisions of the nature. To express the sublimity of the mountain, I used perpendicular lines rather than soft curves. The nuance of the piece is more likely to show dignity in the emotional strength of the copper expressing images of the mountain. (Mountain 2)

III. When lonely, he soars high to become a peak.

When he is dying to hear the sound of water, he comes down to become a gorge.
Angry roar that gives
Mountain its height and name.

The mountain controls the emotion of itself like a live object. The mountain stays in harmony, with which it breathes and expresses its emotion. The mountain does not always stay in a tranquil mood. The mountain gets angry with people as if it were a teacher disciplining a student, and it teaches people patience and modesty through the slow growing of the trees and difficult climbing of cliffs. I use negative space in order to image the mountain’s breathing. The positive and negative space expresses the emotion of the mountain. My intention, in which the mountain is covered with fog and cloud, is to imagine the mountain to have its height and name. (Mountain 3)

IV. Spring comes first on its foot
But summer stays little above
Two seasons are in one place and
Stays on good terms.
The lesson from the mountain is a comprehensive presence. It describes a majestic existence of the mountain where the two seasons coexist. In the fourth stanza of the poem, the mountain shows its sublimity and magnanimity through its size, which causes one to follow its noble lines upward with awe. I made two similar, which project coexisting personas, symbolic of mother and son. Also to use all soft curves in the work is the expression of the vibrancy of life and motherhood. (Mountain 4)

B. Technique of work

Designing and making sculpture like my thesis sculpture work takes both skill and time. It also requires patience and an understanding or how materials can be used. But perhaps one of the main attributes of sculpture making is a feel for the textures, shapes and colors that work well together.

The materials and processes used in the “Nature Through Sculpture” series were dictated by the shapes and characteristics of the mountain. Some of techniques employed in this series include hammering, die forming and patination.

First of all, the mountain shapes of my works were made by hammering copper sheet. When I use a hammer, the head should always make positive contact with the metal.
Then I used it an angle so that the face meets the metal squarely and does not leave edge mark. This is just as important for the metal stake on which a piece of metal is supported. Any damage caused by a hammer on a stake will mark the underside of new piece of metal that is used with that stake. Badly damaged stakes can be professionally reground, and hammer used only for shaping metal should be kept polished and dry. The action of the hammer comes from the wrist. The weight of head is balanced comes from the handle, so that a rhythmic movement can develop, which makes it possible to hit the metal with blows of equal pressure. Hammer marks left during the making process could be removed so that the piece has a smooth, shiny finish. But, in order to express the surface of the mountain, I left even hammer marks. Through this technique, I made two shapes of the mountain which was the half of the oval shape. These shapes have to be the same size because it is required that both left and right side evening weld together.

Second, to make several shapes for the clouds, I used die forming which is a technique of using two ply wood panels to make three-dimensional shape. The reason why I used this technique is time effective to make several shapes from one tool. A die hole is cut out between two layers of plywood. When I made die hole, I take care in sawing so that the sides of the hole are vertical. The opening in the top of the die must be the same size as
the opening in the bottom. Screw holes are laid out and drilled in order to secure the metal.

To cut the right size piece of metal, I make a rubbing of the die. I used this rubbing to cut the metal sheet and drill holes for screws. I then fastened the metal onto the die with metal screws. To find the outline of the die tap the metal lightly with a mallet or hammer handle.

While working, the die may be placed on a bench or sandbag. To anneal, remove the screws and take the metal off the die. Through this process, I am able to use both sides of the die in order to create two equal half for the sculpture form.

The last process is patination. For successful coloring of copper, using the metal surface must be clean and free of oxide, dirt or grease. The metal surface is first cleaned with a degreasing solution. This step is followed by steel or brass brushing the surface with water. Apply a pickle solution thinly and evenly with a brush or cloth, rub in and leave to dry before applying the next coating of the solution. The most attractive and durable surface results are obtained by applying a number of coats and rubbing each one thoroughly with a soft cloth or leather. If weaker pickle solutions are applied and treated in this way, a polished finish is obtained which reflects the natural patina of the copper.

For coloring of my works, the heat patina offers me red and brown pattern surfaces. I tried to apply the color which is between yellowish-green and dark green depending on
the strength of the solution and the number of the chemical patina applications. However, I got green color because the temperature of water might be higher or lower. I adjusted my approach several times and I tried to combine heat and chemical. First, I spray chemicals and then dipped into hot water in order to get reddish-yellow. I then heat gently turning the surface green. I was able to control the strength of the solution and temperature of the heat and got yellowish-green color which represents the image of Korea Mountain.
IV. List of Illustration

Mountain 1

Copper (14”x17”x16” / 22”x8”x2.5”)
Mountain 2

Copper (30"x36"x20")
Mountain 3

Copper (48”x22”x12”)

16
Mountain 4

Copper (20”x14”x6” / 12”x8”x4”)

V. CONCLUSION

Nature is an integral part of our lives. From the earliest days of primitive man to modern times, humans are closely related to nature. The goal of this thesis is to arouse how society ignores the importance of nature and why we, as creatures of the earth, have separated ourselves from nature. Through my works, I made sculpture that is personified my personal emotion, and force viewers to think about how human beings are trifling in nature.

My graduate studies had a profound impact on my growth as an artist and I am still cultivating the aestheticism through nature. I will continue studying sculpture. Sculpture allows me to bring life to metal and this is what I strive to achieve in my work and life.
VI. Bibliography


