

Yoon Jiseon's 2015 Textiel Plus Interview

Q1. When you were a child, did you want to become an artist and did your parents encourage your creativity?

A1. I have been fond of art, play and literature since I was a child, however, I didn't have any specific plan to become an artist.



<Untitled, 2006_Photo printed on fabric, hand knitted gloves, variable size>

I was not a student who adapted well to school. When I was a high school student, most high schools in Korea had self-study classes at night after regular school hours finished. So I had to stay in school till late. The only way to skip the night study was to be a student who was going to major in art or physical education in colleges. I didn't want to stay late so I joined the art club at school after I convinced my parents. And then I entered the university of art.

I think my mother influenced me to become an artist. When I was a child, my mother was always working. She restlessly worked on knitting, cooking or making handicrafts and so on. Actually, my exhibition in 2006 using a knitting method was collaboration with my mother.

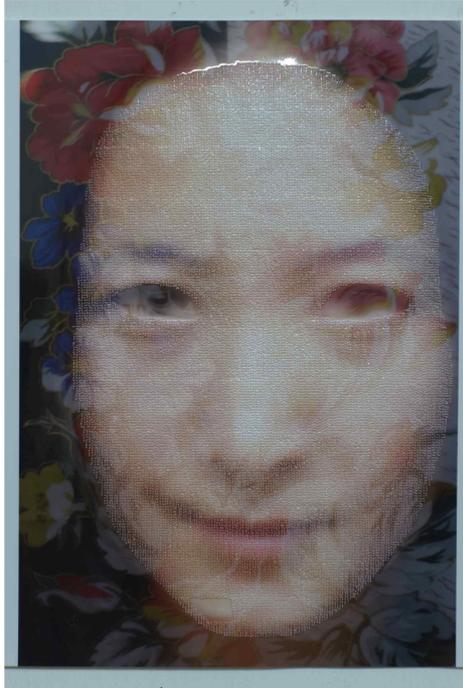
Q2. Why did you go into fabric art and how you decided on this medium/ this way of working?

A2. There are many reasons. I majored in painting, but I felt limited to painting that was created only by paints. In fact, it was more like the limitation of my situation than the painting. Professors did not like my paintings and I was fed up with paintings that they wanted. I was eager to paint but I had to choose what they couldn't kibitz. So I have chosen my second best way, which was 'objet' or 'media'. I felt freer to express myself when I used various materials than painting.

I was working on 'Pricked' series before I started 'Fabric' series. I pierced holes in the back of portraits with needles that were used in acupuncture clinic. After piercing, the portraits looked like they had pimples or goose bumps on their faces. But it took too long to complete a piece and I was too exhausted after many hours of piercing. Just in time, my new sewing machine caught my eyes and I started to sew on photos. Holes made by a sewing machine were different from the ones by needles. They were severely

torn out and tougher than neat needle holes. These holes were not suitable for my pricked series. So I started to sew on photos with different colors of threads for fun and it was the start of fabric series – 'Rag face'.

The most important reason that I continue to working on the fabric series is



**<Pricked, 2012_Pierced
the back of the photo with
acupuncture needles >**

that it fits the best for me. 'Fine art' is translated to 'painting' in Korean. The first letter of Chinese character of 'painting (繪)' is combination of '糸(thread)' and '會(get together)'. This perfectly fits my work as its action follows its words. It feels like I am drawing when I sew on the face and it feels more like I am painting when I fill out the background and finishing up a piece. My work can be anything between plan and a 3-D as I am called as a photographer, a fabric artist or a painter depending on situations.

In addition, while I was working on the fabric series, I have been satisfied with many pros like tangling, dragging, shapeless of thread, having two different images of front and back in one action, freedom to hang in the air so you can enjoy both images or put on the wall so you can enjoy one side of image, taking long hours to finish one piece (it is good for me because if it takes too short, I need more

expenses), light weight, it can be rolled so it is easy to store in a small work room and simple to move to other place and so on.

Q3. Tell us about your training, how it has influenced you and how you have applied what you have learnt. Did you go to art school, what specialism did you do, was that already in textiles.

A3. I majored in painting at university and graduate school. But I think I learn more from the unique life of painting than what I learnt from schools. I think painting is more flexible than any other genre and it is also probable that it can use other media. On the other hands, it is conservative in some way. The interaction between these aspects gives 'painting' power to be continued.

As I mentioned earlier, I wasn't good at adjusting to school. I had lots of questions but teachers did not like my questions. So I was enjoying answering my questions by myself. I think this habit helps me a lot when I work.

Q4. Please explain how you developed your own style and way of working.

A4. I don't know. Maybe my curiosity? And I find my way of working depends on what I am faced with.

Q5. Are all your works are self-portraits?

A5. There are many self-portraits but I am not sticking to it. Myself appears a lot because it is the easiest material I can find.

Q6. Are you especially interested in masks?

A6. Mask is another face. People are afraid of their and others' real faces. Masks make people able to hide their fears and show what they want to be in society. And also masks can change others' faces the way I want them to be. I am very interested in this kind of characteristic of masks.

Q7. How important is your Korean background for your work?

A7. I have never worked or lived in ideal conditions. Question "Why" comes out from unideal conditions where deficiencies and contradictions exist. This question "Why" becomes a seed of my work. Korean society has a variety of problems and contradictions. These problems and contradictions throw various feelings and questions at me. And then these problems appear on my work with various forms. Problems wouldn't happen in ideal conditions so it will be an ideal situation for me if there are many problems.

Q8. Why do you call your series of works "Rag face"?

A8. I didn't give titles to my work before; I just separated them by its medium. I just called my fabric series as 'SEW ME' at first. But when I exhibited my fabric series, people said my work looked like rags. Since then I called my fabric series as "Rag face".

Q9. Does it not give you a strange feeling that you kind of mutilate your own face? (Photo of)

A9. When I first started to sew my face, I wasn't able to think that this could disturb people. Especially Korean people think of faces very important, so we have a saying 'Stain one's face' to express the most shameful situation. In fact, there were punishments like painting faces with black ink, searing faces with irons and tattooing on faces.

I used to get over boring classes by drawing scars on portraits from textbooks or making over their faces totally different. Sewing my face was not too far from what I used to do.

Q10. Through your art, are you attempting to evoke particular feelings in your audience?

A10. I have never kept the audience in mind when I work. I know that I would never fulfill their feelings or expectation. I want the audience trust

themselves. And I hope they see it as the way they want to see and as what they see.

Q11. What do you think of us placing your work within the context of fabric art and how do fabric techniques and materials relate to your practice?

A11. It doesn't matter. I am described as a photo artist on a Korean portal research website with Rag face series. Fabric and sewing are materials and medium, which always faze and fluster me. But their effects and results are more magnificent than I expect. Moreover, fabric and sewing make me as a fabric artist. (In fact, quilt artists showed their special interests in me.)

Q12. What specific historic artists have influenced your work?

A12. There are lots of historic artists. Paintings of Cézanne, Monet and Gogh inspired me to paint and the experimenting spirit of Man Ray opened up many possibilities to my work. Man Ray once said, "I paint what cannot be photographed. I photograph what I do not wish to paint". What he said gave me freedom to use many kinds of media during my work. And it also secured a range of diversity that the same media could be read as differently depending on situations. Also my 7th generation grandfather and a very important artist Dooseo Yoon (1668-1715) greatly influenced me, as he was one of materials.

Q13. What specific contemporary artists have influenced your work?

A13. There are many of them. Especially works of Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon, Jan Fabre, Sarah Lucas, Pina Bausch, Anselm Kiefer and Gerhard Richter always fascinate me and lead me to deep reflection. Their works have something in common. Their works are not completed pieces but ongoing works. They have full of vitality as they happen vividly on-site. Pina Bausch is a dance performer but she let me know the state of the ultimate art.



<KOO KYUNG SOOK,
Herstory(C4)>

Q14. What other fabric artists are you interested in?

A14. A Korean artist, Kyungsook Koo. She lives and works in USA at the moment. K.S. Koo has been constructing and casting forms with seaweed. She also installed 3-dimensional pieces during her exhibitions.

Q15. How time intensive is your work?

A15. It depends on the pieces. Pieces between 100 cm and 150cm take more than a month when I work for more than 8 hours a day.