

The artistic practice of Lee Fi is a way of existence to seek answers to one huge question. After encountering the traumatic big bang—birth, an organism gains life in the vessel of a human form and attains a body whereby the new life form conceives the world through bodily experiences that are holistic yet specific. Lee explores these tremendous but mundane events. In other words, the artist explores how to understand life with all of her senses. Instead of reflecting on preexisting language or frame of thought, Lee focuses on the root of the 'self-existence-life,' which is directly in contact with the world, as a primal experience. Perhaps, this is a recurring question that began from Lee's first solo exhibition, *A Person Searching for Eyes, a Nose and a Mouth*. However, Lee's recent works in her 10th solo exhibition, *The Inside of the Angel*, seem to approach the core of her ongoing extensive questioning with more clarity and deftness.

*The Inside of the Angel* is deeply related to Lee's last solo exhibition in 2014, *The Whole World on My Face*. Lee's most well-known pieces, *The Whole World on My Face* (2013) and *The Whole World on My Body* (2015), are about the senses on the surface of the flesh (skin) expressed in pink. However, in *I've Just Opened My Woman Storage* (2016), a creature with multiple limbs, which often appear in Lee's works, opens up the other side of the skin—inside the body, which is expressed in blackish red as if it is divided in half and about to bleed. The circular structure of the work, in which the whole and the parts surround each other, becomes more interesting through the contrast of inside and outside. Like a preview, the two major paintings in current exhibition, *Oxygen* (2015) and *Nitrogen* (2015), were used for the front and back covers of *The Whole World on My Face* exhibition catalogue. However, the previous versions were not paintings but instead 17 x 26 cm black and white drawings from 2013. Lee's drawings and paintings are the same and different simultaneously, and have inside-outside structures in themselves. Each painting is coupled with a drawing. Rather, we should perhaps say, each drawing generates a painting. Lee's new piece, *The Inside of the Angel* (2016), whose title is identical to the exhibition title, was completed on Feb. 24th, 2014, but its original drawing was made on Jan. 4th, 2014. *Sweet Taste Swimming Pool of Oblivion* (2016) was finished in 2016; however, its drawing was made on Sep. 2nd, 2013. Likewise, Lee's drawings and paintings live singular but binary lives at the same time.

In her artist statement, Lee mentions that she makes drawings as if she were "writing in a diary." Lee makes drawings based on images and impressions from everyday life on a 17 x 26 cm notebook. They are usually created from fleeting impressions and sensations, usually at the beginning or the end of the day. These works are not the result of planning, or intend to express particular thoughts. Rather, her style actively embraces the effect of momentary and improvisational chance. Later on, the artist makes sophisticated and large paintings from selected drawings. What is surprising in this transformation is that the rough sketches of the paintings do not change much from the drawings. Most parts remain the same except some small details. Given that most artists use drawing as a means to record or express

their ideas, Lee's uncommon drawing practice might be the core of her work. As for Lee, drawings have meaning as they are drawn from particular moments gathered from the coincidences of the artist's everyday life. A series of moments are accumulated as events, eventually becoming a framework in Lee's art practice. Marking intermediate spaces, do the terms "angel," "gap," and "preposition," written in Lee's notes during the preparation of *The Inside of the Angel*, imply the "fleeting and temporary" truth—the fundamental mystery; sensations toward a life that exists on its own while penetrating things that are defined by the outside and confined within conventional frameworks. Lee mentions in an interview, "I want to create images of what we encounter in our daily lives before they are fixed to certain concepts in our brain." Lee's desire to restore our senses, which are conceptualized through language and prejudice, back to primary experience lies in tight tension and balance throughout her work. Instead of holding an omniscient view of an artist towards the world, Lee allows the world to pass through her and speak on its own. Therefore, Lee compares her works to an altarpiece: "I dedicate my body as the work of an angel—I dissect the moment of the angel." Here, Lee's concept of "I" is not limited to her ego, but rather we could see it as a passageway, where the *Inhale* and *Exhale* of breath travel. Thus, metaphorically speaking, Lee aims to become a camera lens transmitting light, instead of a cameraman taking images.

It is important for Lee how her works relate to each other. In Lee's practice, each work is interconnected, while one work embraces other work(s), some parts can be separated from the whole as individual works. During the process of repetition and selection, complex relationships between her works attain a sort of depth. It is not surprising to see deformed creatures appearing in Lee's work. Even though we cannot thoroughly understand Lee's intention, perhaps for the artist, the form of the monstrous creature is a "mandala" that is represented as the most natural state. Just as neurons connecting the senses are closely related to each other, Lee's work operates as a whole rather than as individual pieces; they are like one organism sharing life.

Rather than creating work out of things already in existence, Lee's art practice is a procedure of suggesting a form of non-existence as non-existence. Her methodology does not take an easy route, because she employs a primordial language, and might take a very long time to be understood by others. Perhaps, the works will merely remain as murmurings until they cross the threshold of the graspable. Some other day I would like to see Lee's work in a huge space, encompassing her whole career from her earlier to more current works and future developments. Then, we might be able to finally grasp the root of her works and the scale of their transformation. In contemporary society where our civilization is threatened by invisible things, I look forward to seeing Lee's journey of transforming the world that progresses from her understanding of it. I think the work will achieve as much strength as it bears the weight of the reality.