

**GALERIE NÄCHST ST. STEPHAN
ROSEMARIE SCHWARZWÄLDER**

JONGSUK YOON April Mai 사오월

19 JUN – 27 AUG 2020

Opening: June 18, 2020, 7.30 pm

Introduction: Robert Fleck, Prorektor Kunstakademie Düsseldorf

The more you explore Jongsuk Yoon's paintings, the more you realize that her pictures have grown larger and bolder over the years, while continuing to evade comprehension. Their dry, floating colors and their linear and painterly all-over structure transforms them into diaphanous phenomena that seem briefly to condense, only to dissolve in the next moment into individual markings, lines, fields, and subtle moods of color and form.

The strange, resonating inability to place these pictures can be partially explained by the artist's biography. Jongsuk Yoon was born in Korea in 1965. Her father ran a gallery for traditional Asian ink painting. She left her home country in 1995, when she was almost 30 years old, to study in Germany, among other places at the Academy of Art in Düsseldorf under Fritz Schwegler. For a long time, she has been at home in two worlds, never feeling entirely at home in either. After exploring conceptual ideas in complex knitted pictures at the beginning of her career, she began to focus entirely on drawing and painting. Since that time, her work has been located within a structural in-between space in which not only line and plane, colors and black and white, as well as abstraction and narrative elements, but more importantly also the traditions of Asian and European landscape painting encounter each other and mingle.

In a way, what we see in Yoon's pictures is a Eurasian journey that has been transformed into painting; a shift and drift between horizonless views of close and far and of fragmented motifs vaguely evoking mountains, lakes, clouds, paths, buildings, birds, and flowers, among other things, while ultimately remaining ambiguous. These fragments are accompanied by cascading colors, meandering lines, and brushstrokes that may remind us of Art Informel and Abstract Expressionism at first, yet ultimately thwart this association. For this, she relies on elementary principles of Asian landscape painting without copying them. In many of her works, she ignores the rules of perspective and plays with distances.

This having been said, Yoon also clearly strives to subjectively express herself and not to transpersonally transform landscape into a timeless, time-transcending essence, absent of all interest in a personal artistic style, as is the case in classic Asian landscape painting. In reality, these landscapes, which Yoon configures in a fragile and fleeting manner and which draw us in with their ephemeral presence, are essentially remembered images in which mental and real landscapes are permanently and inseparably intertwined.

Rather, what makes the composition coherent is its almost poetic ease and the grace of the ephemeral. This is also true for her most current works – for example, several works titled *Kumgang* (2020) in which she has created extremely masterful compositions on canvases that are almost three by four meters large and avoid all hints of definiteness or compact heaviness.

When looking closely at Yoon's paintings, we can recognize from their surface that she has landed directly on the continent of the canvas, without a plan, without preliminary sketches, or other preparations – equipped only with the courage of a painter-adventurer. Once she has arrived, each new brushstroke and color form reacts to the kind of vibrations and sensations each painterly mark evokes in her and on the surface of the painting.

Yoon has said about her odysseys on the sea of painting: "I do not have the finished picture in my head. In a way, it tells me what to do." This clearly captures the inevitably unstable and fragile foundation on which these pictures are based. They are not allowed to know who or what they are beforehand if they want to reach their preliminary goal, which is only a stopover in the work's continuous journey.

Stephan Berg

JONGSUK YOON, born 1965 in Onyang, South Korea, lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany.

In 1996 she studied at the University of Fine Arts Münster, from 1997 to 2001 at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf and from 2004 to 2005 at Chelsea College of Art, MA, London. In 2020 Yoon is the Artist in Residence of the Bildraum Studio of Bildrecht, Vienna. In 2019 Yoon received a residency at SoART Millstättersee, Spittal an der Drau, Austria, in 2000 she was a scholarshio holder of the DAAD Artist-in-Residence Programme, Berlin, Germany.

Exhibition (selection): 2020 Nordiska Akvarellmuseet, Skärhamn, Sweden; 2019 Akademie-Galerie, Düsseldorf, Germany; 2018 Art Sonje Center, Seoul, South Korea; Kunsthalle Münster, Münster, Germany; Galerie nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie Schwarzwälder, Vienna, Austria; 2017 Museum Kurhaus Kleve, Kleve, Germany; Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany; Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art, Ansan and Korea Foundation Gallery, Seoul, South Korea.