

Kim Bohie 김보희

Beyond

The Modern Institute, Osborne Street

7th June – 5th September 2024

Preview: Thursday 6th June 2024, 6-8.30pm

The natural world emerged as the defining theme and subject for Kim Bohie in the 1990s, having previously also worked across the genres of still life and portraiture. In the early 2000s, Kim set up her studio on the island of Jeju, which lies south of the Korean Peninsula, and its landscape became her main preoccupation – the ocean, the local floral, her own garden. Notably, there are never people in her quiet, elegant paintings. Her panoramic views and plant studies, depict moments of solitary contemplation. Each one shows a vivid encounter with nature; the golden disk of the moon at twilight framed by a beacon mound near Sanbangsan Mountain, sea water catching the sun in the heat of the day, the striking leaves of Washingtonia palms. The exhibition title situates these scenes – their emphasis on what lies beyond our individual bodies and consciousness and offers a consideration of the unity and order of the natural world.

Her works are about looking and personal connection to place, engaging with ideas around closeness – spiritually and physically – and the way it effects our vision. Kim works on canvas utilising sumi ink and water-based mediums to achieve a range of effects. While Kim's compositions contain a range of international influences, including, for example, John Constable, they can be understood in the lineage of *sansuhwa* 산수화, or traditional Korean landscape painting (*san* meaning mountain, *su* meaning water) which emphasises communing and engaging with nature, and is influenced by Taoism and Confucianism.

More specifically, her works can be seen as a contemporary re-engagement with *jingyeong sansuhwa* 진경산수화, translated as 'true-view landscape painting'. This 18th approach to painting sought to portray specific classical or in some sense definitive natural sites in Korea. Previously, Korean locations had not been depicted in landscape painting, with artists preferring to follow models from Chinese painting. It is commonly understood today as a style which considers the inherent characteristics of important places while also considering the layers of cultural and art-historical activity which have previously interacted with them. In this sense, Kim's paintings seek to engage with both the mystery of nature and the cultural history of Jeju, and to carve out a space of meditation for the viewer.

Kim Bohie (b. 1952, Seoul) lives and works in Jeju, Korea. Kim was a professor of Korean Painting at Ewha Womans University from 1993-2017 and was a Museum Director at Ewha Womans University Museum from 2008-2010. She is now an emeritus professor at the same institution. Kim's work has been included in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Korea and internationally. Selected solo exhibitions include: 'the Days', Jeju Museum of Contemporary Art, Jeju; 'Towards', CAN Foundation, Seoul (2021); and 'Towards', Kumho Museum of Art, Seoul (2020). Selected group exhibitions include: 'Indexing the Nature: From Near and Far Away', Gallery Baton at No.9 Cork Street, London (2022); 'Mountains, Rivers, and People: Eight Views and a Nine-Bend Streams of Gyeonggi', Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art, Ansan (2015); 'Garden', National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA), Seoul (2014); and 'A Form of Thinking - Rediscovery of Drawing', Museum SAN, Wonju (2014). Her work is held in many public and private collections, including National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA), Seoul, Seoul Museum of Art, and Hyundai Arts Center, Ulsan.