ARARIO GALLERY

Pop-thru-Out

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As the title indicates, the focus of the "Pop-thru-Out" exhibition is to present "Pop Art" as a comprehensive art movement beyond generational and individual styles, ranging from the early Pop artists of the late 50's to younger artists working today, who try to embrace popular culture and life in art in terms of themes and materials. As the expressionist abstraction of the U.S. and Informel of Europe since the Second World War lapsed into self-contradiction, a group of artists started expressing their antagonism against the originality and uniqueness of art and attempted to employ motifs of popular culture in their art.

Among those, Andy Warhol made use of images of pop stars or mass products in his art, that started prevailing in the 60's. <Campbell's Soup Box>(1985), this exhibition is part of his series of countless Campbell's soups, the most frequent motif of his art. Nevertheless, though Warhol represented mass products as icons of contemporary culture, his work still retains artistic and abstract quality in spite of the popular taste of the images. We can observe irony in <Diamond Dust Shoes>(1980-1) by the same artist in that the shiny surface transforms the figurative image of highheels – a symbol of femininity – to the abstractive. Haim Steinback also uses images of mass products in his art. By producing objects as if they were on display in a shop, he blurs the boundary between art and life. Though his art in general can be characterized as pop art, the repetition of objects, for instance, in <Untitled (Breast Mugs and Marilyn Guitar)>(1990) and <Beep, Honk, Toot>(1989) display a strong sense of aesthetics and draw our attention to the design aspects of mass products.

Images of pop stars were another significant motif of Warhol's work in addition to those of mass products; for example, Hiroshi Sugimoto's portrait of the late Diana, <Diana Princess of Wales>(1999), can be understood as a successor to the history of Pop Art. Duane Hanson is an artist known for his lifelike sculpture cast from live human models. Hanson can be considered a Pop artist in terms of that his art features ordinary people such as merchants in <Flea Market Vendor>(1990) and tourists. Cars were another

preferred motif by Pop artists of the 1960's. Especially, the vertical arrangement of metamorphosed car images by Peter Cain represent the culture of the 1960's characterized by cars and sex. Ashley Bickerton, the artist of <Miata #9>(1991) and <Seascape: Floating Costume to Drift for Eternity(Elvis Suit)>(1992) eternalizes the ephemerality of pop art by enshrining Elvis Presley's costume — a symbol of the pop culture of the 1960-70's— in diving apparatus.

In general, the first and next generation of Pop artists can be characterized by masculinity, laconism, superficiality and the graphicness of their images. This can be best exemplified by Ed Ruscha's <St. Crosses Avenue>(2000) and <Manual Mobility>(1994) which feature sectional scenes of streets with signs. Planeness in John Wesley's images composed of simple lines and planes can be understood in line with Roy Lichtenstein, who incorporated benday dots used in the print process in his cartoon-like images derived from pop culture. Simple lines and vivid colors in Solomon Huerta's work also shows design elements. Even though we do not see their faces, we can make a distinction between men and women, black or white by the skin tones and contours of their bodies, while walking in the street. In the rearview images of people, as if seen from behind, Huerta seems to express the sense of isolation among those living in contemporary society.

During the 1960's, Pop Art had been criticized for indifference or a submissive attitude toward pop culture and consumer society; though one can insist that their indifference without making any comments can be viewed as another strategy of severe criticism. Under the influence of the Pop Art of the 1960's, the next generation artists also appropriated the motifs of pop culture and consumer society. However, their interpretation and viewpoints of life and pop culture seems diversified in various expressions. Fun and sharp sarcasm coexist in R. Crumb's caricaturistic drawing with insightful depiction of the prejudice prevailing in our society. In his human sculptures with blank looks, which employ icons from reality and pop culture, George Segal reveals the isolation and conflicts among those living in contemporary society. His work, for example <Chance Meeting>(2003), involves the audience in the theatrical space created by the fixation of a moment. The audience is invited to muse upon the solitude of individuals in contemporary society. Mike Kelly produces a grave and gloomy atmosphere in his work based upon advertisement images by transforming them. Kelly's art starts from images of the mass products around us, but creates an unique aura by transforming them in various ways; as is exemplified by <Double Horizontal Chaste Form(Unfolded) of the

Land-O-lakes Girl Illustrated with the Images of Land-O-Lakes>(1996) comprised of the enlargement of the landscape on the butter case and wire entanglement on it. This is the case in Ci Kim's work. The barcodes or X-ray images incorporated in his work deviate from everyday life and become a part of art as they are combined with various images the artist chose.

David Salle's <Windmachine>(1997) makes a strong impression by juxtaposing various images from different times and spaces. At a glance, it seems a combination of discordant images; however, the artist incorporates a certain narrative, which is too ambiguous to be noticed by the viewers. Along with ambiguity, his use of divided canvas can be read as postmodern quality against the tradition of art. David Humphrey pays attention to the unconscious desire of human beings in his work composed of strange combinations of various images. Lisa Ruyter takes photos of daily scenes, transforms them and adds colors to create unfamiliar space.(<Our Town>(2000), <King Solomon's Mines>(2002))

Pop art is not only a movement or a certain '-ism' born out of the specific period of the late 50's and 60's against the background of the rapid development of pop culture, but also a persistent attitude among artists toward art. In this exhibition presenting 26 artists, whose working strategies are an extension of Pop Art, the Arario Gallery aims to provide our audience with an opportunity to take another view of Pop Art as an open history, which is still changing, thought-provoking and full of vitality. We hope the artworks in this exhibition will be a starting point for further discussion about the significance of Pop Art in the present and the future, as well as in the history of art.

팝-쓰루-아웃 Pop-thru-Out'전은 그 제목이 암시하는 바와 1950년대 후반 등장한 초기 팝아트 작가들의 작품부터 최근 팝 아트적인 성향을 보여주는 작가들의 작품까지 세대와 개별적 특성의 경계를 넘어 소재와 주제적인 측면에 있어 대중의 삶과 문화를 자신의 작품에 적극적으로 도입시키는 다양한 작가들의 작품을 "팝아트"라는 하나의 미술 경향으로 묶어보고자 하는데 그 초점을 두고 있다.

제2차 세계대전 이후 등장한 미국의 추상표현주의와 유럽의 앵포르멜, 그리고 이를 잇는 미니멀리즘과 개념 미술의 전개가 고급 미술의 한계 속에 그들 스스로를 옭아매고 있을 즈음 일단의 작가들은 작가의 독창성과 작품의 유일성에 대한 강한 거부감을 드러내며 우리 일상의 소재들을 작품의 주제로 삼기 시작하였다. 수백 개의 캠벨 수프 깡통을 복제하듯 그린 앤디 워홀의 작품이나 리히텐슈타인의 만화적 이미지를 차용한 작품들, 핸슨의 실물과 똑같은 사이즈의 인체 작품들은 팝 아트라는 이름 하에 고급 미술의 영역을 침범하였다. 이 새로운 미술 경향은 고급 문화의 테두리 속에 스스로를 옭아매고 있던 이전 예술로부터의 단절이었으며 괴리되어 있던 삶과 예술의 경계를 다시 연결 시키고자 했던 노력의 결과물이었다. 그리고 이러한 노력은 1958년 영국의 비평가 로렌스 알로웨이가 팝아트라는 용어를 새로운 예술에 부여한 이래 하나의 미술 운동이라기 보다는 삶과 예술의 결합을 꿈꾸는 하나의 시도이자 태도로서 오늘날까지 영향을 미치고 있다.

ARARIO GALLERY에서는 이번 '팝-쓰루-아웃'전을 통해 여전히 변화하고 있으며 생동감이 넘치며 풍성한 논의의 대상으로 남아있는 열린 역사로서의 팝아트 작품들을 검토해볼 수 있는 기회를 제공하고자 한다. 본 전시는 유사 작품들 사이의 고정된 관계가 아니라 다양성을 보여주며, 전시된 작품 하나하나는 그것이 지닌 역사적 의미와 함께 팝아트가 우리의 현재 삶과 미래를 위해 어떤 의미를 지닐 수 있을지에 대한 새로운 논의를 감상자에게 제공할 것이다.

<참고>참여작가 이름 List

Andy Warhol, Ashley Bickerton,
Ci Kim, Claes Oldenberg,
David Humphrey, David Salle
Duane Hanson,
Ed Ruscha,
George Segal,
Haim Steinbach, Hiroshi Sugimoto,
Ian Dawson
Jack Lillies, Jean Michel Basquiat, John Wesley,
Jonathan Borovesky, Jonathan Schnabel
Lisa Ruyter, Mike Kelly, Peter Chain,
R. Crum, Richard Artschwager, Robert Rauchenburg, Roy Lichtenstein,
Simon Linke, Solomon Huerta