

Manhee Kim



Gallery d'Arte, Manhee Kim, Journey Santiago De Compostele, 2016, 60x60cm, Acrylic on canvas

ManHee Kim paints with the high energy of the great Abstract Expressionists. While the abstract paintings of Kim Man Hee are filled with broad sweeps of pigment and embodied gestural nuances, they also hold memories of time and place. The viewer will see the direct use of primary color in Kim's work – the reds, blacks, blues, and violets – as carriers of vivid emotion. They suggest the sound of wind blowing through the mountain passes, the hills, meadows, and vales. As Kim's extended brushwork moves across the surface of his canvases, intervals of rhythmic notation and expression can be felt. In the process of being seen, they suggest feelings of the wind being consumed by aggregates of color within the artist's wild, sweeping gestures. There is force in these paintings: the force of beauty in the process of revealing itself, on the threshold of coming alive. - Robert C. Morgan

Manhee Kim's gestural abstraction is not doctrinaire in the sense of 20th Century work but rather is attuned to his time yet is not based on any particular manifesto.

In this new abstraction, there is a purposeful movement that is almost aggressive yet controlled, that subverts claims of perfection. It is about incompleteness, gestural antithesis, and a tendency towards an unfinished quality analogous to the Japanese idea of Wabi-Sabi, the appreciation of imperfection. In Korean it is almost synonymous to the concept of Han that is like the mystery of the soul or a feeling of angst and yearning that developed over hundreds of years of shared cultural development.

In Kim's work like the *White on Black*, these qualities appear in his flying white brushstrokes that contain as much void space as solid. This subversion of closure allows Kim to address issues in his own roots while being currently viable in denying dogmatic history. But, even in this departure, Kim is not being cavalier, but rather playfully unpredictable and informal.

Kim's approach to his work is very serious however, although there is an intuitive element present. Kim works with different size scales without confining his smaller works to the genre of studies, but rather giving them their due democratically speaking. Kim's works are not meant to produce calm resolution but rather agitation and excitement addressing the multivalent and tumultuous world in which we reside.