

Artist reveals history of subjugated

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Australian artist Daniel Boyd poses in front of his works at Kukje Gallery Busan in southern city of Busan in December last year.

Courtesy of Kukje Gallery

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By Kwon Mee-yoo
meeyoo@koreatimes.co.kr

BUSAN — Australian artist Daniel Boyd explores an inextricable part of history and the identity of Oceania — Aboriginal Australians.

Boyd pays attention to the beginning of Australia and restores what general historians missed through artworks.

At "Recalcitrant Radiance" at Kukje Gallery Busan, Boyd brings historical figures and incidents of Australia seen through his lens. This is the first solo exhibition of the artist of Aboriginal descent in Korea.

Boyd's identity plays a key role in his works as he reinterprets the history of his home country based on his Aboriginal identity.

While the established history shows a standardized narrative from a Eurocentric perspective, Boyd emphasizes a multiplicity of

perspectives through images with various layers of time and space.

"The questions I have are about where my place is, being in the world and how I relate to things and others," Boyd said during his visit to Korea.

Boyd borrows existing images — specifically historical and anthropological documents from the British, who had seen Australia from the perspective of the ruler — and reinterprets them from a perspective of Aboriginal Australian.

"(The) photo is a scientific observation of a man in Brisbane. I'm taking that and presenting it in the canon of art."

"Untitled (YMKSMRWAKP)" is based on the portrait of King Sandy of Brisbane, a well-known Aboriginal figure during the early colonial days of Australia.

"He is an ancestor of mine from the 19th century. What I am interested in is the historical represen-

tation of people. I try to create a space someone can come through and exit in my paintings as an attempt to understand multiplicity," he said.

"The historical narratives of those who are suppressed are often overwhelmed by a dominant historical narrative. What I want to do is try to create a space as I see it and share my experience as I have a particular relationship to something."

Boyd replicates the historical photos with oil paint, water color or pastel and adds a layer of ethereal, glaze-like dots over the painting.

The pedantic title of the exhibition using an optical term also comes from the "lens" on canvas.

"When you move across, the light on the surface changes," Boyd said.

However, the artist declined to divulge how he makes those lens-like dots on canvas. "It's a secret. I have to keep the secret like a magician," he said.

The nature of materiality in Boyd's paintings come from the distinction between the dots and black space.

"When you make the black space visible, you give it duality. You can't dismiss the space anymore. The black space between dots represents acknowledging that we never fully comprehend the past or the future.

The unknown could be misinterpreted and the unknowability is visible in the painting," the artist said. "Through this process, we can acknowledge how each individual has their own understanding of their place. It's like pluralism."

Boyd believes that there is beauty in difference. "We are all beautiful as humans. No two humans are exactly alike. It is one of the most beautiful things about the world," he said.

The exhibition runs through Feb. 29.