

When painting sky becomes Sunday 'ritual'

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There is hardly anything that looks big or significant under the overwhelmingly vast sky. Or is there?

Artist Byron Kim's "Sunday Paintings" series, which he began in 2001, is an artistic and intellectual quest to look for a metaphor where a small part stands for the whole thing by observing his mundane daily life against the indifference of the celestial sphere.



Artist Byron Kim stands in front of his "Sunday Paintings" series in this photo provided by Kukje Gallery in Seoul on Feb.1, 2018. (Yonhap)

"Somehow I've always been interested in the subject matter of very small things compared to big things. Once you examine a small and trivial thing, you would realize it is also important," he said in a recent interview with Yonhap News Agency.

The artist, 56, is currently running a solo exhibition called "Sky" at Kukje Gallery in Seoul, his first in the country in seven years. A similar exhibition is also taking place at James Cohan in New York, where he now lives and works.



Byron Kim's "Sunday Painting 12/28/08" is shown in this photo provided by the artist and Kukje Gallery. (Yonhap)

Every Sunday, he observes and paints the day's sky on square canvases, 35.5 centimeters on a side. From azure and sky blue to grey and purple, the sky changes its hues and dynamics depending on the time and weather.

"When I feel really lazy, I pray for no clouds or all clouds. It is easy that way," he joked. And there were a few times when he skipped his Sunday appointment with the sky and painted it on another day, he admitted.

On the finished painting, he writes down a diaristic passage, juxtaposing natural wonder with his "personal but not that personal" stories like his daughter's soccer game and his dad's birthday.

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career to become an artist as a young adult.

"If I could be a really good poet, I would prefer to be a poet," he said. "But everybody (at the school) was better than me. ... I thought I could be an artist like a poet. And that is what I've been trying to do for 30 years."

For him, art should be something "really difficult to understand" and "intellectually stimulating" but "fun and interesting" at the same time. That might explain his yearslong devotion to the subject of the sky.

"Everyone knows what the sky is. But do you really know what it is? You probably have no idea."



"Byron Kim's "Sunday Painting 1/27/08" is shown in this photo provided by the artist and Kukje Gallery. (Yonhap)