



German artist Anselm Reyle poses in front of his installation piece "What About Love" at Kukje Gallery K3. The exhibit featuring Reyle's work runs through Dec. 31.

Courtesy of the artist and Kukje Gallery

Junk becomes art

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Upon entering the dimly-lit gallery of Kukje Gallery K3 in central Seoul, visitors encounter a bunch of odds and ends — from parts of automobiles, televisions and construction materials to colorful acrylic panels, picture frames and neon lights — piled up as if in a junk shop.

It is natural for visitors to wonder what this junk pile installation means, but Anselm Reyle does not give away answers to such questions. He rather wants them to actively engage in the works, thinking about its visuality.

The title of the exhibit, "What About Love," comes from American rock band Heart's namesake song, but it is neither Reyle's favorite nor a song with special meaning.

The title was picked up by the artist as he picked up other objects for the work.

"I don't think the title goes well or represent it, but it is a question to me and other contemporary artists about the meaning of love," Reyle told The Korea Times at an interview Thursday.

Born in Tubingen, Germany in 1970 and currently based in Berlin, Reyle combines modernity with found objects, breathing new life into mundane objects such as car tires.

His mother was a painter who mainly painted landscapes, and going to museums and theaters often in his childhood obviously affected Reyle's artistic background. However, Reyle sought the kind of art that his parents would find displeasing.

"I was interested in monochrome and pop art, which reflected the contemporary world I live in," Reyle said.

His belief is fed into the installations, which are composed of typical waste from the civilized world. But the components are not some random picks — Reyle sourced larger objects from



An untitled work from Reyle's collection, a collage of a drip painting and foil

junk shops and salvage yards in Korea, but he also brought frames and neon tubes from his atelier in Berlin to link the work with him.

"I have this pile of modern junk in my atelier from tires and fishing nets to wall fragments and scrap metal. I am interested in these as part of contemporary junk," he said.

The concept of ruin and extinction is also behind his junk pile installations. "The idea has been rooted in Western art since Romanticism and related to the awe toward death. It also links to melancholy," Reyle said. "I also give an astounding effect of neon light in embodying the form of civilized garbage."

Reyle's signature foil paintings are also on display at the Seoul exhibit. He places crumpled foil on canvas and covers it with colored acrylic, maximizing the characteristics of the material.

"Aluminum foil is an everyday object

we often overlook, but I just had to place it on my canvas. The simplest and the stupidest idea can become art," the artist said.

The German artist believes that though an artist thinks his work is a finished product, another artist or viewer can always add another layer to the work. "Some abstract artists use secret language that can only be interpreted by experts, but I reject such an idea. That is why I use ordinary found objects in my work so even a child without artistic knowledge can feel something from it."

Reyle said he continues to pursue art because he hasn't understood what art is yet. "Art cannot be explained logically. Art begins at the point where logical reasoning is over and that is why I'm attracted to art."

The exhibit runs through the end of December. Admission is free. For more information, visit www.kukje-gallery.com or call (02) 735-8449.