

<4 PM>

-Ingo Baumgarten's Materialized Paintings

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It is right to ask this. What time is 4 PM? 4 PM isn't just 4 PM. It's right to ask again, like this. Where is 4 PM located? There is a reason why Ingo Baumgarten's painting, which is entirely spatially themed, explores time in this way.

Only objects exist in the spaces that Ingo Baumgarten gives shape to. Most of those objects are buildings. There are no creatures that crawl, walk, swim or fly. There aren't even any trees or grass. It is quite different from the artist's surname, Baumgarten ("tree-garden" in German). While the entire building appears, the architectural part is elaborately depicted in the painting. However, it has nothing to do with design. The shading and line drawing in these paintings seem to be completely traditional painting techniques, but on the contrary, perhaps they want to distance themselves from tradition. Ingo Baumgarten's works drift in a certain space (a city) with familiar buildings needlessly separated. "Saemaeul" houses, changed from cultural houses during the Japanese colonial period, and detached houses, unlike parts of high-rise buildings or apartments, are indifferently solitary.

What the artist persistently pursues throughout is the materiality of the house. There is no life anywhere. Natural nature is also practically rejected. There are only some clouds attached to the buildings. There is no place to live during the construction process of building a house. Things like the intention to make an accusation are seldom revealed. The artist records the house itself as an object. It's almost as if this is his ultimate goal.

Therefore, it is difficult for these buildings to be nest-like homes or places of belonging. Capitalist society has commercialized and materialized even emotions. It can be summarized that the socialist countries, including East Germany, which disappeared, moved toward administration. Administration refers to state intervention in almost every aspect of life. It seems right to look for the real reason for the collapse of the socialist system in everyday life. It means that people and life as subjects in the two systems have been going extinct throughout the 20th century. Art is an act against this.

Through a perspective of insight into the materiality of human dwellings since the industrial society, the artist has been fiercely documenting the materiality of life in the capitalist society. Even the quantity of works made amounts to hundreds of pieces. His works are straightforwardly dry and honestly desolate. The artist seldom exposes emotions in his works. Things like abundance, luxury, vanity, and sadness are either concealed or not working. It is not a strange judgement to say that these things are being driven out of the canvas.

As such, Baumgarten's work is an intense report through compact object painting on human dwellings that have been objectified and degraded. This is the reason why the appearance of living creatures in the

paintings are unnecessary. The buildings he has drawn are houses within the space we call "Korea". The beings living in the materialized space become materialized together under the control of the materiality.

Any space is under the influence of time. Familiar, yet unfamiliar, buildings that have been materialized remain at 4 PM. 2 PM is sleepy time, 3 PM is work time, and 5 PM is time to go home from work. 4 PM is a sign. Nothing happened, and nothing happened before that. Materialized buildings stand at 4 PM. Tidy and solitary. Never lonesome. From Ingo Baumgarten's point of view, humans today are drifting in the space of 4 PM no matter where they live.