

ARARIO GALLERY SEOUL | SAMCHEONG

AHN, Chang Hong Solo Exhibition 《Heart of the Artist》



(Left) *Hand of the Artist*, 2019, acrylic on FRP, 300x200x45(d)cm / (Right) *Heart of the Artist*, 2019, acrylic on FRP, 300x200x60(d)cm

Exhibition Title	AHN, Chang Hong_Heart of the Artist
Exhibition Period	May 2, 2019, Thu – June 30, 2019, Sun
Press Conference	May 2, 2019, Thu, 2pm – ARARIO GALLERY SEOUL SAMCHEONG
Venue	ARARIO GALLERY SEOUL SAMCHEONG # 84 Bukchon 5-gil, Jongro-gu, Seoul (03053)
Content	Approximately 25 pieces (including sculptures and paintings)
Hours	Tuesday – Sunday 10:00 – 19:00

ARARIO GALLERY SEOUL | SAMCHEONG introduces 《Heart of the Artist》 – a solo exhibition by AHN, Chang Hong (b.1953-), who has been crafting out critical reflections on reality in his artwork, on show from May 2 to June 30. This solo exhibition, which will be the second of its kind since its first iteration at ARARIO GALLERY CHEONAN in 2015, is a place where AHN, widely known and critically

acclaimed as a painter, will be showcasing new sculptures produced since 2016, including recent works. The exhibition will comprise a total of around 25 new pieces, including a massive relief, masks, and paintings.

Through comprehensive painting series including *Family Portrait* (1979-80), which depicts the dissolution of families in the throes of industrialization; *Forty-Nine People's Meditation* (2004), wherein he portrays the tragedy of the individual in the flows of history by painting over portrait photos with people closing their eyes; and nudes of healthy, ordinary people we often encounter in our daily lives, entitled *Bed Couch* (2009), AHN has told stories of the pains and alienation of contemporary Korean history in their projections on to anonymous individuals. From 2016 on, he expanded his reach to sculpture, introducing masks with their eyes covered or left open in gaping holes.

His new reliefs – including the trilogy *Hand of the Artist* and *Heart of the Artist* - will be presented in the underground floor exhibition hall at ARARIO GALLERY SEOUL I SAMCHEONG. The *Hand of the Artist* series, which features a jumble of discarded objects such as dolls, antiques, paint tubes, and paint dregs with a skeletal hand hanging in the middle of an extended board, is a giant relief that reaches 3m in height and 2.2m in length. The artist depicts the bondage of life through three stages – an assortment of colors, grey, and gold, analogizing them to the life of an artist whose success and failure, joy and despair depend on time and fate in the heat of the intense production process. *Heart of the Artist 1*, which centers on a painfully bleeding, scarlet-colored heart bound by thorns on a board as big as the one used for *Hand of the Artist*, metaphorically suggests that the value of life is based on pain and angst, which in turn gives rise to new vitality in our lives. *Heart of the Artist 2*, as a vollplastik expansion of the heart alone, sits in one corner of the exhibition space, sublime in its gesture to martyrdom.

Contrary to the underground exhibition space comprising large-scale sculptures, the 2nd floor exhibition hall houses two large-size masks and 16 small canvases featuring anonymous faces. The painting series *Sad Evaporation* (2018~) shows deindividuated faces, drawn in rough brush touches. The artist describes these expressionless faces as “anonymous people who not only lack names but also presence itself, their existence completely elided.” He projects sad and forgotten realities on to these characterless faces, pointing to historical traumas such as the 4.3 Massacre in Jeju or the 5.18 Gwangju Revolution. The *Mask-Blindness* series comprises two masks that either lack pupils or have their eyes covered in bandages, devoid of facial expression; they remind the viewers of people who see, yet are blind to the absurdities of reality.

AHN's works have evolved into a variety of series since the 1970s, but they uniformly spring from his gaze toward those who have been victimized by or alienated from corrupt capitalist systems or the survivalist logic of social evolution. Many remember AHN as a Minjung artist based on his thematic focus and his past involvement with the "Reality and Utterance" movement in the 1980s, but AHN himself asserts that his art bears more affinity to "realism" or "art of life." His refusal to turn his back to reality and the needs of the time has sustained his body of work for the past four decades. The solo exhibition at ARARIO GALLERY aligns with his abiding interest in these topics. AHN's productions, which effectively capture his perspective and intent, will provide the viewers with an opportunity to reflect on their own lives and surroundings.

AHN, Chang Hong was born in Milyang, Gyeongnam Province in 1953. Refusing to subscribe to institutionalized education, he forged his own path as an artist. Starting with his series *Dangerous Game* in the mid-1970s, he persistently pushed his critical stance in his work, leading into *Spring Day Goes*, *Cyborg*, and *Bed Couch*. Since the solo exhibitions at Young Artist Center and Kongkan Gallery in 1981, over forty other venues including Kumho Art Gallery, Savina Museum, Busan Museum of Art, and Chosun Ilbo Art Museum have hosted his solo exhibitions. He also participated in numerous group exhibitions held at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Gwangju Museum of Art, Busan Museum of Art, Gyeongnam Museum of Art, Seoul Museum of Art, Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, and others. In 1989, Ahn was awarded the Special Jury Award at the Cagnes International Painting Festival, the Lee In Sung Art Award in 2009, and the Lee Joong Sup Award in 2013. His works are included in collections held at major art galleries and institutions including National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul Museum of Art, and Busan Museum of Art.

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Images provided by ARARIO GALLERY

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