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Where Are You From?
The Other Habitat
The Master of the Digital Sublime

"For the 21st century, the source of creation is data itself. My database painting is thousands of multiple layers of image data to create a new painting, which is data multiplying difference. It is not an illustration of a digital pen.
- Cody Choi, 1997."

Cody Choi is a pioneer of digital painting genre that he initiated in 1997. He foresaw the coexistence of virtual reality and the real world in the 21st century then. He unveiled a digital database painting titled Twin Funeral (2002) at the 2nd Seoul International Media Art Biennale in 2002, proclaiming that the "double brain" symbolized the coexistence of virtual reality and reality that would become a typical structure in the society of the future. At that time, the painting, Twin Funeral was shown in the form of a printed image on a mesh canvas, not as the digital file itself. In conjunction with the biennale, a symposium, 'Luna Flow' was held and invited him for work commentary presentation with the great scholar Jean Baudrillard as a lecturer.

Since then, digital artworks have been minted through a recent transaction in NFT art platforms as JPG files, not as physical art pieces.

Digital painting offered a clear opportunity in the history of human civilization to prove that the coexistence of the virtual world and the real world has finally achieved a durable structure for survival, as the works as files in the cyber world are traded for astronomical amounts of cryptocurrency and the value of that cryptocurrency can also be interchanged with real money.

It was at this point that Cody Choi's approach to digital painting clearly distinguished itself from the majority of digital artists who were suddenly drawn to the recent NFT transactions. Cody Choi's digital artworks are created with thousands of layers of accumulated data, the multiplying Layers method, in CYBERSPACE itself. This contrasts with the work of other digital artists' works which are simply the result of imagination and expression techniques taken from pixelate or digital illustrations, games, fairy tales, and cartoons. In other words, Cody Choi's database painting is the creature that inhabits a digital ecosystem and has its genesis there.

We confront a new world today in which reality and virtual reality values can coexist, something that Cody Choi envisioned, and prepared for, from the late 1990s. He was already working both on physical artworks in the real world and database paintings in cyberspace where data is formed and multiplied at that time and now is the foremost artist to pioneer the building of the most robust topographic map. He started planning for the future by producing prophetic works from the late '90s that have become the most appropriate artworks for NFT transactions today.

Cody Choi completed his first database painting file in 1999. His Database Paintings can be largely divided into the Animal Totem series, Multiplying Difference series, and Andrea Angelidaki series. The beginning of his Animal Totem series can be traced back to 1997 when Choi appropriated drawings of his son, who was then a kindergartener. Choi employed the computer software "Crayola Magic 3D" on

386PC computer to rework the art. Choi then expanded the animal drawings to hundreds of data files using "Cheetah," and utilized iMac G3 and "Photoshop" for data multi-layering to realize the series in 1999.

In 1997, in preparation for his Multiplying Difference series, Choi downloaded data concerning colors and scratch patterns on the internet from AOL. Using "Cheetah" and "Photoshop" to multiply layers 500 to 1000 times, he finalized an abstract painting in 1999. For the Andrea Angelidaki series, Cody received data on cyber architecture from an architect Andrea whom he met, through Miltos Manetas during his stay in New York. Using 3D modeling software, "Cheetah," "Photoshop," and "Crayola Magic 3D," he finished this series in 2001.

Cody Choi's Database Painting demonstrates that creation in digital art can be traced back to data itself and that the multiplication of data can be a means of sublimating computer evolution into a genuine work of art.

PKM Gallery will present Cody Choi's early database painting Animal Totem series (1999) at Art Basel Hong Kong 2021Satellite Booth 1D06 (May 21-23)

The database painting series was featured at many exhibitions such as the New York University Faculty Exhibition (Washington Square Gallery, New York), New Pictorialism Database Painting, We are in Jungle (Kukje Gallery, Seoul and PKM Gallery (Seoul, Korea), Continental Shift-Aachen/Heerlen (Ludwig Forum, Germany, curated by Gregor Jansen) in 2000.

Over the next 20 years, he exhibited his Database Paintings in retrospectives at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (Düsseldorf, Germany); Musée d'art Contemporain de Marseille (Marseille, France).); Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz (Chemnitz, Germany) and at many group exhibitions, Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei (Taipei, Taiwan; exh. title: Digital Sublime: New Masters of Universe), Exhibition Halls in the Rectorate of the University of Málaga (Málaga, Spain), 6th Busan Biennale (Busan, Korea), 6th Shanghai Biennale (Shanghai, China), Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (Los Angeles, US), CAIS Gallery (Seoul, Korea), Seoul Museum of Art (Seoul, Korea), Arario Gallery (Cheonan, Korea; exh. title: Standing on a Bridge).

As a pioneer in the field of digital art, Cody Choi has achieved fame for his innovative and compelling Database Paintings. In the early 2000, world-renowned art critics such as John Welchman, Laurence A. Rickle and Gregor Jensen wrote about Choi's Database Painting, and related art professionals such as Robert Rosenblum (former Senior Curator at Guggenheim), Peter Halley, Mike Kelley and MOCA, SEMA, GMOMA to include Choi's Database Painting in their collections.

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