

The Korea Herald



Living Arts

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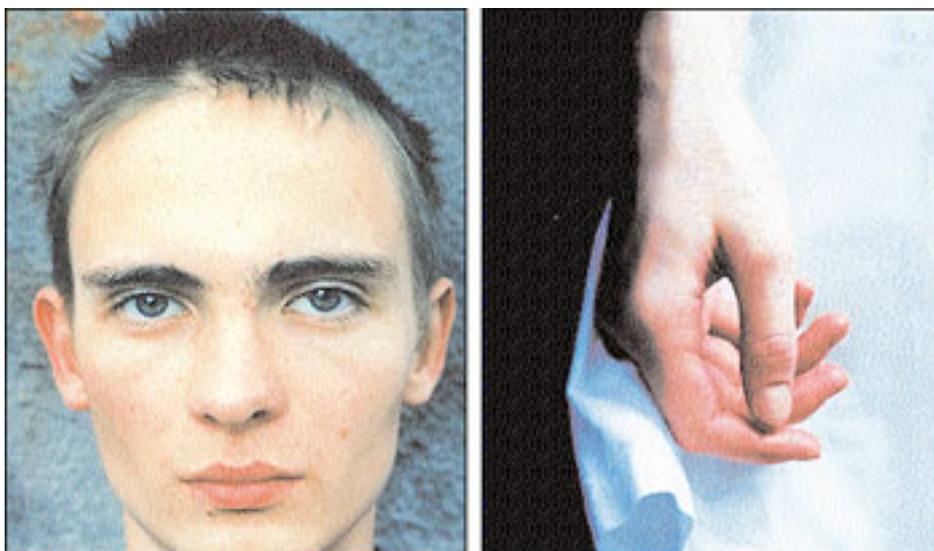
Dutch photographic insight into internal wounds

While a pair of human eyes reflect despair and hunger, a porcelain-like pale white hand seems to murmur helplessness. Even to viewers ignorant of photography, these delicate shots of human features arouse deep empathy and complicated emotions.

Largely affected by its late artists Rembrandt van Rijn and Vincent van Gogh, who accomplished great achievements in painting portraits, the Netherlands has developed a peerless sector of portrait photography since the invention of photography in 1839.

While Dutch artists strived to bring out internal agony of human beings by capturing people's subtle movements and expressions, Korean artists focused more on capturing outer surroundings and scenery, largely influenced by German photography.

Acknowledging the need for Korea to achieve new prospects of portrait photography, Kumho Museum of Art prepared the exhibition "Dutch Insight" in Seoul, presenting superb photographic works of 19 emerging Dutch artists.



As in

ã(left) Celine van
Balen
"Berlin" (2000),
(right) Carla van de
Puttelaar
"Untitled" (2000)

Rembrandt and Van Gogh paintings, Dutch photography commonly uses "light" as an important tool in creating the most profound effects.

Carla van de Puttelaar excellently captures the delicateness of female bodies by using contrast of the dark background and the whiteness of human skin.

In her works, female bodies are depicted to be as delicate as mother-of-pearl with the smallest details of moles, bruises, scars and marks vividly showing up against the fair skin.

Koos Breukel strives to capture internal wounds of people around him, death and transitory nature of life becoming two main themes of his photography. But at the same time, the artist`s dark portraits show "hommage (respect)" for life, engaging viewers with a deeper philosophy.

For instance, in 1996, Breukel produced portraits of Dutch poet Michel Mathew who died from AIDS in the same year. Several years before his death, Breukel began to take detailed shots of the poet to capture the beauty of his weakening body.

Melanie Bonajo uses the human body as a tool to fill up the space between the real and the surreal, creating "outrageous" images. Portraying the body in such way is Bonajo`s method of conveying certain messages to viewers.

For example, Bonajo`s portrait of a crying woman with her body tied with a rope is her "absurd" way of showing how a face-lift to earn beauty causes certain pain and suffering.

Diana Scherer is an artist who focuses on portraying the body rather than facial features to emphasize the anonymity of the model, who represents all human beings. Scherer tries to express the limitation of artificial production and the irrationality of society by treating these "anonymous" models as mere objects in her works.

In Scherer`s 2003 piece "Frauen (Women)," women hang on a tree as if they are uncontrolled puppets, the image representing social irrationality toward females.

Rineke Dijkstra, who is noted for his ability to capture people at the moment of hesitation or anxiety, shows how much clothing can affect a person. In his photograph of a Portuguese bullfighter, the masculinity of the model is maximized by his proud expression and the bloody costume.

Marijn de Jong`s works are results of her personal rendezvous with various people. Because her photography is based on the artist`s personal intimacy and feelings, the portraits become more exclusive.

Mesmerized by medical approaches toward the human body, Paul Kooiker uses overweight females as his main models, deliberately making photographic errors to maximize the effect of his work.

Annaleen Louwes is known for his devotion to focusing on one model for a lengthy period of time in order to achieve the best possible shots.

In 2005, Louwees spent a whole year observing his model Rob Cruger, striving to learn the connection between the model`s emotions and movements. Toward the end of the project, the artist succeeded in achieving a perfect image of the man, drawing out admiration from many critics.

The exhibition which opened last Monday will run through Jan. 27 at the Kumho Museum of Art, near Gyeongbokgung Station, Subway Line No. 3 Exit 5 and Gwanghwamun Station, Subway Line No. 5 Exit 2. For more information, visit www.kumhomuseum.com

After Seoul, the exhibition will move to Daejeon Municipal Museum of Art on Feb. 24 to meet viewers of South Chungcheong Province through April. 9.

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2005.12.19

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