

GaHee PARK

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The Korean artist painting pleasure, voyeurism and strange desires

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GaHee Park's latest works showcase domestic ritual like you've never seen it before.

When GaHee Park started painting, it was, in part, an expression of a youth in revolt. "My family was religious, conservative and pretty strict, and Korean society when I was young was very sexist, patriarchal and hierarchical," she says. As a teenager she'd draw a lot of sexual and taboo stuff. "Throughout my twenties, that rebellious approach fuelled my work a lot." Between works like "Butt on Face" (2014), and "Fuck You Woman" (2012), that early influence is more than apparent.

Now 35, GaHee is still primarily interested in goings-on behind closed doors. "Up until a few years ago, I'd still hide certain works from my family if they had nudity or sex in them," she admits, "but eventually I realised that wasn't necessary any more. They have seen my work and accept it now, if reluctantly." Her latest works, exhibited currently under the name *Betrayal (Sweet Blood)* at the Perrotin gallery in New York, retain the mischievous spirit of her earlier ones; GaHee's newer compositions are more suggestive than explicit, at once bold and mysterious. In vibrant colour she paints luscious interior lives: miniature landscapes populated by silver goblets and cocktail glasses, freshly-cut flowers, enviably manicured talons. But, peer closer, and insects are crawling all over the table.



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PERROTIN

You mentioned a scene in Charlie Chaplin's *The Idle Class* as an inspiration for your exhibition's title painting, *Betrayal (Sweet Blood)*. How did that come to be?

I'll get into certain directors at certain times. Sometimes it'll be the whole film, but other times it's particular scenes or shots or performances I get obsessed with. Those often find their way into my work.

I have seen a handful of Chaplin films, and *Modern Times* probably has the most moments that stick out to me. Like when [Chaplin] is roller skating by a ledge in the building, the famous machine sequence, the scene where he accidentally starts a riot. It's such incredible choreography, and his compositions are just so fun to watch.



THE CATCH, 2020. PHOTOGRAPHER: GUILLAUME ZICARELLI. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PERROTIN.

Do you have any other favourite filmmakers?

My biggest influences have been from films by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Nagisa Oshima, John Cassavetes, and Claire Denis. There are also a few really inspirational young female directors in Korea right now -- it's especially exciting because there were almost no women making independent films there for a long time -- Yi Ok-seop, who made a film called *Maggie*, and Bora Kim, who made *House of Hummingbird*. Both are amazing filmmakers with very specific personal visions. I can relate to their perspectives; these ideas couldn't be found anywhere in Korean cinema or culture when I was growing up.



SPILL, 2020. PHOTOGRAPHER: GUILLAUME ZICcarelli. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PERROTIN.

Is there an intention for what you want people to take away from your work?

To be honest, I don't think about that very much. I try to put my own perspective into my work, and I'm happy to share that with viewers. I do hope some of what I'm expressing comes across, but what exactly they end up thinking about because of it is up to them.



BETRAYAL (SWEET BLOOD), 2020. PHOTOGRAPHER: GUILLAUME ZICCARELLI. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PERROTIN.

**What are the themes you're finding yourself drawn to at the moment?
Has being in quarantine affected this at all?**

I usually start a painting with a loose idea for an image: a composition or a gesture, something that gets my imagination going. Then, as I'm developing it, the themes emerge and I work with them, but I don't usually start there. Like anyone, I tend to end up being drawn to certain themes or motifs again and again. A lot of those -- domesticity, private spaces and rituals -- already mesh pretty well with the concept of quarantine, so I'm not sure if it's affected me much. Or perhaps it has, in ways I can't quite see yet.

'Betrayal (Sweet Blood)' is on view at [Perrotin](#) until 17 October



SHADOW KISS, 2020. PHOTOGRAPHER: GUILLAUME ZICCARELLI. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PERROTIN.