

Things Which Can Be Seen Only If You Should Stop

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Abstract

This thesis aims to provide a context in which to situate my interdisciplinary art practice concerned with painting that addresses architecture. The paper explores my childhood memory of space and contemplation as themes that are essential in shaping my art practice as a whole, but also as my way of relating to art, nature, and the built environments such as parks and gardens. By reflecting on and conflating historical, cultural and philosophical contexts from a Western and Asian perspective, I will investigate how my work has been transformed through my personal journey from Korea to Canada, and how my practice can be situated at the intersection between art and architecture and the space between the real and surreal.

Chapter one will examine my childhood memory of looking at a little bonsai pot in my family garden, the catalyst to create my own art work amidst the realization of what I will refer to here as an “innerscape”. In this section, I will also introduce four predominant motifs in my artwork triggered by this childhood experience: Imagination, Space, Scale and Nature. In the following chapters, I will investigate these four themes by mirroring each in a relevant series of works: *Water Series*, *City Series*, *Inventory of Architectural Forms* and *Pebble Series*. The critical works *Poetics of Space* by Gaston Bachelard and *Space and Place* by Yi-Fu Tuan will provide underpinning theories as a bridge to connect these chapters together. The final chapter, “Things Which Can Be Seen Only If You Should Stop” will reflect on my experience of co-existing between eastern and western culture. In addition, it will discuss my research, aesthetic sensibilities and the philosophical context in which my artistic process operates. Through an

investigation of different historical and theoretical backgrounds of contemplation in Asian perspective, I will provide a theoretical context for the processes that constitute my practice.

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Introduction

Memory_ Walking Through Innerscape for Contemplation

In this section, I focus on describing where my motivation came from and how it has been applied to my art works over time. By illustrating how my early works stemmed from my childhood memory, I introduce four motifs – Imagination, Nature, Space, and Scale – as crucial catalysts of my practice. By exploring what kind of space I see and desire to see in my memory, I examine the historical and theoretical context of these spaces within the Western and Eastern notions of parks and contemplation.

We are always surrounded by space that is limited and bounded, but everyone may have their own special space that is meaningful to them. To me, one of these spaces was a little bonsai pot in my family garden.

Every time I looked at this one particular small pot, it led me into a tangled world with beautiful figures and colorful natural elements mixed with strange and oddly shaped things. I found a kind of playground inside this small world. I always imagined myself being miniaturized inside the pot, and I imagined a “park” while watching this small bonsai tree. However, the physical limitation of this space always conflicted with my desire to explore this world. I could not go into this space, and the process of entering it existed only in my imagination. For me, this conflict became a catalyst for creating my own works in that I wanted to explore these kinds of spaces through painting and installation art.

Philosopher and geographer Yi-Fu Tuan argues in his book *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* that, through the veil of memory, a childhood experience of nature retains a certain type of magic that often seems more intense than that of an adult:

In relating the passage of time to the experience of place it is obviously necessary to take the human life cycle into account: ten years in childhood are not the same as ten years in youth or manhood. The child knows the world more sensuously than does the adult. This is one reason why the adult cannot go home again. This is also one reason why a native citizen knows his country in a way that cannot be duplicated by a naturalized citizen who has grown up elsewhere. (185)

Tuan suggests that perception in childhood is amplified as a result of the way we experience time and space at this age. The wonderment of my experience with the bonsai tree at a young age has become a touchstone in my practice. My interest in scale – and the miniature world of the bonsai tree - has informed the juxtaposition between the real and the surreal that is evident within that practice. My early works attempted to represent these intense memories from nature into more concrete images. From a third person perspective, both the paintings and photos aim to emphasize my experience of watching these spaces, observing and spectating. My photo works, for example, explored the paradoxical relationship of imagining a big park around a small bonsai tree. I made a miniature bench (size 3 x 1 x 0.8cm) out of wooden chopsticks and oil paint, put it inside a pot, and took a picture, zooming in as much as possible (Fig1). Through the camera lens, I was able to capture this blurry wonderment which now exists only in my childhood memories. This re-captured scenery inspired the expansion of my oeuvre into an interdisciplinary practice that includes painting, sculpture, and architecture.



Fig. 1- *Mira Park* (2006) bench in the bonsai pot, Digital Image.

In the *Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at How We Experience Intimate Places*, (1958), Gaston Bachelard describes how a botanist uses a magnifying glass to recapture the magic of youth. By gazing at this miniature world through a lens he is granted access to an entire world of undiscovered space:

The man with the magnifying glass - quite simply - bars the every-day world. He is a fresh eye before a new object. The botanist's magnifying glass is youth recaptured. It gives him back the enlarging gaze of a child. With this glass in his hand, he returns to

the garden, where children see enlarged. Thus the minuscule, a narrow gate, opens up an entire world. The details of a thing can be the sign of a new world which, like all worlds, contains the attributes of greatness. Miniature is one of the refuges of greatness. (155)

For Bachelard the botanist's magnifying glass opens up an entire world of greatness by enlarging his gaze of the minuscule. This "narrow gate" that grants the botanist access into the minuscule resonates with my childhood memory of gazing at the small Bonsai world. Like Bachelard describes the miniature, for me, it became a refuge for rest and contemplation. My art practice attempts to articulate these experiences and perceptions using a variety of mediums to explore these memories from different angles. By using an architectural approach to painting I recreate my childhood experience of space through an imaginative interpretation of this memory. An example of this process is illustrated in Fig.2 *Framed Space*.



Fig. 2- *Framed Space* (2007). Oil and Pencil on Canvas. 118 x 84cm

This work has led me to a pivotal point in my practice where I feel I must question how I articulate my process in relation to the miniature. Why did I imagine something like a bench in this enlarged world? And through harmonizing a constructed object with an intimate natural space, how could I then engage in this place by painting and re-appropriating it? My childhood was largely devoted to relaxing and resting alongside miniature trees in my garden. Through these potted miniature trees, I imagined this place expanding into parks.

For me, therefore, the notion of a park was more concerned with the psychological aspect of resting – an intimate and personal innerscape to contemplate and play within one's own imagination. With this in mind, the idea of a park with all its historical implications, where nature and architecture coexist, became a crucial resource for the theoretical positioning of my practice as an inner and outer scape for contemplation.

In the Western world, the notion of the public park was generated in the eighteenth century; prior to this era, protected areas of landscaped nature were reserved as private hunting grounds and gardens, and later as status symbols surrounding the mansions and country homes of the wealthy.¹ However, during the Industrial Revolution, parks became more egalitarian spaces for urbanites. In contemporary cities, parks are protected natural or semi-natural spaces for human recreation and enjoyment. Public parks such as New York's Central Park and Prospect

¹ The Gardens of Versailles, which are part of the Palace of Versailles located 12 miles outside of Paris, are an example of how gardens were used as a symbol of wealth and political power in history. The Gardens of Versailles were created under Louis XIV, France's self-styled 'Sun King', who managed every stage of construction. Under the king's direction the gardens were to be used, adapted, altered and extended as his royal enthusiasms dictated, and kept pace with every extension of the king's power by celebrating every conquest. At Versailles, Louis XIV created not just Europe's most lavish palace but also the most extensive gardens the Western world had ever seen. (Thompson 13-18)

Park (built in 1858 and 1867 respectively) are examples of how parks are conceived in modern cities. Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed these parks as places of refuge from chaotic urban life. The modern park in Asia also comes as a result of a similar historical circumstance; however, in Asia, parks have a slightly different significance in terms of resting. In my practice, the notion of “park” may be more closely engaged with the Chinese word for resting (休息; also used in Korean) rather than the literal definition of “park” in the Western world. This word has evolved over time from earlier pictorial characters, by the combination of 人(human), 木(tree), 自(oneself) and 心(mind). Therefore, 休息(resting) is the image of a human leaning on a tree and taking time to “watch the mind”. In Chinese characters, the definition of resting means not only physical relaxation, but also time to reflect on oneself. In my works, this Asian perspective – restfulness of the mind – is a crucial notion. My interest in a park is not limited to the notion of a protected environment containing natural elements; it also includes the contemplative effects of rest(休息). My thesis, therefore, when discussing parks and architectural spaces, focuses on the notion of a protected environment containing natural and architectural elements but it also extends further to include the psychological dimension of the effects of rest(休息). In other words, it is these inner and outer existential spaces that interest me and inform my art practice.

In the following chapters, I will examine how these inner and outer existential spaces, triggered by memory, are explored in my paintings, sculpture and architectural projects through four predominant motifs. These motifs include imagination, nature, space, and scale. By examining my series of works, all created from this same perspective, each chapter explores

these different motifs as individual ways of provoking contemplation for myself and within the hypothetical viewer. In the *Poetics of Space* Bachelard suggests this kind of motionless but imaginative moment when contemplation takes over:

Immensity is within ourselves. It is attached to a sort of expansion of being that life curbs and caution arrests, but which starts again when we are alone. As soon as we become motionless, we are elsewhere; we are dreaming in a world that is immense. Indeed, immensity is the movement of motionless man. It is one of the dynamic characteristics of quiet daydreaming. (184)

Just as my artwork initially stemmed from the paradoxical relationship of entering a miniature scene and imagining an entire world there, by walking through each chapter I hope my thesis will act as a guide to entering this type of surreal space - dissolving our inner barrier between the visible and invisible as a way to access the immensity within ourselves.



I. Imagination

Space between the Real and the Surreal: *Water Series*

In perception, one takes information from the outside world, such as light, or sound waves, and finds meaning in it, using memory and perceptual processes. In imagination, it works in reverse. Imagery is created from the memory. This is perhaps clearest in dreaming, where our minds churn up an entire virtual reality for us to experience when we sleep. But imagination is used in a whole variety of cognitive processes, including planning, hypothetical reasoning, picturing things in the past or the future, comprehending language, and, of course, in design and creativity in engineering and the arts.

Jim Davies², "What Imagination Is"

In common with many artists, my experience of imagination can be described as a vehicle associated with physical and metaphysical spaces, operating to create the art work. In this chapter, I explore the possibility of experiencing a space between the real and the surreal as an attempt to access the immensity within ourselves. By examining this idea through the paintings in *Water Series*, I articulate how the work has evolved out of my experience with the miniature into an expanded practice that imagines and designs immense spaces.

Picture a small tea kettle wherein the potential for an immense space exists, perhaps a

² In the Ph.D. Jim Davies is the Director of the Science Imagination Laboratory at Carleton University. In the *Psychology Today* Magazine, he discusses the notion of imagination in the article titled "What Imagination Is: Creativity or mental images?"

large flowing water park? Maybe this space could be accessed better through a two dimensional cross-section in a painting or drawing? *Water Series* was initiated from this simple question based on my experience. The question spurred a process by which I bring this imaginary space into reality as portrayed in the series. By focusing on my imagined space of the inside of a small tea kettle, I design and express an internal space with curved lines using the shape of the kettle and water as motifs. Through this process, I intend to explore both abstractive and formative shapes of water in immense space as an attempt to invoke a contemplative and peaceful feeling from this space.

My initial inspiration of water and the tea kettle as a metaphor for contemplative space is associated with my research of the 'tea ceremony'; it is also called 'teaism'³. In Eastern Asia, teaism is considered as a kind of 'ritual retreat'⁴ to promote harmony with nature, humanity and mind beyond the mundane world. Since the sixteenth century in Japan, this idea is directly influenced by architectural forms called 'tea house' or 'tea-room' for the purpose of tea-gathering. For instance, the "roji" (a path in the urban Japanese garden) is often connected with the tea house whose purpose is to calm the guest into a state of contemplation. At the end of

³ "In China, in the eighth century, it entered the realm of poetry as one of the polite amusements. The fifteenth century saw Japan ennoble it into a religion of estheticism— Teaism. Teaism is a cult founded on the adoration of the beautiful among the sordid facts of everyday existence. It inculcates purity and harmony, the mystery of mutual charity, the romanticism of the social order. It is essentially a worship of the Imperfect, as it is a tender attempt to accomplish something possible in this impossible thing we know as life." (Okakura 1)

⁴ In *Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation*, Marc Treib introduces the idea of the tea ceremony by referring to "ritual retreat". He describes, "The tea ceremony offered a ritual retreat from the cares and complexities of the mundane world. But it also represented an advance into a realm of much higher aesthetic and spiritual pursuits" (Treib 25).

roji, people arrive in a calmed space to prepare tea while the simplicity⁵ of the architectural forms is considered as an intentional emptiness, yet possible to be filled up with our artistic spirit and imagination. Here, I am interested in how this relationship between a garden, a tea kettle, flowing water (maybe connected to the more auditory sense when we hear the pouring of tea) and a space could function as a metaphor for contemplation in this culture. In *The Book of Tea* Kakuzo Okakura states, “The simplicity of the tea-room and its freedom from vulgarity make it truly a sanctuary from the vexations of the outer world. There and there alone one can consecrate himself to undisturbed adoration of the beautiful’ (44). He describes this simplicity as ‘Purposely leaving something unfinished for the pay of the imagination to complete’ (34). In my work, this emptiness may become a platform to open up the immense flowing water space inside the tea kettle.

Although not a direct influence on the *Water Series*, this idea describes the creation of space for my experience in the garden, tearoom, and tea kettle. Importantly the contemplative mood generated from this ceremony may facilitate the creation of Bachelard’s ‘immense’ space inside the tea kettle embodying my imagination. Okakura is describing the creation of the place Bachelard departs from. But Bachelard also describes the influence and effects of imagination on the individual through the concept of the immensity. He states:

⁵ “The tea-room is unimpressive in appearance. It is smaller than the smallest of Japanese houses, while the materials used in its construction are in-tended to give the suggestion of refined poverty. Yet we must remember that all this is the result of profound artistic forethought, and that the details have been worked out with care perhaps even greater than that expended on the building of the richest palaces and temples.” (Okakura 34-35)

Since immense is not an object, a phenomenology of immense would refer us directly to our imagining consciousness. In analyzing images of immensity, we should realize within ourselves the pure being of pure imagination. It then becomes clear that works of art are the by-products of this existentialism of the imagining being. In this direction of daydreams of immensity, the real product is consciousness of enlargement. We feel that we have been promoted to the dignity of the admiring being. (18)

Following Bachelard's idea, by gazing at the inner space of a kettle and imagining flowing water within it, visualizing this space through a series of works becomes the process that I use to approach my own process. If works of art are the by-products of "this existentialism of the imagining being", I believe these by-products can be perpetuated and resonated through further works of art as a way of accessing that free and imaginative state of being.

As for Davies' notion of imagination which I referred to in the beginning of this chapter, imagination is a crucial vehicle in generating "a whole variety of cognitive processes" in art. This perspective may be related to how the viewer engages with these forms of imagery and what those limits are for the artist. In my practice, imagination, a concept bound up with memory, can create space within one's mind, and can be translated onto canvas. Such a space, once actualized and experienced, can then in turn create an imaginative response within the viewer. Therefore, generating this communicative and creative event may be at the center of my artistic production. Through the Water Series, that focuses on my perception of the peaceful and calm feeling derived from a flowing water space, I investigate this intention to deliberately evoke an imagined space between the real and the surreal.

Water Series

The *Water Series* consists of three components: a site-plan (collage drawing with mixed media), paintings and drawings. These components are closely related to each other as fragmented parts of a larger work. For example, in the first component of this work *Plan for Water Series*, I design a map of the water space creating a viewing platform. Curved lines and the shape of the kettle is used to contain the flowing water space inside the vessel. By drawing grid lines to simulate the latitude-longitude grid and geometrical scale of a map I create a visual representation of the imagined immense space. In keeping with this traditional western depiction of space I attach small images of each painting in the *Water Series* (*Water Series: Painting # 1-4*) as a part of the collage to guide the viewer, like signposts, through the paintings. Additionally this acts as a way to connect the paintings and *Site Plan* so that they can relate to each other when they are installed in a gallery setting.



Fig. 3- *Site Plan for Water Series* (2011). Mixed Media on Paper. 400x169cm

The paintings and drawings in the series show a more detailed view and an altered perception regarding this water space. To evoke a contemplative and peaceful feeling from water in this series and for generating spatial images through each painting, I use a restricted set of colors (blue, green, and dark yellow) which were inspired by the kettle and my sensory experience of water. Certain shapes (organic and curved lines from a kettle) and patterns are also presented to evoke a sense of consistency through this collage-like landscape. Each painting describes a re-framed view of this imagined water space with architectural elements such as a pond, fountain, drafting lines and framed structures.

Through paintings, the imaginary space is established by two formal elements: the concrete line drawing and the inclusion of organic shapes. Watercolor technique is used to emphasize the transparent nature of water where colours pierce through paper and spread to embody its own spatial awareness. The concise and concrete lines then become a boundary that embodies water: the collage as a dreamscape of my utopian ideal. Through these techniques, I intend to capture a view of this imaginary space from different angles through each painting.



Fig. 4- *Water Series: Paintings #1-3* (2010-2012). Oil, Pencil and Collage on Paper. 127×102cm

In the last components, the drawings, I examine how this concept has been developed and expanded through the tracing and deconstructing of shapes, color, and texture. The design process allows for the transformation of the original motif through a re-negotiating of pre-established language inherent within an architectural dialect. In simultaneously working with the sketch, the collage drawings, modeling, drafting, blueprint, and researching of different expressions of water from historical garden design drawings, I try to access this flowing water space in different ways, not only through a purely representational manner though painting, but also by designing and exploring an immense space through the lens of an architect.



Fig. 5- *Water Series: Drawings* (2010-2011). Mixed Media on Paper. Various Size

Using these types of motifs in the designing of space has led to some crucial shifts in my practice. First, it directed a new strategy of applying architectural drawings to my work as a way to move beyond traditional types of landscape and to design a space that emphasized imagination and psychological space. Second, the process has challenged me to articulate my own ideal space into a new hybrid structure that amalgamates art, architecture, and design arriving at a practice where the real and the surreal are blurred. In my practice these questions became a significant turning point; they have expanded not only the research behind my formal paintings and drawings, but also inform relevant visual components such as drawing, collage, and three dimensional modeling inspired by the field of architecture. Overall this work aims to integrate methodological threads that span diverse fields of cultural production in order to explore an interdisciplinary practice between art and architecture, a subject that will be discussed further in the next two chapters.



II. Space

Intersecting between Architecture and Art: *City Series*

In the next two chapters, I explore predominant motifs 'Space' and 'Scale' in my works by negotiating the pre-established language of architecture as a more practical or tangible methodology. Relevant to this methodology, I refer to artists or landscape architects who work at the intersection of architecture and art such as Carlos Martinez, Martha Schwartz, Dan Graham, and Maya Lin. By reflecting on my exploration and works over the past two years, I demonstrate my journey of transition from two dimensional to three dimensional work, and from art to architecture, which was essentially my aspiration in the Master's program.

When I started this research effort, I had two primary goals. The first was to apply concepts of two-dimensional representation into three-dimensional space through exploring sculptural installation and architectural models. The second was to relate this initial exploration to create a hybrid of architectural and natural elements in my paintings and drawings. As I described in the previous chapter, my interest in architecture as a tangible methodology to express space became one of the crucial controlling themes in my practice beyond painting. In the next two chapters, "Space: Intersecting between Architecture and Art", and "Scale: Miniature and Intimate Immensity", I examine how these two intentions have been explored over two years within my practice by mirroring each in a relevant series of works: *City Series* and *Inventory of Architectural Forms*.

I am interested specifically in the spatial awareness inherent within the language of

architecture. The act of painting translates this architectural language into an alternative form of speech, when then exists in physical space, but also evokes another awareness of space. My early paintings, catalyzed by memory, might be more about physical and metaphysical perceptions of space. I focused on observing a space and re-appropriating this space onto canvas in hopes of creating imaginative and contemplative images. As an alternative to relying solely on memory, the language of architecture, as a pre-established tool, opens up the possibility to more consciously design these spaces where I desire to see them implemented. In this vein, I have focused on the design process in the field of architecture, and broadened communications with and research into urban designers and architects. This has become my process in order to resolve how I could situate an interdisciplinary practice within contemporary art. It has been a challenging but inevitable step as my practice continues to expand.

I have been investigating interdisciplinary artists and architects such as Dan Graham, Martha Schwartz, and Maya Lin who create an interplay between architectural and natural elements⁶. These were important references to which I could relate my interest in historical and theoretical relationships between architecture, art, and space. My two years of this investigation time was not sufficient for me to assimilate all the design processes in this field. However, it was enough not only to experience their design processes as a whole, but also to

⁶ In relation to this journey, during the Applied Master's program, I completed the Basics of Architectural Design and Architectural Modeling courses in Continuing Studies at Emily Carr University over 2011, and a certificate in Garden Design at UBC as my internship from March to August 2012.

learn different approaches toward space which could then be applied to my studio practice from various perspectives. If art works are self-portraits that reflect who I am in a personal and subjective way, architecture may be more of an objective manifestation of another person who will live in the building and stay in the garden. For me, this perspective seems to suggest a different way of thinking about method which I was not able to engage in as a painter.

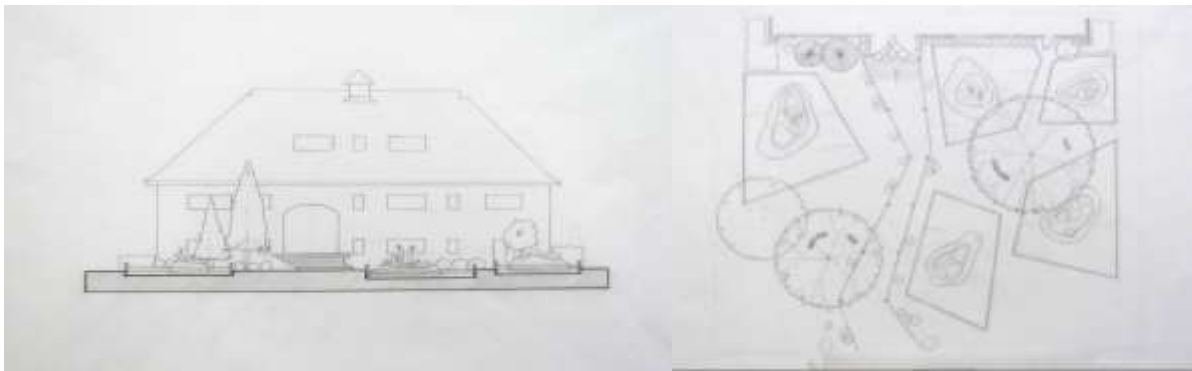


Fig.6- Conceptual Garden Design 1. (2012): Garden to stimulate five senses.

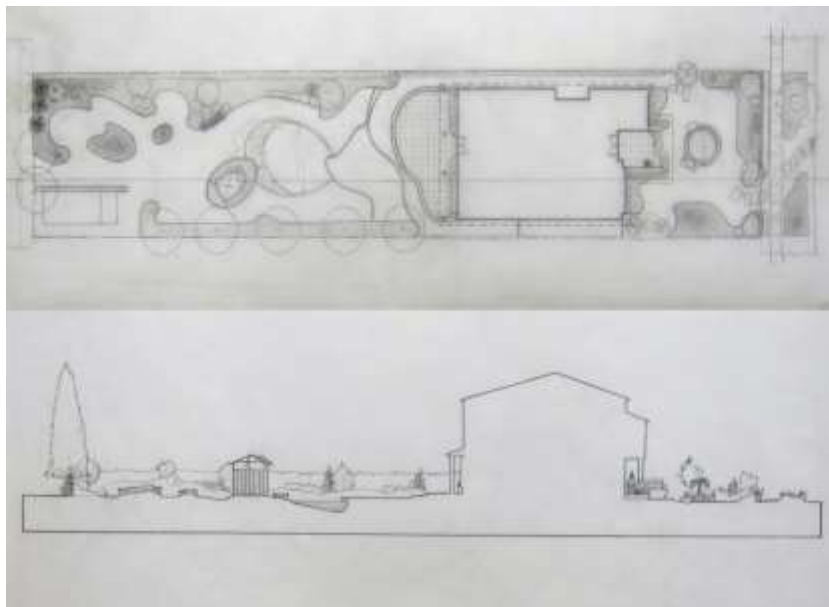


Fig. 7- A Case Study Garden Design Plan and Elevation (2012): Garden Design at 6629 Balsam Street, Vancouver, BC for the virtual client Susan Koelink

Regarding this relationship, Maya Lin, a prominent architect and environmental artist, is a good example in terms of identifying her position in the realm of both art and architecture. In her book *Boundaries*, she speaks about this balance through a reflection on analogical differences between poetry and prose in terms of how she creatively harmonizes the two different components in her life:

My work exists somewhere between art and architecture. I never consciously tried to separate the two. Instead, as I have produced both the art and architectural works, they have taken shape quite differently from one another... and I have found that the creative process I undertake to create these works is likewise different. I have often said the difference between art and architecture can be likened to the differences between poetry and prose, and this analogy reflects not just the end result but the creative process one goes through in the making of the work. (4:44)

Just as she never consciously tried to separate these two realms in her life, I intend to explore this boundary as an artist and to cross the threshold somewhere between art and architecture. In order to explore this threshold more fully, I try not to set a kind of limitation between two and three dimensional architecture and fine art. Like a built-in metamorphosis, this hybrid is constantly broken down and re- created through different bodies of works such as paintings, drawings, collage, sculptural installation, and book making. *City Series* is formulated within this practice. The work displays a built-in metamorphosis explored through various approaches beyond my previous work which focused only on painting. This chapter provides a reflective moment in order to connect all these fragmented elements together through the *City Series*.

City Series

City Series references the landscape design project entitled *City Lounge* by Carlos Martinez + Pipilotti Rist. *City Lounge* is an outdoor space in the center of St. Gallen, Switzerland that was designed by Carlos Martinez in collaboration with the artist Pipilotti Rist for a design competition in 2005. The idea was to create a public living room where small streets in the central city have been covered with red rubber, traffic signals are placed like toy-objects, and illumination comes from light bubbles. In my piece, I explore my impressions and visual inspirations of the city, focusing on architectural environments such as glass, color, light, and parks. For this project, I specifically focused on Martinez's concept of a public space as a living room.⁷ This seemed related to my notion of a park in that I refer to it as an intimate and exclusive personal space inside the open and inclusive public space: by negotiating the pre-

⁷Carlos Martinez discusses this concept of a living room in his interview with www.kopenhagen.dk in December 2007.

In the city everything moves very fast. It is normally a place where you cannot relax. *City lounge* is a place where you can relax. An example is that when you make a chair - a conventional chair - you have almost only one way you can sit. If you are two sitting each on one chair - the dynamic of the conversation is different than if you sit on seats as in *City lounge* where you can move your body freely simply because it is designed to make you relax. *City lounge* is a place where you can relax. The red color and the softness and the light - everything included is made to make you slow down and relax...Interestingly for us it is a social component - a public space. Not your space - not my space. And people feel responsible as if it's their own private area. (Martinez)

http://www.kopenhagen.dk/interviews/interviews/interviews_2007/interview_pipilotti_rist_and_carlos_martinez/

established language of architecture, I am exploring a new artistic reality by designing spaces through paintings and architectural models.

The first components of this series are paintings and sculptures. The paintings in *City Series* consist of two different bodies of work: one is a triptych of paintings (each 72 x 100 cm on canvas, using oil, glossy media and overlapping architectural drawings with thin pencil lines on the surface), and the other consists of three monochromatic paintings (26.5-70 x 40-65cm) on shaped canvas that echo and evoke the geometry of architecture in my triptych. These sets of paintings can be flexibly installed depending on the size of the wall. In the first series, the triptych paintings, I focus on expressing the atmosphere of the architectural environment such as glass, color, light and imaginative, provocative night views of the city as in the *City Lounge* project. I depict this idea by focusing on architectural forms of buildings and using different kinds of blue— (such as sky blue, greenish blue, and indigo) as well as drafting pencil lines. The shades of blue are translucently layered and mixed with the glossy media, which can show all layers of the painstaking process of painting and emphasize the shiny and glossy characteristic of glass buildings at night.



Fig. 8- *City Series: Painting #1 #2* (2011). Oil and Pencil on Canvas, 72×100 cm

This perception is also sustained within the sculptures. Here I focus on conveying an architectural structure of the building and illuminating the blimp-shaped light ball through three dimensional forms. By using translucent material such as wax and soap to emphasize the organic and glossy surface of light balls and buildings, I explore how my perception of this view can be realized in different ways through a three dimensional installation.



Fig. 9- *City Series: Sculpture Installation View* (2011-2012)



Another component of my *City Series* consists of ten collage drawings: each 23×30.5 cm, using different kinds of translucent papers, color papers, pencil, oils, and photographic images. Referring to various images from *City Lounge* (drafting, blue-prints, photographic views, design concepts, articles and so on) and re-appropriating them by overlapping my painted images in *City Series*, I attempt to recreate fragmented and distorted spatial images from urban spaces in the hope of creating a dialogue between painting and drawing. For example, one of the triptych paintings (*City Series: Painting 2*) is directly referred to by the composition of one of the drawings. This dialogue is further emphasized by the installation of these two components together when exhibited in a gallery space.



Fig. 10- *City Series: Drawings*, (2011). Mixed Media on Paper, 23×30.5 cm

The final component of this project is a sculptural book, functioning as a form of architecture or sculptural installation, which highlights these relationships between painting, drawing, and architectural elements in the *City Series*. The form of this book revolves around three main concepts: a folded structure with four pop-up components cut and folded into rectangular shapes, evoking three-dimensional buildings; a double-sided structure with attached images (a view of the *City Lounge* project and images related to my paintings and



drawings from the *City Series*); and the shape of the graphic title of the *City Series* which is die-cut through the entire form. Through this structural hybrid that includes photos, paintings, and drawings of the series and the application of three dimensional structures in the book, I attempted to speak to the tensions in my work where I explore a relational process between painting and sculpture: a kind of telescoping of past and futures, expansions and contractions of scale, and of cross disciplinary thinking (painting, architecture, and book-making). Just as the graphic title of the *City Series* cuts through the piece as a whole, this book is intended to function as a guide book for the viewer to further combine the entire elements of the series.



Fig.11- *City Series: Book Project* (2012)



The creative collaboration and contemplative mood of the place in *City Lounge* became an inspiration for *City Series*. If the motif for *Water Series* was based on my personal imagination of a tea kettle, then the article about Martinez's and Rist's design project, and its imaginative and provocative views of a city space, is a more tangible resource for me. By deconstructing and re-appropriating space through drawings, paintings, sculptures and book form, this tangibility allows me to focus on both the investigation of the question of form itself and the various attendant visual forms. In the following chapter, I will investigate how this manifestation is explored based on my third motif - scale.





III. Scale

Scale as Miniature and Intimate Immensity: *Inventory of Architectural Forms*

Miniature is an exercise that has metaphysical freshness; it allows us to be world conscious at slight risk. And how restful this exercise on a dominated world can be! For miniature rests us without ever putting us to sleep. Here the imagination is both vigilant and content.

Gaston Bachelard (161)

Miniature in particular is fundamental to my practice. Representing the two and three dimensional, the organic and the architectural, the imaginary and the provocative, along with my observations on miniature objects (which are often neglected spaces) have all become particularly interesting aspects for inquiry. These spaces can be as simple as a photograph's interior, the inside of a tea kettle, under a bonsai, or the seemingly finite surface area of a pebble (to be discussed next chapter) – repeated at infinitum and given a new life. My work explores this intimate and complex scenery that is in a constant state of flux – a built-in metamorphosis similar to our imagination. Imagining the microscopic becoming enormous and the macroscopic becoming small is one of the fundamental ideas of my work. This process allows me to express a variety of sensory experiences within an unconventional set of terms that exists somewhere between the real and the surreal, space and imagination. A link can be made between Bachelard's term "metaphysical freshness" and the process by which the micro becomes macro in my artwork. Like Bachelard's idea of restfulness this process is a type of meditation on an alternative space – creating becomes an act of building a refuge.



In exploring architecture as a creative medium, I became interested in the way miniaturized architectural models could be unfolded into creative forms of space. The work *Inventory of Architectural Form* was initiated from this research. Through an investigation of architectural forms and different materials, that I experimented with during an architectural modeling course, I was able to realize my interest in scale between the miniature (and intimate) and the immense. If the previous chapter “Space” is about my intent to negotiate architectural techniques through differing two dimensional and three dimensional works, then *Inventory of Architectural Form* is more focused on examining how a space is framed in terms of the miniature, as influenced by architectural model making, and how this framed space expands to create an immense space through my art works.



Inventory of Architectural Forms



Fig. 12- *Inventory of architectural forms* (2011-2012). Wood, Soap, Wax and Polymer Clay

My architectural sculptures are experiments made of wood, wax, and translucent soap. By sanding and cutting found pieces of wood, arbitrarily, I explore form and shape in different materials. At the same time, I focus on refining my technical skills in sculpture through these created forms. I install all these components on a small plywood panel, and explore how each form evokes an architectural structure or topographical image of the miniature. By installing these sculptural pieces as if they were in the context of the grid of the city, an association can be made with actual architectural maquettes. This tension between sculpture and architectural modeling refers to the idea of the microcosmic world in this form of “architectural” sculpture.

The process used in *Inventory of Architectural forms* is reminiscent of Maya Lin's installations in that she has a similar approach with material and content. She explores architectural elements, organic forms, tactile qualities and geometrical frames as I do in my practice. Lin's desire to "create an intimate dialogue with the viewer, to allow a place of contemplation . . . [with] a reliance on time, memory. . . passage or journey" (2:03) resonates with my own methodology for creating work. I am especially motivated by her intuitive and aesthetical response to various shifts in color, texture, shape, and scale, from natural to unnatural elements. In the *Maya Lin Systemic Landscape*, the author Richard Andrews speaks about these aspects by referring to Rebecca Solnit's essay on the subject of landscape in recent art. She states:

Installation brings many of these issues into environments that are responses to their sites and are sometimes metaphorical constructs of the world. The world here isn't represented in images of what is absent, but rather present in microcosm. Here, too, the viewer enters into the work, literally, geographically. The work may speak to the whole body, may have temperature, sensation underfoot, smell, sound and tactility, as well as sights. Installation could be described as an attempt to speak to the mind in the languages of the body: space, substance, systems, sensation⁸. (63)

Solnit describes installation as an entrance point for the viewer to see "metaphorical constructs of the world". I also find the concept useful as a way to articulate my series *Inventory of Architectural Forms*. For instance, one of my sculptures resembles the organic and wavy surface of the land. Over the top of square laminated wood pieces⁹, I pour different types of waxes

⁸ Rebecca Solnit, *As Eve Said to the Serpent* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 47.

⁹ 28cm x27cm x 5



(bees, paraffin and soy wax) to examine the different colors, textures, and tactile qualities of wax. By slowly pressing and pushing the surface of the wax while it dries, a different surface is evoked, a framed part of a land. By installing this work with other sculptural objects in an arbitrary manner on the half-size ply-wood panel, I intend to present an entrance to “metaphorical constructs” of the microcosm through edited architectural forms.

By investigating different architectural and organic inventories of forms and installing these components in different ways while thinking of architectural models, I attempt a containment of spatial sense. This evokes an intimate but immense world similar to how the bonsai tree opened up that kind of world in my childhood memory. In my imaginings, these forms could be enlarged into an architectural building beyond human scale, and transmuted into my painting as an abstract form or a public sculpture in my garden design.



Fig. 13- Detail from *Inventory of Architectural Forms*
(2013)

To amplify these different sensory experiences, I re-capture the three dimensional forms of this piece through photography. In the next stage of the process, I take a photo of these sculptures at different angles. This process allows me to transform these objects into two dimensional images, which seems to break down the sense of scale more dramatically. For instance, the organic shapes could be traced geometrical forms of mountains and the square structures could now be placed into the plan of a city. By tracing the outline of this shape through drawing or using computer aided design programs¹⁰, I intend these images to resemble architectural draftings, something that looks like part of a site plan or elevation map. In this respect, the visual transition from three dimensional to two dimensional not only opens up a fresh perspective toward *Inventory of Architectural Forms*, but is also strongly suggestive of additional visual exploration for further drawings and paintings; for example, this approach could inform an abstract painting as well as an architectural installation in a gallery space.



Fig. 14- Drawings from *Inventory of architectural forms* (2012). Illustrator file and Mixed media

¹⁰ Adobe Illustrator



To develop further potential works, I first play with, and expand on these ideas through collage and drawing on one-foot-square panels. I cut the traced outline of my sculptures into thin door-skin wood and use these lines, layers, and cut-outs as an attempt to utilize the thin wood pieces like a puzzle for collage. These pieces are juxtaposed and multi-layered onto my drawings with other colored papers and simple, figurative drafting lines which imply the scale of the images. In the future paintings of this series, these collage images will be creatively referred to and re-appropriated as a crucial step by which to explore the relationship between form, space, color, abstraction and architectural models.



Fig. 15- Drawings from *Inventory of Architectural Forms* installation View (2012)



With regard to this relationship between two and three dimensional forms, architectural historian Oswald Ansgar addresses the creative possibilities of architectural models focused on “scale”. He not only expands my understanding of architectural models as relevant to miniatures, but his writings also evoke new approaches to model-building as sculptural embodiment through a reference to Jonathan Swift’s character Gulliver:

By scaling down architecture to proportions of a doll’s house, the architect is magnified to the size of a giant relative to his own creation. At the same time, the model provides the only moment when the architect can tower over his work, as it were, and view it like a Gulliver in the Lilliputian world of his own design adventures.

(41)

Building on this description, my personal conversation with Canadian designer Tony O’Regan¹¹ added a psychological perception of scale as he remarked on “the uniquely human ability to imagine being the same scale as a model or drawing” (O’Regan)¹². These perceptions add significant aspects that I interpolate with three-dimensional works as they expand the viewers’ receptivity to imagination. They serve as a productive research territory in order to crystallize not only my *Architectural Sculpture project*, but other aspects of “the miniature” within my practice.

¹¹ Tony O’Regan, MEdes (Arch), is a graduate of Emily Carr University in painting and also studied architecture and industrial design at UBC and U of Calgary, Urban Design at SFU, receiving a Master of Environmental Design (Architectural Design Specialization). He was designer for numerous prominent civic and institutional buildings (including the Richmond Cultural Centre) with major architectural firms. Through design practice and teaching he has been very much involved in Urban Design, Interior Design (Faculty Member at Kwantlen) and Garden Design (UBC). Tony shares his enjoyment for studio work in the fields of art and design through his teaching at UBC, ECUAD, Shadbolt Centre and other venues.

¹² Conversation with O’Regan October 12th, 2012.



To this point, I have worked to visualize concrete spatial images that I observe in natural and architectural elements, and this part of my practice has been constantly developing and expanding through investigations of the interdisciplinary practice between painting and landscape architecture (park and garden). As discussed in the first chapter, in my work the notion of a garden and park is a place not only for physical relaxation, but also a place for restfulness of the mind through reflecting on oneself. Bachelard addresses how these spaces in which we live begin to consume us, affect us, and help define who we are. In his chapter on the “Miniature” he explains how our perception of the miniature shapes our thoughts and memories beyond logic through our imagination. He describes:

In line with a philosophy that accepts the imagination as a basic faculty, one could say, in the manner of Schopenhauer: "The world is my imagination." The cleverer I am at miniaturizing the world, the better I possess it. But in doing this, it must be understood that values become condensed and enriched in miniature. Platonic dialectics of large and small do not suffice for us to become cognizant of the dynamic virtues of miniature thinking. One must go beyond logic in order to experience what is large in what is small.

(150)

By considering the psychological aspects as O'Regan does, as well as Bachelard's imperative to possess something in order to understand it, I intend my working with scale to create new perceptions of metaphysical space in the viewers beyond logical order by generating questions concerning what is large within what is small to create the effect of disorientation. In comparison to *City Series*, this process could provide another methodology; it examines how I can explore physical and mental relationships between two and three dimensional forms,



architecture and art. This exploration would be based on my relation to the miniature, not as a contained architectural form, but as an experience of intimate immensity through imagination.

Lastly, in concluding this chapter and my two years of exploration in a field of architecture during the Master's program, I refer to my inspiration from artists Dan Graham and Martha Schwartz who also create an interplay between art and architecture. In regard to this cross-disciplinary approach, Graham discusses the relational intersection in his interview¹³.

I don't believe that form is architecture. I think architecture is about the program of what happens inside in the interior and also how people walk through it and experience it in time...Every artist wants to be an architect and every architect really wants to be an artist. Although my work references to current architecture, which I'm a great fan of, I consider myself an architecture tourist, not an architect. A great part of architects build form, and I don't think that's architecture at all. It's just a design motif they read books about in the 1960's. (Kopenhagen.dk).

For me, his interview seems to allow a sort of freedom in my works. As suggested by Graham's term "architecture tourist", this tour might be continued not only through my paintings, but also through further studies in landscape architecture. In this respect, I am especially motivated by Martha Schwartz, (a prominent landscape architect and artist with a background in printmaking and design,) and her notion of garden design and landscape architecture. Schwartz brings an entirely new language to a traditionally horticulture-oriented profession in her

¹³ www.kopenhagen.dk in November 2008 that was in conjunction with his exhibition at Gallery Nicolai Wallne in Denmark.



dynamic designs that use colorful, unconventional objects, both real and artificial. In her book, *The Vanguard Landscapes and Gardens of Martha Schwartz*, she declares her mission as a landscape architect: “Like most artists and architects, I wish to leave a mark, something that, at best, bespeaks whatever uniqueness I can bring to a place or that at least show that ‘I was here.’ I see landscape as a medium and a vehicle for personal expression, much as a painter would view a box of paint” (123). She also shares her personal connection with art and the everyday: “I have always been interested in exploring new or unconventional materials. Like the Pop artist, [...] embrace the materials used and found in everyday life.”(125) I think her innovative and interdisciplinary perspective both as a landscape architect and artist has been a guide to my fundamental goals as an artist. I reflect this awareness and this intention more in the next chapter.



Fig. 16- *Hello, Martha* (2010). Oil on Canvas 127×102.5cm



IV. Nature

Things Which Can Be Seen Only If You Should Stop: *Pebble Series*

By focusing on motifs from nature, I attempt to develop a different perspective of space and feeling, one which may be dreamy and illogical. In this chapter, I will explore this perspective by investigating the concept of “insight contemplation” related to a Buddhist perspective. Through clarifying the definition of “contemplation” anchored by memory and reflecting on the Pebble Series, I will describe how my experience gazing at one particular object in nature, and repeatedly painting and drawing this motif can be related to slowness and a looking-in-depth process through art.

In my previous three chapters, I focused on describing my practice forming a connection between art and architecture, and on this being the focus of my studies during the two years of the Master’s program. This was an attempt to articulate a cross-disciplinary practice by mirroring my relevant works, with their related themes. Investigating this transformational process was a meaningful step not only for the inevitable progression in enabling me to write this thesis, but also a fruitful development through personal reflection on my two year journey from Seoul to Vancouver. In this last chapter, I intend to integrate this exploration into a critical reflection of a final motif: Nature. By investigating “Nature” as related to my work as well as re-examining “Memory” as personal catalyst for creating my art practice, this last chapter will involve self-reflection on my co-existence between the eastern and western cultural, historical, and philosophical contexts.

What people see and what they desire to see may reveal the process of how they are engaged in the world. In my work, this process is signified by focusing on a certain object, imagining this object on a large scale in space, and visualizing this space in my paintings and drawings as an intimate and imaginative locale with a sense of displacement. Anchored by my own memories and perceptions, my paintings and sculptures are manifestations of the transient nature of space and its elements—from which I intend a viewer to extract his or her own experience, unrestricted by physical barriers between the real and the surreal as a vehicle to stimulate contemplation.

Philosopher and geographer Yi-Fu Tuan declares in his book *Space and Place*: “place can be defined in variety of ways. Among them is this: place is whatever stable object catches our attention. As we look at a panoramic scene our eyes pause at points of interest. Each pause is time enough to create an image of place that looms large momentarily in our view” (161). In my paintings, this idea of a momentary breath may be essential to determine what my work attempts to do. By capturing elements from nature, and re-appropriating these images into my works, I desire to create an imaginative and provocative place where our attention is re-captured through art.

In my practice, this idea is investigated in two different ways. Firstly, in the previous three chapters, I explored this intention by negotiating the pre-established languages of architecture to emphasize spatial awareness and disorient the viewer through my paintings and sculptures. Secondly, I represent and reframe particular objects from nature in an effort to

explore deconstructed and fragmented ways of representation in spaces that embody my imagination. For instance, the mixed media *Pebble Series* may be considered in this category as here I explore the sense of displacement through an object from nature, taking the elements of time and focusing through repetitive processes, to function as a means of contemplation.

Slow, focus and repeat... Pebble Series

In a modern Asian park, pebble paths are common elements beyond the purpose of aesthetic decoration. People walk barefoot across these pebbles stuck to the ground with cement as both a playful and medicinal exercise. Inspired by pebbles on an acupuncture path¹⁴ in the public park near where I lived in Seoul, I attempted to transform this image, combining it with my imagination to instigate a different set of perceptions, by changing the pebbles to a red colour and an organic shape, and instilling the memory of physical or emotional pain such as the pebbles might feel when people walk on them.

On the acupunctural path, when people walk on the pebbles, can the pebbles feel something walking on them? Then how can I transform this perception from nature onto my canvas? These questions became my initial perception for this work. By focusing on these small objects, and the interplay between the paintings and sculptural installations in the series, I intend to capture both my playful and painful perception of this place.

¹⁴ An acupuncture path (or gravel path) is one of the main forms of treatment in traditional Asian medicine; people take off their shoes and socks and walk down the path. It is intended to activate different acupuncture spots on the foot.

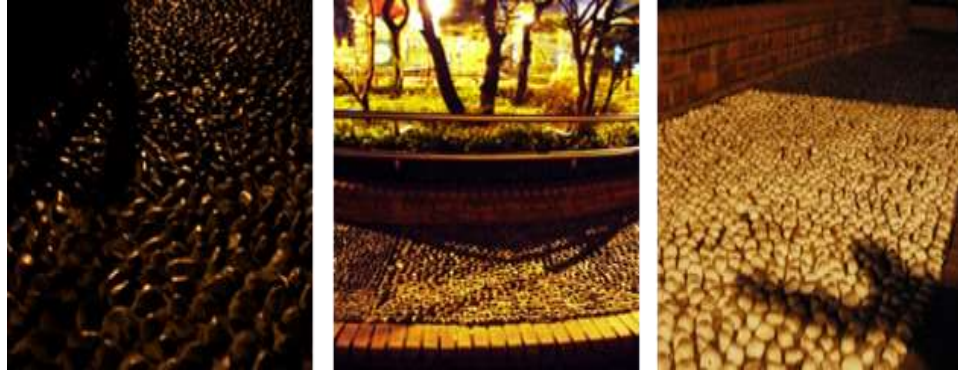


Fig. 17- Documentation of a pebble path in the park in Seoul; this view was taken from a bench in a park where I used to sit to ponder and rest.

In my paintings, it is necessary for me to reimagine pebbles as translucent, shiny, and feeling tangibly alive, rather than their inherently firm and hard characteristics. It is crucial to emphasize that they are part of nature – alive, not dead. I set up a palette with various red and yellow hues, and layer each pebble with pigment until I achieve a glossy red organic shape made of different layers of colour. Through this process, I intend to suggest that a pebble is easily popped, squished, and scattered -- something resembling a blood bubble to stimulate both a painful and emotional experience similar to walking on a pebble path. Likewise, this perception is simultaneously seen in the process I use to create my three dimensional work which is also through a contemplative method. In this relational process between two and three dimensional works, the goal is to create a repetitive and time consuming process in my everyday studio practice. Through this physical, simple, and meditative process, I intend to explore and emphasize an in-depth look at the pebble as an intimate motif from nature.



Fig. 18- *Slow, Focus, and Repeat...Pebble Series: Painting # 1* (2012).Oil on Canvas. 118 X 122cm



Fig.19- Detail from *Pebble Series: Painting # 1* (2012)

In the *Pebble Series*, I investigated the reframing of particular objects from nature in an effort to explore deconstructed and fragmented ways of representation in space through paintings and sculptures. In history, a garden of rocks and gravel are associated with spiritual ideas stemming from Buddhism and Zen as elements in a garden or temple intended to provoke contemplation. In Japanese gardens, specifically Ryoan-Ji in Kyoto, rocks and gravel are used to offer a meditative space, providing a minimalist setting without, as Marc Treib notes, “admitting any direct interpretation certainly not in garden design” (14). He continues, “More critically, the garden serves equally as a vehicle for contemplation in its making and tending as well as in its viewing. That is, the care and maintenance of the garden are also part of monastic life, and according to doctrine, awakening normally arrives suddenly without restriction to time and place: even raking gravel in a garden.” (15) Relevant to this perspective, therefore, my

observation of a pebble in the park, and re-interpretation of this pebble into a red shape in my studio by painting and sculpting it over and over may be a signification of the contemplative process through art-making beyond simply viewing it. For me, this process is not only awakening my personal inner visualization of a pebble in the park, but also functioning as an aid in a kind of meditation, concentration and reflection through an on-going daily studio practice. By installing this work in the gallery space, I intend to impart this contemplative mood to the viewer.



Fig.20-. Sculptural installation: Pebble Series (2012)

In this vein, defining the notion of contemplation is crucial to create a base understanding of my entire practice. Further, my established definition of “park” and architectural spaces which I laid out in the introduction to this thesis – spaces as protected environments containing natural and architectural elements including the psychological dimension of the effects of contemplation and rest – is inherently important in relation to this use of contemplation.

The literal definition of contemplation runs across several interpretations.¹⁵ There are

¹⁵ In the *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* contemplation is defined in different ways:

1 *a*: concentration on spiritual things as a form of private devotion

b: a state of mystical awareness of God's being

2 : an act of considering with attention

generally two different perspectives; one is to simply view or consider with continued attention, the other is a higher degree of concentration or meditation on spiritual things that accompanies the perception of normal life. Regarding my interest in contemplation as a crucial methodology of my practice, I am more focused on the second aspect of this process.

In the *Contemporary Landscape of Contemplation*, landscape architect and Professor Rebecca Krinke expands on this idea of a higher degree of concentration by referring to Professor Robert Thurman's ¹⁶ perspective on this:

From a Buddhist analysis, Thurman defines contemplation differently: there is “calming contemplation,” which focuses on the elimination of thought, benefiting body and mind, and “insight contemplation,” which is similar to reflective states, and is considered to contribute more to psychological, intellectual, and spiritual development than calming contemplation. (1)

Here, Thurman introduces a deeper level of engagement with what an individual is viewing or considering rather than being mindlessly entranced. Relevant to the notion of rest(休息) from an Asian perspective, his definition of “insight contemplation” seems to also emphasize a more active involvement for us. In the Buddhist perspective, this engagement may be a time for seeking spiritual realization; it may be personal reflection, and new insightful awareness through a psychological, intellectual, and spiritual development found in contemplation and rest.

3 : the act of regarding steadily

¹⁶ Professor of Indo-Tibetan Studies at Columbia University and a noted Tibetan Buddhist.

For me, this approach seems to allow for a crystallization of my practice by bringing back my initial catalyst in nature (the bonsai tree), and reflecting on all four predominant motifs (imagination, space, scale and nature) in my artwork triggered by this experience. The investigation based on these motifs is my effort to evoke an “insight contemplation” in the viewer which I myself intensively experienced on gazing at the microcosmic world of my memory. By reflecting this sensory experience through art practice, my work may be a personal journey to increase and realize this inspiration from nature, and a desire to transfer this condensed sensory experience to the viewer. In the *Contemporary Landscape of Contemplation*, Krinke illustrates this insight concerning contemplation associated with art as a reflective type of contemplation between artist and viewer. She states:

Contemplation indicates a deliberate attention, often implying a concentration on ideas, objects, or places that are somewhat outside our day-to-day thought. For example, art is often linked to contemplation: the artist may be seen as being in a contemplative state to create, or the viewer is seen as contemplating the work of art, or art is seen as able to induce a contemplative response.(2)

If art is indeed able to “induce a contemplative response”, my art works and this thesis may provide the basis of what I fundamentally intend to create as an artist. In this exploration, I hope my work can open up a contemplative and imaginative perception of space and nature through this relational process and its interplay between the paintings, drawings, and sculptural installations. By evoking in the viewer their own series of contemplative moments, I hope the gallery would be not only a space for resting(休息) somewhere outside the mundane, but could also be a space for viewers to pass through their own innerscape.

Conclusion

The Resonant Harmony between Eastern and Western Painting and Perspective

By working through each chapter, I hope that my thesis acts as a guide to entering the kind of space from which I have attempted to explore my art work based on the notion of 休息 (resting) – a space for restfulness of the mind. As a conclusion, I would like to underpin my philosophical perspectives through reflecting on my personal journey between Seoul and Vancouver, and try to connect how these perspectives are engaged in my art and how they relate in particular to my paintings.

As a foundational experience, I spent my childhood in the metropolitan city of Seoul, South Korea, which is an artificial, loud, and built-up environment. In this large and chaotic city in Asia, a small bonsai tree on my rooftop garden and a park were the places where I could emotionally and spiritually rest through embodying my imagination somewhere outside the mundane. My works' challenge is to bring this contemplative consciousness into a gallery space to remove us from the quotidian, a kind of restorative experience for people living in a modern city. For me, it is often about ritualistic associations evoking our inner quietness or simply creating a contemplative mood in an attempt to create an intimate and existential personal innerscape which I desire to see and expose to the viewer.

For me, this perspective may also be rooted in traditional East Asian painting such as its holistic approach emphasizing harmony as a way of meditative exercise. When I paint something, I'm

not only interested in the individual painting, but also in how it relates to other works in the series or how elements in the painting co-exist without overwhelming each other. In traditional East Asian painting, this aspect, as U-Chang Kim notes, is imbued with multiple points of view, or a moving one, rather than the objectifying approach in Western painting governed by Cartesian dualism (91). In Eastern art history, this perspective is engaged in a more psychological process, the painter attempting to recreate a total experience of nature based on their actual memory of landscape and nature. By using landscape painting as a mnemonic device, artists are enabled to evoke their experiences of landscape through the mind; this is a way of rendering not only visual impressions of landscape, but one that is also expanded in an intention for a holistic immersion in the experience through art. This perspective may be the most significant when I articulate my philosophical attitude as an artist. My paintings are triggered by my memory of bonsai tree and the last painting in the series, entitled *things which can be seen only if you should stop*, is influenced by this perspective.



Fig. 21- A Final Project in MAA Program.

Things which can be seen only if we should stop (2013). Oil on Canvas. 240x109 cm

In Buddhism, this holistic aspect is visually described by illustrating Indra's Net¹⁷ from Hindu mythology. The image of Indra's Net shows us how a part actually includes the whole by their mirroring each other, and how this reflective influence connects to a principle of interdependence and interpenetration of phenomenon. Through this image, I seem to find a way to articulate what my painting is, more particularly, what kind of space could be opened up onto my canvas. Like Indra's cosmic and integral net, for me a painting is an intimate and immense opened space where my four pre-dominant motifs are all interconnected and resonate between memory, imagination and space. Here, our inner barrier between the visible and invisible, interior and exterior and the real and the surreal could be dissolved-- from which I intend to create a kind of contemplative and motionless moment to be imparted to the viewer. Through paintings, I explore this kind of scenery by a deep-looking into my four motifs, and architecture is a bridge to access this space and to build up my own Indra's net through different forms of art¹⁸.

¹⁷ In the thirteenth verse we encounter the teaching of inter being and interpenetration as presented in the *Avatamsake Sutra*. The *Avatamsake Sutra* is the source of the image of Indra's net which is part of the god Indra's heaven. Indra's net is a vast, cosmic lattice that contains precious jewels wherever the threads cross. There are millions of jewels strung together to make the net, and each jewel has many facets. When people look at any facet of any one jewel, they can see all the other jewels reflected in it. In the world of the *Avatamsake*, in Indra's net, the one is present in the all, and the all is present in the one. This wonderful image was used in Buddhism to illustrate the principle of interdependence and interpenetration. (Thich 81)

¹⁸ Consideration and expansion of these ideas leads me to future plans for an installation of an outdoor gallery. This would suggest a new method of application, also involving the field of landscape architecture. It would allow further reflection on my notion of park and 休息 (resting) into an actual space beyond painting. Through this expansion from the micro to macro, viewers shall physically walk through and experience a park or garden that is created from my paintings. The actualization of imaginary spaces can lead my practice to other forms of exploration, while bringing together different perspectives on time, from childhood memory to the present moment. Just as architects and landscape architects such as Le Corbusier, Burle Marx, Zaha Hadid, and Maya Lin have utilized art, in this vein, painting and sculpture will always remain as fundamental tools to walk through my own intimate and immense innerscape.

Lastly, I want to reflect again on Bachelard's claim here that, "Immensity is within ourselves. [...]" As soon as we become motionless, we are elsewhere; we are dreaming in a world that is immense. Indeed, Immensity is the movement of motionless man. It is one of the dynamic characteristic of quiet daydreaming." (184) I believe this concept is essential to both the beginning and end point of this stage of my practice. Through my work, I desire to evoke this motionless but imaginative moment. Just as the title of this thesis suggests, I intend my paintings, sculptures and explorations in architecture to exemplify Bachelard's sense of immensity, dissolving the barrier between the visible and invisible, highlighting the things which can be seen only if we should stop.

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