

Planarian

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Planarians reproduce through the method of fission. When a planarian is cut in half, the two organisms regenerate perfectly and become separate individuals. Where the head used to be, a tail is produced, and where the tail used to be, a new head sprouts. They all have the same genetic traits but partially new cells. The two planarians, with their new heads and new tails, are two separate selves, a combination of the past and the present, the same but disparate.

AOKIZY continuously explores how images from manga, movies, and games are consumed and reproduced on the internet. He is interested in the contemporary digital image process, which modulates through countless reproductions and transforms character faces from manga and illustrations into timeless forms, such as Greek sculptures and Buddhist statues. Both these forms are the starting point of classical art, which strives for ideal proportions (the canon). AOKIZY's character drawings stand in contrast to the past in that they have extremely production-friendly proportions that are derived from the modern action figures and animation industries.

As the reproduced materiality of a game or digital space, AOKIZY's work is highly objective; however, from the perspective of the image consumer, his pieces are the result of strong friction and response to a form from an era furthest removed from the current "me". In this way, the artist attempts to expand the binary fission of asexual reproduction by repeating and transforming familiar designs into opposing media and contexts that stand in contrast to each other, such as past and present, 2-D and 3-D, object and video.

This effort extends beyond painting to sculpture, and beyond sculpture to video. It also manifests itself between one artwork and another, as well as between artworks and space. AOKIZY's choice of antithesis and repetition is also the most basic way to create space through components such as columns. A single column, duplicated right next to another, becomes the minimal structure that can support a roof. Duplicate a pair of components and you will have four structures to create a room. If you line up the newly constructed rooms contiguously, you end up with a long gallery or corridor. Starting from the vanishing point, the elements grow or shrink, and the viewer perceives space and time with a new depth and distance.

AOKIZY also pays attention to the symmetry and repetition of his works in the exhibition space. Think of the elements that prove perspective. It is only when we feel the difference in size in the repetition of columns and walls of the same height and width that we recognize the depth of the space. AOKIZY's 'faces' lining the exhibition space serve as these columns and walls, forming a vanishing point that leads us into his world through repetition. However, the exhibition space of *Planarian* is not a one-point perspective where all the differences between elements converge to

a single point. Rather, it is more like the panorama of a natural landscape constructed from multiple vanishing points. The viewer encounters this landscape created by the succession of individual works in different media and materials in the exhibition space.

The order of what is in front and what is behind, what is to be seen first and what is to be seen later, is virtually meaningless in the multi-layered, perspective-intersecting exhibition landscape. As if to reflect this reality, all similar works have been labelled with the same title, size, and material. The captions that are supposed to differentiate them refuse to do so. Nevertheless, unifying these works under a single title and repeating the same materials is not meant to celebrate mass production or reproduction in the modern sense. Rather, it is an attitude distanced from efficiency or convenience. The differences in form and color as well as design and medium are more pronounced. For example, "Helmet" inverts the image from left to right. In "Agony", the background color changes. With "Tylenol", there is either a full-color change or just a hair's worth of movement. "Spike" transforms from color to black and white, the image going from a close-up to a portrait framing. With "Canon", the long and the short hair are alike but different.

This variation in AOKIZY's artworks is similar to how a single design can manifest a slight change in color, texture, and/or physical effect each time that it is converted to 3-D graphics or a video, how a character in a game is generated by pressing a random button, how a generative AI image or text created from prompts produces different results each time the same command is given. For AOKIZY, tradition is not something to be destroyed or rejected, as the results of repetition do not have to be identical to the original. The future may or may not be indebted to the past. The freedom created by strict rules culminates in a new work titled "Canon". The painting of a pair of faces with long and short hair is the result of the present, where the once flat, three-dimensional image has been flattened back into two and a half dimensions. Paintings, sculptures, and videos have evolved from absorbing and reflecting light in various ways to emitting light.

The exhibition *Planarian* shows how the image continues to expand into space on the surface of paintings, videos, and sculptures based on a primordial method of division. It takes the form of a deceptively heavy classicism, but it is also a 3-D digital file, a crumpled two-dimensional plane, or a thin film on a light material. Like a planarian, it is a metaphorical representation of our current time, when we cannot distinguish between parent and child, original and reproduction. AOKIZY believes that the way in which we view, consume, and (re)produce images now is not so different from the way he plans and creates his works. Nor does he believe that there is a crisis of images. Instead, he says, we build on the past, but always arrive at a completely unpredictable future, and all we can do is change parts of it. Through AOKIZY's *Planarian*, the viewer will experience a new chaos created based on a rigorous system, a heterogeneous contemporary art, where simple clarity and ambiguous mystery coexist.