

## The externalization of the unseen/ghost as an enhanced version of reality

My collaborator A, Kokori said to me, "you are always working on visualising something unseen." (2019, Kokori) As she said, my project unconsciously seeks the same subject unseen, for example, copying film images of Andrey Tarkovsky, the visualisation of an exoplanet. Those projects have each different methodology, but the result of an approach to visualise unseen. The copying film image is to explore the divinity in it, and the exoplanet is the visualisation of the scientific data. I am interested in the potential of painting, which creates an enhanced version of the reality with embodying unseen like the work of Hilma Af Klint or William Blake. My work purpose in being an expanded version of reality. I am locating my work is the approach to visually point out the unseen. Also, my work inspired by some scientific idea/concept and research. An astronomer Angelos mentioned, "art and science share a same-origin, curiosity." (2018, Tsiaras) As typified by the exo-planet painting series, I began to explore the unseen by cooperation with science since 2018 while continuing to depict invisible from my experience. Time, memory, mind, and the distant planet and sun, such the unseen subjects have been explored by science. The understanding of the scientific aspect of the unseen has broaden my perspective.

Firstly, I explain why I focus on to paint the unseen and what is the definition in my context. There are two exciting accounts,

"The fairest thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science." (1934, Einstein),

"the history of technology is the history of the replacement from nature to the machine." (2017, Ishiguro)

When we defined, human civilisation is originated to the curiosity or an inquiring mind to nature, whether art or science, both could be stated as one of the ways of understanding the world around us/nature. The matter of man could be reported as what kind of mysterious he focuses and how to apply to it.

I am curious about the world around me, specifically the weird world which I often see but doesn't physically exist. What is that? Is that the delusion, or being there? The inquiry to the mysterious, a desire touching the unseen world has been the core of the matter of my life. If I dare to explain the reason why I focus on the unseen, it is because of my pure desire to know and reconstruct the unseen I experienced. I want to pursue the mystery through visualisation/painting.

Then, what the unseen I call precisely is? For me, that is the intangible and incomprehensible thing but subconsciously understand, which suddenly spreads onto eyes as a figurative form of people, landscape, or unidentified creature. I have had this disease ever since I can remember. From childhood, I often communicate with someone/something unseen but being there, and trip to the somewhere ideal world apart from the body. I suppose the connection of my body and mind is quite weak, my conscious easy to apart from the physical world. Sometimes, my conscious come into someone another's body and experience man's life, and sometimes I simply get out the body and trip to the weird world.

Moreover, I talk to the unseen person; I do not clearly remember what I talk about, but we communicate. All my work is inspired by the experience of while I am leaving the body. The essence of my practice is the desire to make it come down to physical reality by embodying as an image.

I have lived in connection with unseen as much as I could say that half of my life did not happen with my body. From my 25 years reflection, I have known that it is not one kind. At least there are three types, the possession type, messenger type, and the expedition type.

The possession type is mainly caused by people who are still in this world the same as us even after death. Generally, they are called ghosts, flowing or earthbound spirits, mostly having a negative feeling. They possess people to share their life story. From my experience, they are looking for people who can communicate with because of loneliness. The practice in unit 1 was the reconstruction of a ghost's memory.



(2018), unit 1 untitled, oil on board

The messenger type purposes of telling a message throughout the visual description that suddenly comes over like a dream or daydream. The message is random and metaphorical, so you need to decipher the meaning or the point something tried to tell you. However, it is incomprehensible because mostly they are the visualisation of the unpredicted future event. For example, you see yourself being in a funeral because someone dies soon, but you don't know the person is unwell. Even you felt it is a meaningless delusion; sometimes, it becomes a déjà-vu after the actual event happened.

The expedition type is the most mysterious. It doesn't cause by possession or notification. However, consciousness apart from the body temporarily and comes into the conceptual world like a journey. The place is sometimes the same, sometimes different. Films by Andray Tarkovsky, especially the *Mirror* (1975, Tarkovsky) reminds me of the view. There is no smell, temperature, and body amount. The colour is vivid and transparent; there are many unidentified creatures like a turtle with a birds head or the being dragon-like being. I often talk with someone who takes me there as a guide, but when I come back to reality, I forget who and what we were talking about.



Andrey Tarkovsky (1975), *Mirror*

The account of Japanese spiritualist Hiroyuki Ehara expresses about the unseen well. He introduced about his religious view, spirit or ghost is not to watch through the retina because their form is like the visualisation of strong feeling or energy. I can see, even when I'm closing my eyes. That is closer to the sense of feeling but watching. (2001, Ehara)

I agree with his statement because the unseen doesn't appear as reality even to myself. When I am in front of them, simultaneously I recognise they are not in the same dimension with us. They don't speak but make me understand their will without language communication. The most significant difference is heart or depth are missing comparing to the living body — even the people, landscape, or object, which looks the same as reality.

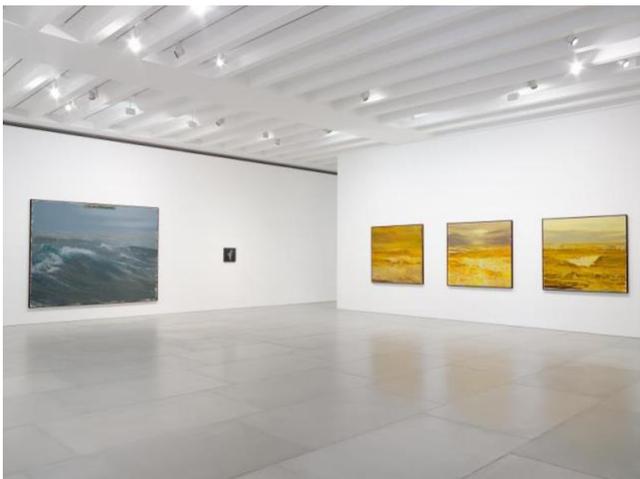
He also expresses this phenomenon is like watching different world throughout the film screen. The physical presence of the unseen is less than living our body like watching something reflected on a screen. As an additional difference between seen and unseen is the colour. The colour of the unseen is brighter and more transparency than reality. It is far from the colour of the substance in real. It seems like the accumulation of light irradiates from the object, which is like the brightness of an image on digital devices or the film screen.

That is all about the unseen I think which I want to embody. The matter is how to depict those abstract experiences, memories.

Takashi Ikegami explained, human sense organ is mostly towards the outside but not inside, so a human being is insensitive to the world in mind (2017, Ikegami). The range of the world people understands it is quite limited. Especially the memory or experience such the unseen things we know through an inner view is hard to capture with our sense organ.

I used to start practice with analysing the unseen I saw, then organise it using visual references like photographs or films. However, in unit 4, I reconsidered the way and attempted to depict the unseen from a more direct approach.

To create the body of unseen: The work of Enrique Martinez Celaya, Hilma af Klint, and William Blake inspired me. Those artists shape a personal spirituality, imagination, memories, or integration of them as a visual art which enhanced version of reality.



The Mariner's Meadow. 2019



Enrique Martinez Celaya (2019) The Portrait, oil and wax on canvas

Enrique Martinez Celaya is an artist, author, and former scientist. He paints relation to the subconscious with a recurring motif in his work like fire, sea, and birds. (2019) I knew his work in his solo show The Mariner's Meadow(2019) at the Blain Southern Gallery, inspired me a lot. The quality of his work seemed like not skillfully perfect, but there was a weird quality to take me to the unidentified philosophical memory or nostalgia.

He explained about the relationship between his painting and the memory, "It's not so much about my memory; it's more abstract. It's about how we remember things, what we regret and why, and what did that point to? My specific memories are only important if they seem difficult to understand, so I focus on that. But when I start a painting and want to use apple trees or sea grapes or this boy, I like to see what I remember; I like to make it up. Occasionally, I might confirm the image, but usually, it exists in my head. Between what I remember and the painting, there is a correction process that I'm interested in, and when my memory runs out of information, then that determines the end of that rendering. The whole notion of a photograph or a rendering is arbitrary. But with memory, I stop when there is nothing left in my head about it." (2017, Wei)

In that record, he avoids affirmations about what his painting exactly is. Later he only mentioned: since the age of 12, he has attempted to paint to understand the world better, and it is a kind of inquiry. Word of the investigation indicates the essence of his work; it is the world he understood itself. His work showed that painting could be a formalised inquiry mind to the world one perceive subconsciously. His work opened up my eyes because that broke my definition of painting that a painting should be a consequence of inquiry. I learned from his work there is painting as a record of the endless investigation.

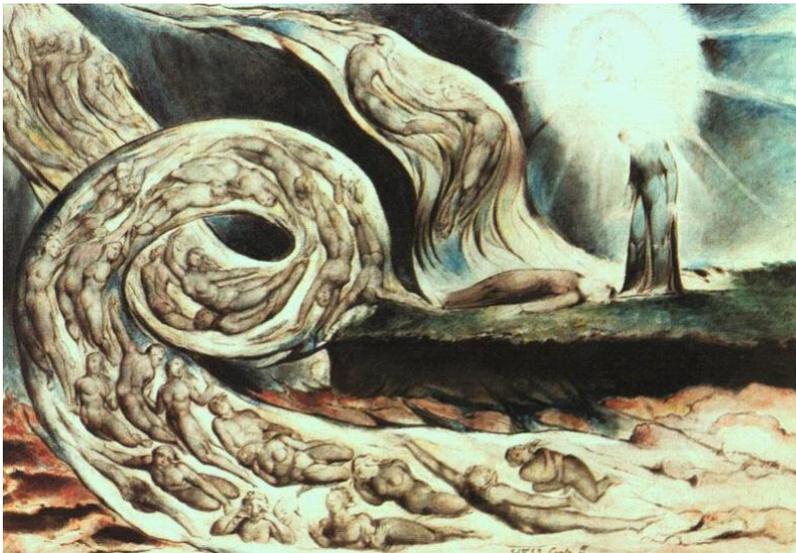


Hilma af Klint(1906-1915), Paintings for the Temple, oil and metal leaf on canvas

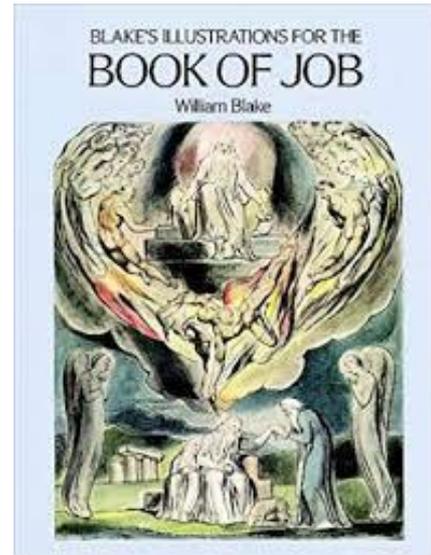
Hilma af Klint revealed her spiritual inner view with keeping the new type of artwork sequenced and rarely showed it to individuals outside of her spiritualist circle. (2018, Bashkoff, pp73) She is a famous artist as one of the pioneers of abstract expression /contemporary art. She depicted her spiritual inner view by adding the latest painting format. (2018) The series of paintings for the temple is one of the most representative pieces. That series of painting constructed with entirely organised images and the composition. From the sophisticated structure and design, I saw her effort to hold what she saw and felt objective.

According to Stiftelsen Hilma af Klint Verk, The ambition of Hilma af Klint was to develop an artistic relation to her esoteric material, utilising an inner, spiritual maturity, and to express this in her paintings. Additionally, the article continues that "Hilma af Klint understood the uniqueness of her works. Working intensively with herself, and with her personal development, she wanted to understand the process in which she was taking part. This aspect became the main quest all through her life: "What is the message that the paintings convey?". She would actively seek the answer through philosophical studies, by taking part in various religious movements and by researching in their representative archives – all in vain." (no data, Verk)

It supposes even herself didn't know what she is painting. Her focus is the message that the paintings convey, which separated from personal understanding. The spiritual essence in her work is to share the inclusive message to the public using herself as a medium. In her case, signals that she received inherited as a timeless real throughout real object/painting. She focused message but didn't control, manage by her understanding. She painted the mysterious as mysterious.



William Blake (1824-7) The Whirlwind of Lovers, Pen, watercolour on paper



William Blake(1825) the Book of Job

The drawings in "The Book of Job" (1825) by William Blake, especially "The Whirlwind of Lovers" (1824-7) also impressed me. Kathleen Raine expresses the impression very well.

"Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job are more than an illustration of the Bible; they are in themselves a prophetic vision, a spiritual revelation, at once a personal testimony and replete with Blake's knowledge of Christian Cabbala, Neoplatonism, and the mystical theology of the Western Esoteric tradition as a whole." (2000, Raine, pp186).

When I saw The Book of Job, I felt the divinity beyond the religious classification. It was the experience of touching godhead. The interesting thing is that those paintings are originated from the old narrative, but the picture is painted from his imagination. He used the story to elicit the divine image he potentially had. I am inspired by the idea of externalising one's divine or subconscious by stimulating it with the existing narrative or concept. In unit 4 practice, I used the concept of ghost by Gilbert Ryle, that is the inspiration from his theory.



Andrey Tarkovsky(1983), Nostalgia



Andrey Tarkovsky(1971), Solaris

As a different format of the enhanced version of reality, films by Andray Tarkovsky inspires me.

Hans Joachim Schlegel mentioned the work of Tarkovsky is,

"The image in his movies do not set out to copy reality but instead seek to help us experience the invisible within the visible, the inner reality that lies within the outer." (2012, Schlegel, pp10)

I suppose that account accurately describes the pursuit of Tarkovsky's work. According to Ravi Vasudevan, Tarkovsky's early representative works like Ivan's Childhood(1962) is famous as an homage for his memory. Later works like Solaris(1972) or nostalgia (1982) are notorious for relating to the work of memory, which tends to move within the registers of the personal and the intertextual. ( 1994) His main subject is the

reconstruction of the memory; in other words, the catalysis of the spirit. "Remembered time is not fictive time - it is the imagined return of real, emotionally experienced time, not only through things that happened but through our reactions to stories and records of historical reality. Tarkovsky's images focus in particular on authentic, documentary 'fixed' time as captured on film." (2000, Schlegel, pp13) Tarkovsky said, "I see chronicle as the ultimate cinema; for me, it is not a way of filming but a way of reconstructing, of reconstructing life..." (pp14 Tarkovsky). The aesthetic composition, expression of light and shadow, or the perspective to nature, such his outstanding artistic sense inspires me. However, the most significant inspiration from Tarkovsky to me is the unwavering pure passion for reconstructing unseen. The desire transferred to the viewer as the aura that wraps each film; it directs people to experience invisible. His film embodies man's possibility of the reconstruction of the unseen like spirits or memory.

As the reflection of the artists' work above, I reminded Walter Benjamin's essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936). Walter Benjamin stated, "We can encapsulate what stands out here by using the term 'aura'. We can say: what shrinks in an age where the work of art can be reproduced by technological means is its aura. The process is symptomatic; its significance points beyond the realm of art." (1936, Benjamin, pp7)

He defined the advantage of art which impossible to reproduce by mechanical reproduction is the aura. I suppose the speciality of the work by Enrique Martínez Celaya, Hilma af Klint, William Blake, or Andrey Tarkovsky is not only the visual aspect but also the aura. In the vast of reproductive visual arts, the fragment of the unseen world which externalised as their work attracts me through the aura.

The inspiration from the aura made me challenge to focus on my originality that embodying the unseen world. I have avoided facing to directly depict the invisible because I was afraid of the abstract topic distracts the painting quality. I have used to concentrate on the copier function of painting because that was the easiest way to appeal my skill to the viewer. However, I noticed that the attraction of their work is the pureness of the perspective of the world they saw. It made me recognise the value of art/painting is not measurable by superficial technique. As Walter Benjamin mentioned, in modern society, visual art is reproductive. The copier function of painting is already lesser than the machine. However, the inquiry mind to the world unseen is unreproductive. I reconsidered the purpose of my practice, attempted to challenge to tell the unseen with focusing on the aura/ the purest impression from the unseen.

Regard with my unit 4 practice; I confronted to embody the unseen as much as directly from the brain. I determined the unseen image/vision as the memory of the ghost, worked to the concept that reconstructed the experience of ghost. In that practice, I focused on to put my raw impression/ of the unseen on the painting, not the degree of technical perfection.

As a specific methodology, I painted by hand because of the fresh impression of the unseen image soon to disappear. Firstly, I was using painting tools like brushes or knife to paint, but I recognised the painting tool expands the stroke from the brain to canvas. I found the hand-painting is the most effective way to link the fresh impression of the unseen to the art. I used to think that I cannot paint anything without a model image or object. However, Enrique Martínez Celaya's working video, *Enrique Martínez Celaya on place, poetry and painting the sea* (2019) encouraged me to paint an image directly from my mind because it captured Celaya paints without any photographic and objective references.



Eileen Hogan (2012) UL 238,FH172,FR59, Beehives at Little Sparta,oil and charcoal on paper  
Right panels - UL 238,FH172,FR59, Beehives at Little Sparta, oil and charcoal on paper

About the material, the quality of Eileen Hogan's work motivated me. I have been working on the canvas. However, when I painted the first painting in unit 4, I felt the edge of the canvas is unnecessary. The thickness of edges seemed to avoid the image getting into a part of the space naturally. The bright texture and deep colour of oil are great, but the strong presence of painting the canvas gives to work was not my intention. I was looking for the material which as durable as a canvas but thinner. Then I met the Eileen Hogan who works oil and wax on the paper. Her painting had my ideal quality. I learned some papermaker for oil paint and the methodology of prime from her talk. Then tested many types of primed paper and chose Saunders Waterford 300gsm HP Traditional White to the second painting.



Paper Text



2019, Unit4 practice 2 oil on paper



2019, Unit 4 practice 1. Oil on canvas

The concept 'ghost' is from the context of Arthur Koestler and Gilbert Ryle. Arthur Koestler expressed our life is "The ghost in the machine" in his book. Which means the consciousness or mind carried in a physical entity. (1975)

He mentioned our mind/ consciousness is a ghost possesses on the mechanical body depended on the concept of mind by a philosopher Gilbert Ryle. My idea was to show the living existence of the ghost throughout the painting. To catch up with the idea, the film Ghost in the Shell(1995) by Mamoru Oishi, the book The concept of mind(1949) by Gilbert Ryle, the concept offloaded agency by Takashi Ikegami (2017) inspired me.



Mamoru Oshii (1995), Ghost in the Shell

Ghost in the Shell is a sci-fi animation movie. The theme of the story stimulated my inquiry mind to the unseen. In the film, the human brain and the ghost/consciousness can be replaced to the android body. People succeeded to transfer our memory organ and spirit to the machine. However, a hacker who controls the machine's brain and consciousness appears. Then people living on the machine body starts thinking about what the mind is. There is no proof of their heart in the machine correctly transferred from the original because people know it is controllable by hacking. 'What is the mind?' is the critical question among the world in the film where people manipulate the mind as data.

In the middle of the movie, there is a conversation between human and android:

Human " No matter what you say, you've no proof that you're a life form."

AI "It is impossible to prove such a thing. Especially modern science cannot define what life is." (1995)

That script made me think of the definition of the mind. Generally, people may think only living existence has a mind/soul. However, why can we know there is a heart even though it is invisible? The question of 'what the mind is?' captured my interest.

To investigate the essence of the mind, I read *The Concept of Mind*(1949) by Gilbert Ryle. His idea which Arthur Koestler summarised as 'the ghost in the machine' made me better to understand the mystery of the mind.

"every human being has both a body and a mind. His body and his mind are ordinarily harnessed together."  
(1949, Ryle, pp13)

"Human bodies are in space and are subject to the mechanical laws which govern all other bodies in space."  
(1949, Ryle, pp13)

"Even when 'inner' and 'outer' are constructed as metaphors, the problem how a person's mind and body influence one another is notoriously charged with theoretical difficulties. What the mind wills, the legs, arms and the tongue execute: what affects the ear and the eye has something to do with what the mind perceives."  
(1949, Ryle, pp14)

"only through the medium of the public physical world can the mind of one person make a difference to the mind of another. The mind is its own place and in his inner life each of us lives the life of a ghostly Robinson Crusoe. People can see, hear and deaf to the workings of one another's mind and inoperative upon them."  
(1949, Ryle, pp15)

Ryle mentioned in the world; there are mechanical laws which govern all other bodies in space that time and space. What has physical experience is composed of matter, or else is a function of a matter. On the other hand, mental existence is not in mechanical laws limited by time and space. Life is the status which the ghost/mind in its own space and the body/machine physically in the space and time are harnessed together. Arthur Koestler described Ryle's definition of life as 'the ghost in the machine' (1967, Koestler). Additionally, Gilbert Ryle stated "a person is generally supposed to be able to exercise from time to time a special kind of perception, namely inner perception, or introspection. He can take a (non-optical) 'look' at what is passing in his mind." (1949, Ryle, pp16) My idea of unit 4 spread from that account: I thought the weird views and experiences that I have been struggling with could be stated as inner perception or introspection. That is the experience of the mind/ghost in a different world from the mechanic body limited by time and space. However, the experience as a ghost is quite messy and disorganised that many of images cross over and no order by time and space. The problem was how to paint such the unordered model.

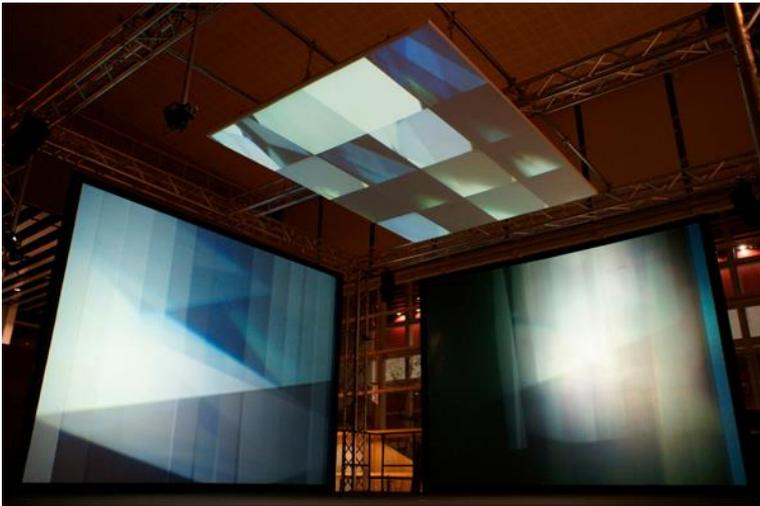
When I was thinking of that problem, the concept of offloaded agency suggested me a way. The offloaded agency is the concept that Japanese robot researcher Takashi Ikegami advocates. He and his collaborator Akira Ishiguro expressed mind as the offloaded agency that means the mind/spirit comes from outside the world.

That concept is for transferring the mind/consciousness to androids. They believe that, if our mind originated naturally occurred from an external factor, it would be possible that a machine has the mind(2017, Ikegami and Ishiguro).

Takashi Ikegami mentioned He has been pursuing the living presence in artificial life. For example, one of his works *Mind Time Machine*(2010, Ikegami) the machine stores a video record of the place and creates own consciousness bases on it. That seems like not a brain, but it reconstructs the function of the brain exactly(2017, Ikegami and Ishiguro). The shape is dissimilar to a human being, but there is a living presence. According to him, among the study between artificial and living life, he recognised the speciality of living existence is the messy mind. Our mind is a very messy accumulation of information from the world around us. The living presence is structured with chaos/randomness called the mind/ghost, which initially not being inside the body.

From the book of Takashi Ikegami and Akira Ishiguro *Between the Human and Machine* and the conversation with Ikegami through Facebook, I was impressed by two points. One is the definition of the mind which comes from outside the world. That definition supports 'the ghost in the machine' in terms of mind/ghost divergent from the physical world. The other one is the mind structured chaos. I understood the randomness is the matter of the ghost, and it is the accumulation of random information of the world/ memory. The mind/ghost= messy: That is what I impressed by their theory.

I was inspired by the work, *Mind Time Machine* (2017, Ikegami), which is created depending on the same concept. The visualisation of the brain function by the messy images from recorded memory prompted me to paint the disorganised chaos of the introspection. The work suggested that messy concept should be expressed as messy form.



Takashi Ikegami(2010) *The Mind Time Machine*

The work in unit 4 is the visualisation of a ghost throughout my inner perception. I painted the raw impression from the experience of the ghost and its chaos/randomness. The painting is the pure expression of the unseen/ghost.

On the other hand, I am keeping the effort to capture the unseen/ an exoplanet from the logical way with collaborating with Anastasia Kokori and Angelus Tsiaris. I am keeping touch with them and attempting to visualise the new exoplanet K2-18b from their research. In that practice, I put the place on the scientific legitimacy of the elements which construct the K2-18b like the colour, material, temperature, and the size. I am assuming to create a picture with my painting and the astronomer's writing to calculate that planet. The practice about K2-18b which based on the analytical scientific data, broaden my viewpoint and avoids being too concentrate on the inner perception. I believe the balance of illogical and logical perspective helps to keep a healthy distance from the unseen to depict it. I am looking at continuing those two types of practice that bases on the inner view and scientific data.



Tacita Dean *LANDSCAPE*, 2018

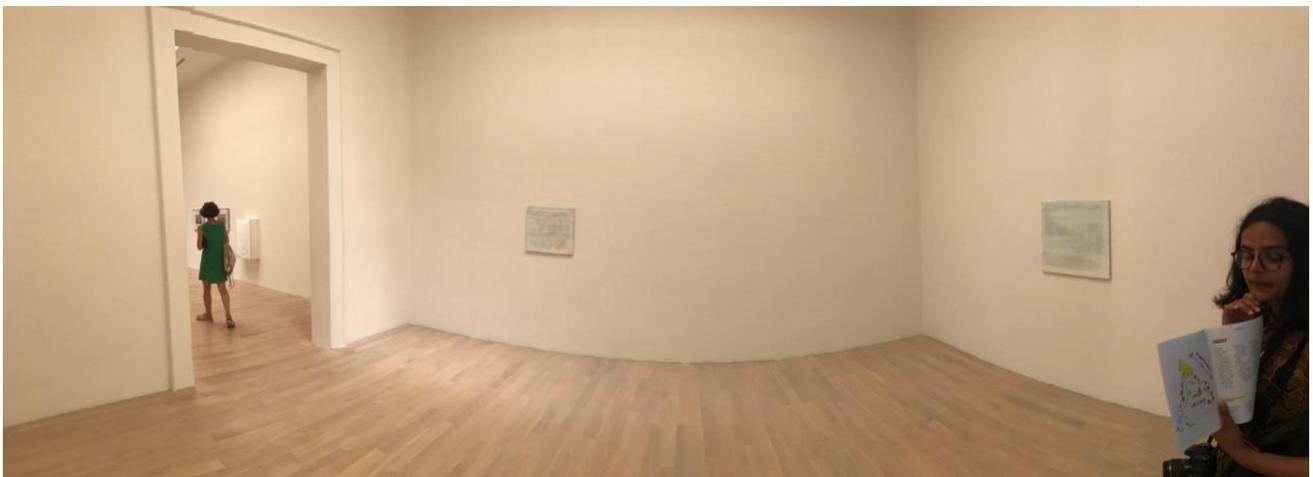
To curate the exhibit space, I am looking at the quality of Tacita Dean's exhibition at the Royal Academy(2018). I remember when I come into the gallery, there is a big iceberg painting in front, the temperature of the gallery was set more cooling than the other room. I felt the iceberg painting with my five senses. Then I thought I came into another world. I quite like the kind of exhibition space which separated from reality by physical and mental taste.



Wimbledon Undergraduate and MFA Fine Art Summer Show 2019

The matter is how to make the difference between the space outside and my exhibit space: I thought the giving people to something different physical experience is effective. I want to make space physically experienced like the temperature in Tacita Dean's show. Instead of cannot change the temperature in the group show, I chose to fill the floor with sand. The sand texture makes the difference to the sense of foot. I have been to the BA graduation show in 2019 and saw a student filling a room with sand. I felt that the moisture sand contains and the smell makes people blur the sense of indoor and outdoor. I am expecting the sand floor make people sense the strangeness to my space.

The subject of unit 4 is a ghost; Gilbert Ryle mentioned that the mind/ghost is not being the space in mechanical law. I hope my space will embody the otherworldly quality the ghost be there.



Venice Biennale, 2019

Additionally, I was inspired by the curation of the UK pavilion in Venice biennale 2019: There were just two small paintings by Cathy Wilkes in a room, and each picture was consciously hanging on more left and righter from the centre wall line to keep distance between the two paintings. That curation made me feel strange but more relaxed than paintings are in the centre of the wall. I want to challenge that curation.

Throughout all those efforts for externalizing the ghost. What is the ghost? This question has a significant meaning in society with low awareness of the definition of life. If an android having mind appeared, will we treat him as a being? When the ghost speaks to you, can you listen to the voice? The unseen appeals why we are being there. All my effort to the work is dedicated to the respect for the unseen. I hope my work will be a space to coexistence between the seen and unseen by externalizing the unseen.

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