

# The Korea Times

## Painted fragments of food packaging, classical art, internet icons visualize today's information overload

By Park Han-sol – January 8, 2023



At the center of the canvas lies a scene of an intimate encounter between two lovers suggestively captured in a Japanese illustrated hand scroll.

But instead of providing the full visual context of the dalliance, Chinese artist Ziping Wang has chosen to interrupt the scene with a barrage of vibrant yet entirely irrelevant images: a pixelated chicken drumstick, dispersed fragments of food packaging and a monochrome checkered pattern reminiscent of the empty bottom layer when images are manipulated in Photoshop.

Such a cornucopia brimming with icons extracted from classical art, convenience store shelves and internet forums is the 27-year-old's attempt to visualize the oversaturated nature of the modern tech-scape — or more simply put, information overload.

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“This is really relevant to my generation,” Wang told The Korea Times in a recent interview. “My generation was among the first born with the technology of the internet when it became accessible to everyone. And during my teenage years, there was the rise of social media with Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.”

The more she was online, the more she became overwhelmed with imagery and virtual identities that were constructed and modified to be attention-grabbing.

“I’m just really interested in this celebration of image overload on the internet. I’m not criticizing it; it’s more like I’m documenting it,” she added.

Nine of her maximalist oil paintings are currently adorning the walls of Peres Projects’ Seoul outpost as part of her solo exhibition, “The Loudest Silence.” While her works have been presented across London, Paris, Kyiv and Shenyang, this exhibition is the rising artist’s debut show in Korea.



Wang noted that she has selected the traditional medium of oil painting instead of new media to portray today’s digital phenomenon in order to highlight “that there is an actual person behind the work.”

“Of course I can easily produce a collage of 10 images a day using Photoshop, but in that way, I’m just creating more perfectly rendered images (that are in no way different from those that) other people upload to the internet,” she said.

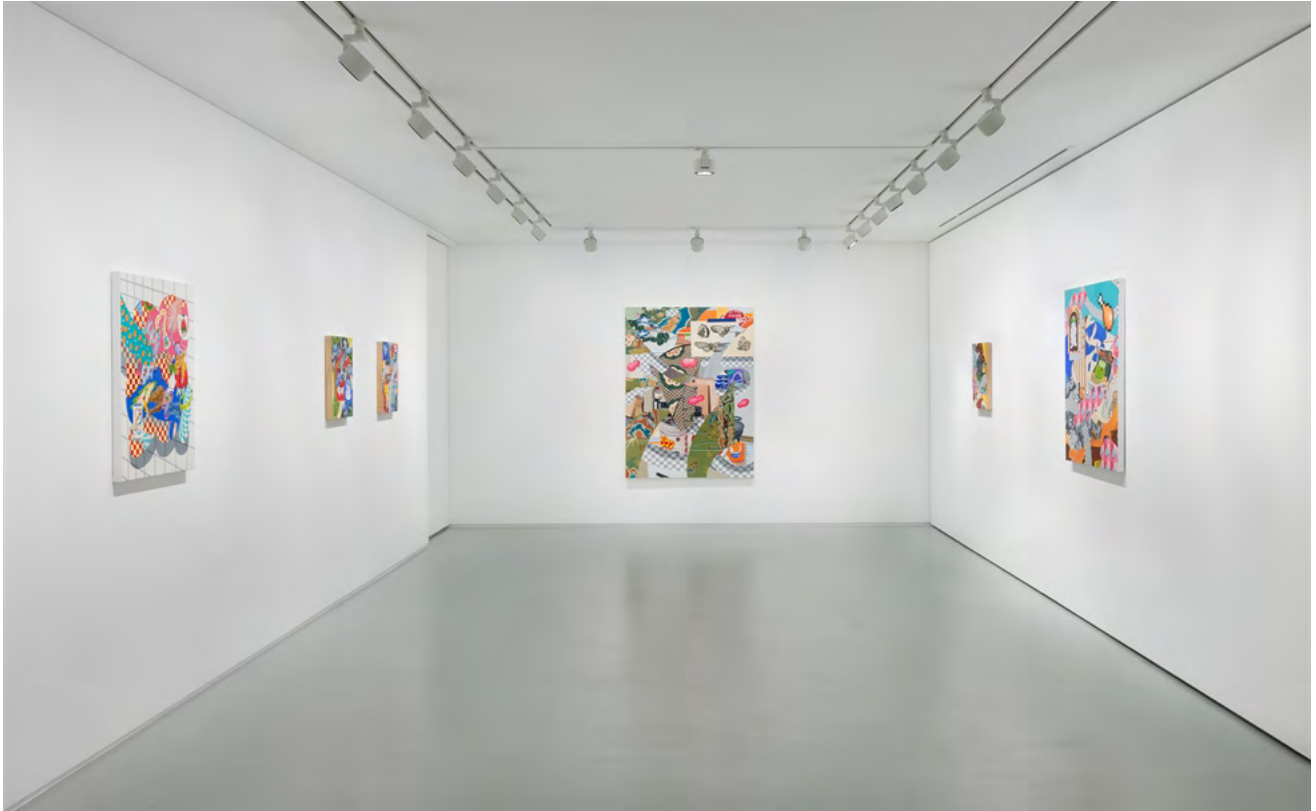
By leaving her hand-painted imperfections on canvas, she hopes to recall the early beginning of the internet that called attention to bringing users together rather than the current mechanical reproduction of information

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that seems to operate without human agency.

But Wang's primary goal does not lie in imparting a specific message or allowing for a single uniform interpretation of her works.

Just like how online slang and coded metaphors worldwide are often not directly tied to phrases or objects from reality — and therefore are deceptive — the artist similarly takes the images of quotidian items and recognizable cultural references out of context to produce a deliberately misleading panorama.



As a result, the same painting that immediately captivates the viewers with its eye-popping graphics and the illusion of a clear narrative has the power to disorient them just as much when they realize it is near impossible to decipher the meaning behind the chaotic placement of each icon.

In fact, what determines her placement of each fragment is first and foremost its visual appeal — colors, shapes and patterns — not the socio-political meaning behind it.

“You can almost see them as abstract paintings, just with (added) elements,” she said when characterizing her work.

“At first glance, you feel this image is loud; there’s so much going on. Every inch of the canvas is filled. But if you stare at it for enough time, it almost becomes like white noise,” she added, likening the viewing experience to standing at the center of Times Square, where all the surrounding neon-lit images and pedestrians eventually become a blur. “Amid that noise, inside your mind, you’re still silent.”

A wonderfully confounding yet contemplative experience, indeed.

“The Loudest Silence” runs through Feb. 10 at Peres Projects.