

M A R G A R E T
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P R O J E C T S

ARTS IN BUSHWICK

A Discussion with Cathy Choi

By Audrey Tran
June 28, 2011



#G1001, Untitled, glue, oil, resin
on woodbox, 25 x 9 x 3 inches

Cathy Choi is a sculptural painter based in Bushwick and she recently participated in BOS '11. For this post, I've posed a few questions about Choi's practice and views of our community in contrast to the other art communities she's experienced abroad.

Audrey Tran (AIB): Tell me about any current projects you have going on. (This can be anything, shows, collaborations, projects in your studio, or even just any of the latest fascinations you might have with materials, learning process, etc).

Cathy Choi: I'm continuing my series of "Liquid" paintings and would like to do larger scale works. I'm very excited to see where it will lead me. I'd also like to explore a kinesthetic sound/sculpture installation based on a person's body frequency in reaction to color and light and sound. The idea came from one of my glue paintings. It leans more toward a conceptual approach that is more metaphysical. I'm in the process of researching materials and how to do it technically. Since these ideas are in its infancy, I need to let it sit in my brain and let it mature a bit.

AIB: What attracted you to Bushwick NY?

Choi: To be honest, I had no idea that the studio I found in Bushwick is in the midst of a burgeoning art scene. I came here from a very practical necessity of finding an affordable studio. Synchronicity is wonderful.

AIB: I noticed that you studied Art both here in the U.S and abroad, and you also were born in Korea. What kind of differences did you notice in the different educational systems?

Choi: Having this mix of cultural backgrounds has been confusing growing up yet a great asset as I've gotten older. I've always thought my influences came primarily from a western perspective in art. It hasn't been until recently I'm realizing how much influence my Eastern heritage has affected my inclinations and proclivities with my creative process and so much of who I am and why I'm drawn to certain things.

When I was doing my graduate studies in Italy, the biggest difference I noticed was the Italian system stressed apprenticeship, learning from a "master" first. And a subtle difference was their approach to critiquing the student's work.

Italy and Switzerland surprised me the most because no matter who on the street you spoke to, no matter the person's educational background, they seemed to revere you because you're an "artist" – in ways not so prevalent in the American milieu.

AIB: Have you participated in Bushwick Open Studios before? If so, are there any good moments you'd like to share?

Choi: This is the first BOS I've participated in. It's really been a positive experience because BOS provided a venue to meet other artists that are practically your neighbors but somehow paths never crossed – even though you may share the same street address to your studio. The BOS really facilitated a “meeting of minds” and created a way to connect by opening your door.

The other aspect of BOS I appreciate is that it by-passes some of the “gates” you have to navigate through to have your work shown. This event empowers the artist to dictate how and what you show and helps to connect with artists, collectors, and the public in an independent way.

AIB: Can you share a past memory involving water? This sounds like a really interesting fascination. Or perhaps you there are other pieces of art/or music/ or films involving water that have influenced your work?

Choi: There is work by Masaru Emoto that shows human consciousness has an effect on the molecular structure of water. It's quite astounding how complex this element is. There is also a documentary video I've seen recently, done by Voice Entertainment that explains how water retains memory.

There is an artist who made me think about color in a different way. Even though Wolfgang Laib's work is not related to water, his sensitivity to material is brilliant. Using collected pollen, he sifts them as a square onto the floor. It is the most intense yellow I've ever seen. It's left an indelible impression.

But ultimately for me, it's simply the visual sensation of seeing flowing water that I get excited about. I can watch water flowing over rocks for hours. It's those memories from direct experience that I directly tap into and helps to motivate me to create work.



#B1101, Untitled, oil, glue, resin on canvas, 36 x 36 inches