

Exhibition offers contemporary art at a glance

2010-12-23 17:43

If you want to see the whole range of contemporary art instead of individual aspects, the exhibition "World Stars in Contemporary Art" at Hangaram Art Museum in Seoul Arts Center in Seocho-dong, southern Seoul, is a good choice.

While high profile exhibitions usually focus on a single artist or group, the exhibition showcases 200 artworks by 185 world-renowned artists — from pop art creator Andy Warhol to leading figure of the younger art generation Damien Hirst — offering a summing up of contemporary art at a glance.

The traveling show is organized by Parkett, an acclaimed Zurich-based art magazine published in English and German three times a year. Bice Curiger, director of the Visual Arts Sector of the 54th Venice Biennale which will be held next year, is Parkett's editor-in-chief and co-founder.

The magazine has maintained a unique way of working with artists since 1984. When the main artist to be featured for an edition is selected, the magazine holds discussions with the artist to select images from their existing works, find a writer who can best write about the artist and have the artist create a work exclusively for Parkett.

"We are not writing about the artist, but with them," Dieter von Graffenried, publisher of Parkett, told the press.

After the first show held at Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris in 1987, the magazine has continuously held exhibitions around the world showcasing "Parkett Edition masterpieces," a collection which is updated every month and year.



"Untitled" by Anish Kapoor. (Seoul Arts Center)

The list of participating artists at the Seoul show is doubtlessly star-studded, packed with big names that even those with the least bit of interest in contemporary art would recognize.

To be more specific, the list includes 15 Venice Biennale Golden Lion winners including Sigmar Polke, Louise Bourgeois, Bruce Nauman and Gerhard Richter, 10 Turner prize winners including Malcom Morley and Rachel Whiteread and artists who are hot at the moment for different reasons such as Ai Weiwei, director of the 2011 Gwangju Design Biennale.

The show is divided into five sections — Studio, Playroom, Garden, Wardrobe and City.

The first section focuses on the place where the artists spend most of their time, get inspiration and are frank about themselves.

A replication of aligned images of skulls by Andy Warhol, titled “Photo Edition for Parkett” is found in the first section. Warhol, who used to call his studio “Factory,” had produced the work in his studio only a couple weeks before his death.



© Parkett Publishers and the artist

“Photo Edition for Parkett” by Andy Warhol. (Seoul Arts Center)

The second, third and fourth sections are full of colorful, whimsical and uncontrollable works that do not always contain cheerful messages. Cindy Sherman's printing on silk of an anonymous person screaming, the face distorted with pain, and Jeff Koon's “Inflatable Balloon Flower (Yellow)” are standout pieces.

The final section is a bit darker, featuring dull scenes and immobile city elements like Thomas Struth's photos of Shanghai.

The sizes of the exhibits are smaller than the artists' usual works but are not any lower in quality and in fact are more covetable because of their convenient size. Parkett and the artists deliberately made small-sized works so that more people could enjoy them up close.

The exhibition runs through Feb. 25 at Hangaram Art Museum in Seoul Arts Center in Seocho-dong, southern Seoul. Tickets range from 4,000 won to 8,000 won. For more information, call (02) 580-1300 or visit www.sacticket.co.kr.

By Park Min-young (claire@heraldm.com)