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Integrative Seminar 1: Memory

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Freedom from black

Na Yon Kim, who is a Korean born in 1996, is my client for this project. For bridge 2, it was important to truly know each other since it was a collaborative peer-to-peer project that had to come up with a specific design for my client. I've once met Na Yon in the New School meeting at Lotte Hotel in South Korea, but the information that I was able to know was only her name and her major, fashion design. At that time I did not have a chance to actually have a conversation with her. When I first saw the list and realized that she was my partner, I thought it would be easier to communicate because there would be no language barrier since we speak the same language, Korean. When we became partners, I was able to know more about her such as the information that she worked as a stylist in South Korea.

Both in real life and for this class, communication between the designer and the client is truly important. This is because it is important to understand and catch what the client expects and to further balance it. The way how we communicated was by talking in free time, texting through Korea's free message application Kakao Talk, and asking questions during the interview. She does not have Facebook, therefore I could not research about her online. For me, the time when we had to interview each other during Seminar class was helpful because I was able to ask several questions that I really wanted to hear from Na Yon, which was hard to ask through text or during free time because she seems reluctant to talk about homework in her leisure time.

The day when we went to Moma, my partner told me about the artist that she likes and the painting that she likes, which made me more complicated because the artists that she mentioned had a totally different styles and media. She said she likes Nan Goldin's photographs and Jackson Pollack's "Autumn Rhythm" appeals to her. Nan Goldin's photographs in the Ballad of Sexual Dependency felt personal, sexual, yet bold. Jackson Pollack's painting was abstract and dynamic, which made me feel like I am dancing with the paints in the painting together. Nan Goldin and Jackson Pollack have two distinct style of art that seems hard to relate, but what I noticed about Na Yon through her preference in art is that she likes abstract and expressive art.

I felt stuck for several days because the answers that she gave to me were abstract and it was hard to relate the ideas; for me, her answers felt like yin and yang, two ideas that are opposite to each other. However, I was able to build up my ideas after interviewing her. I got inspiration from three particular questions: her inspiration, defining herself in three words, and her favorite fashion style. Na Yon answered she does not visit or seek particular thing or place to get inspired; she said she gets inspired naturally from everything and every time by interacting with people. For defining herself into three words, she gave me two words, which are black and natural. She elaborated by explaining why she chose those two words. She said she chose black because of her mood during these days due to the weather and overwhelming school work and she chose natural is because she likes minimal, no constrains, and freedom. Lastly, her answer to her favorite fashion was grunge style,an alternative rock musical style started in the early 1990s featuring heavy electric guitar and dragging lyrics, because it feels like a freedom in the gray and lifeless city. During the interview, I've constantly attempted to find connection of her interest in

fashion and practicality so that I could create a design. Suddenly in my head, the vague answers that she gave me during the conversation and during the interview felt like a universe that I could explore: the abstract answer that she gave to me could actually be my main idea as two opposite ideas of yin and yang becomes one.

At first, I was thinking of producing a painting that is mixed with collage since she loved Goldin and Pollack. However, I thought it would be interesting to combine her interest. My partner seems to enjoy and desires to express her feeling, thoughts, and even herself through art and fashion. Therefore, I thought, my design for Na Yon would be effective if I can combine painting and textile together since she is a fashion major. Thus, I came up with a plan to purchase a normal shirt, preferably white, that is just ordinary and then paint black acrylics and vibrant color on it with dynamic movements that means the break away from daily routine.

I went to Forever 21 to purchase a plain sleeveless shirt and used acrylics that I've already purchased before. While I was looking for white shirt, I have paid an attention to the quality of the material because there were some clothes that did not seem suitable to apply acrylics on; some clothes almost look like ramie fabric, which is hard to paint. Even though I bought the sleeveless shirt, it was truly hard to paint on the cloth since the cloth absorbed water quickly that made me hard to draw because the brush dries in every 10 seconds. My solution for this was to control the water amount, I've add more water, which allowed me to go back and forth between acrylics and water color paint even I was just using acrylics.

Na Yon did not come on Tuesday's class because she had a stomachache, but when I show her a picture of my final product, she seem to be satisfied. My final piece was a white sleeveless shirt that has a black and yellow dynamic wave-like painting. A wave-looking painting

is a representation of Na Yon's hope to be free from mundane life. Through this project, I realized how difficult is to understand what the client exactly wants at first. However, I was able to learn how to catch the indirect messages by observing and exploring more about my partner. Moreover, it was also first time to paint on a cloth, which was demanding, but allowed be to experiment with different media. I personally found this project interesting because it brought communication and art simultaneously, which I think this will allow my classmates and I one step further to become a well-balanced artist.