

# Shelter

## Hyegyong Choi

### *On the Plus Side*

March 2 – April 3, 2021

Shelter proudly presents Hyegyong Choi's debut solo show with the gallery, *On the Plus Side*. Choi's canvases divulge insecurities towards both personal and cultural issues related to societal conceptions of body image, gluttony, sexuality, gender confusion, and identity.

The body in Choi's paintings becomes a means for self-torture; decapitated heads, castration, and floating limbs exist alongside figures that are fatty, meaty, and almost edible, heightened by an application of paint that plays with depth and texture. In doing so, Choi's bodies speak to desire and exist in a space between reality and ideality. The monstrosity of the character in paintings such as *Harvesting at Yongsan City Hall* not only becomes a metaphor for the artist's own expression of and relation to body image, but also asks viewers to perceive and unmask the absurdity of daily life.

Compositionally, Choi uses competing marks, strokes, and images that transform her personal anxieties and embarrassments into fantasies of the indulgent, excessive, and perverse. The artist uses emotion in the context of her paintings as a way to ignite what she refers to as an "irreverent and cannibalistic practice;" for example, anger may be present in vibrant colors, a form of primal scream that incites the need to create. Complementary colors and a play with foreground and background create a disharmonic feel, yet the saturation of color pulls the viewer in, challenging them to look away. By twisting her personal pain into a comedic illusion of the celebratory, Choi puts herself, and all her insecurities, at risk for ridicule in her desire to preserve a perspective that embodies both humor and tragedy.

HyeGyeong Choi (b. 1986, Seoul) is a painter who works to address social and cultural issues that she faces as a woman. As a Korean woman, she has been subject to commentary or criticism based on the high standards of ideal beauty in her country that define womanhood in a specific way. Similarly, taboos revolving sexuality deeply embedded in Korean society inevitably shape how women are treated and objectified, resulting in a high level of sexual crimes in Korea. Her work addresses these points of social friction head on, dealing with body image, identity, gender and sexuality. For this reason, her work in Korea has been censored, as most of her paintings were blurred out when she was featured on the reality TV show, *Art Star Korea*.

Choi currently lives and works in New York. She holds a BFA from Chung Ang University in Korea and an MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work has been included in exhibitions at Zolla/Liberman Gallery, Chicago, Seoul Auction in South Korea, The Stolbun Collection in NYC, Slow Gallery in Chicago, Adah Rose Gallery in Washington D.C, Sine Project in Brooklyn and many others. Her work has been featured and written by Washington Post, Artsy, Hyperallergic, Art News City, Chicago Tribune, Sixty Inches From Art Center, Gay Letter, ADF Web Magazine, and Hankyung News, etc as well as published in the book "Art Reader(Samul Pandokki)" in Korea.

*The gallery would like to extend a special thank you to Lauren Powell Art for their assistance organizing this exhibition.*

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