Soo Kim: 2006-07 Faculty Development Grant Report

Report:

In 2006-07 I received a Faculty Development Grant to support the development of a body of work that alters and slows the reading of the photographic image, to move away from simply what is depicted, and toward a reading of an image that is changed by the removal of some of the image's parts.

The process of making this body of work included photographing images as well as making a video. Both elements were informed by ideas of absence, removal, silence, and the delivery of meaning. I was interested in making a parallel between stage directions in plays and the physical removal of parts of the photographic image from the single photographic image – using these voids and absences to slow down the photograph as well as give meaning to silences and empty spaces.

This project allowed me to use my practice of cutting into photographs in a different way. Rather than using this subtractive method to add narrative elements to my photographs, with this project I excised parts of the photograph and brought a different dimensionality to the imagery depicted. Instead of cutting shapes and figures that were identifiable, the cuts took on a more geometric form that had to do with the imagery recorded in the photograph. I made a work that considered the materiality of the photographic medium differently than the way I had addressed these ideas in previous bodies of work.
Some of the challenges I experienced came with making and using imagery that was dense with information and to work out how to make an image that was simultaneously dizzying yet legible – how to make an image of a landscape that was disorienting and communicated a feeling of living in a world that was in constant flux and political and social unease. This resulted in making work at
different scales to attempt to balance the dislocating qualities with the stabilizing qualities. In the end, the works were made at a print size of approximately 50” x 55”, which is a larger scale than I typically work in, but here conducive to the legibility of the image.

I was invited to speak as part of the Visiting Artist Lecture Programs at Art Center College of Design and California State University, Long Beach, where I discussed this project.

I appreciated the support afforded by this grant and hope that the Faculty Development program at Otis might expand to include larger grants in support of even more ambitious projects.

--Soo Kim (/faculty/soo-kim)
Fine Arts