

The Sustainable Coexistence between Human and Nature

Semi-finalist

Eunna Oh
Arts and Design
Master's program
Image location: University of Alberta, painting
studio



Image Description

My practice based research challenges the dichotomous ontology that traditionally separates humans from nature, seeking pathways towards sustainable coexistence. The forest in the image emerges as an imaginary realm where the dream of harmonious living between humans and nature takes shape. It stands as a conduit and a wellspring of imagination, directing the course of my inquiry. As a Korean-Canadian, I regard the forest as a sanctum of healing, rejuvenating the body and spirit of humans and all other living entities. I hold the belief that every component of the forest, animate or inanimate, harbors a soul. This Image, infused with this consciousness, features a black-and-white forest background and juxtaposed a vibrantly colored space of human habitation. These dwellings, intentionally represented as smaller than the forest's ferns and moss, symbolize the notion that human existence is merely one aspect of the extensive natural ecosystem. This suggests that the journey toward coexistence with nature begins with the recognition of our own role as an integral part of the life-sustaining web, rather than as its dominators.

Image Creation

The process of creating this forest landscape image is a tangible manifestation of my research themes. I try to mirror the value of coexistence I seek between humanity and nature, through striking balance between the digital printed image, acrylic painting, and fiber art. The first step in completing this image was photography. This original photograph was captured in the forest of Deep Cove, in Vancouver, by myself. Visiting the forest and the process of interacting with the forest, provides foundational inspiration for my research and image creation, is a crucial process, and grounding my image in personal experience. The ferns, moss, wildflowers, and traces of humans expressed with acrylic paint and various natural materials on the photographic image reflect the vibrant coexistence of humans and nature. Particularly, natural materials gathered from nature such as sand, sawdust, dried tea leaves, and dried moss add intimacy and the energy of nature to the ecosystem within the image. This entire process is not just an aesthetic choice but also a philosophical one, reflecting my research goal to move away from the dichotomous perspective that seeks to separate humans from nature.