

또 다른 시작, 손氏를 스케치하다.

며칠 전엔 아랫집에 사는 농부 손씨를 작업실에 모시고 와서 누드 모델을 세웠다. 그리기로 마음먹고 난 후, 꽤 긴 기간 동안 공력을 드려 성사된 일이었다. 처음 부탁을 드렸을 땐 씨알도 먹혀들 것 같지 않았으나 수 차례의 설득 끝에 결국은 두 손을 들고 만 것이다. 마치 못해서 승낙을 하면서 첫마디가 “몸 상하는 일은 아니지요?” 였다. “아니, 옷 벗고 가만히 앉아있으면 되는데 몸 상할 일이 어디 있어요!”라며 안심을 시키곤 맘 내킬 때 작업실과 주기를 기다렸는데 며칠 전 가을비가 지척 이는 날 아침 더디어 작업실 문을 두드리는 것이었다. 시골에서 비 오는 날은 별로 할 일이 없으니 작정을 하고 오신 것이다. 작업실로 들어와선 낯선 분위기에 옷 벗기가 어색했는지 엉거주춤 선채 잠시 머뭇거렸다. 이럴 땐 마음이 안정될 때까지 기다려 주는 것이 상책인 것이다. 모델 설 자리를 정해주곤 작업할 준비를 하며 느긋이 기다리는 수 밖에...

결국 마음정리를 한 듯 ‘베드 카우치’에 앉더니 옷을 벗기 시작 했다. 옷옷을 벗는 순간 옷속에서 드러난 어깨와 등판은 견고하고 당당하였다. 관찰자로서의 눈에 비친 칠순 농부의 육체는 가혹하고 변덕 많은 대지의 담금질에 생애를 바쳐 맞선 전사로서의 숭고함과 연륜의 권위가 어우러져 아름다웠다.

오랜 세월, 개간과 수확을 위한 밤낮없는 노동으로 단백질이 빠져나간 근육과 주름과 굵은 관절들이 마치 술한 격랑을 겪으며 노년기에 접어든 자연의 장엄함을 보는 듯 했다. 한 순간 숙연함을 동반한 침묵이 흘러갔다. 나의 진정성이 전달된 듯 손 씨도 내가 원하는 몇 가지의 포즈를 불평 없이 순순히 서 주었다.

Another Beginning, the Sketch of Mr. Sohn

A few days ago, I led Mr. Sohn, a farmer that lives next door, to my studio to pose as a nude model. It was quite a while ago that I decided to paint him, and it took some time of hard effort to actually put it into practice. When I first asked him, he seemed to think that I was out of my mind. But he finally gave in to my repeated persuasion. After he reluctantly accepted, his first question was “Will my body get hurt?” I reassured him by saying “Don’t worry. All you need to do is sit still with your clothes off. How could you get hurt?”. I asked him to come to my studio when he felt like it, and waited. And finally, a few days ago, on a rainy autumn morning, he came to knock on the door. Since, in the countryside, there isn’t much work to do on a rainy day, he seemed to have made up his mind to come. Once he came in the studio, he seemed to feel awkward to take off his clothes in an unfamiliar space and hesitated. The best way to help is to wait for the model to feel comfortable. So the only thing I could do was to tell the model where to pose as I got ready to paint, and wait...

At last, as if he made up his mind, he sat on the “bed couch” and started to take off his clothes. His shoulder and back that was shown as he took off his clothes were solid and strong. In the eyes of the observer, the body of the farmer was beautiful, with the dignity of a warrior that has faced the harsh, capricious tempering of the earth his entire life and the authority from his years of experience.

The muscles and wrinkles with no more protein left, and the thickened joints from the long labor of cultivating and harvesting day and night were like the grandeur of nature that neared its senescence after the sway of raging waves. For a moment, there was a sublime silence. Mr. Sohn, as if he felt my sincerity, earnestly took some poses that I asked without any complaint.