

Attached to My Adhesion

Eugenie Lee

I have always found pain difficult to express in words. *Attached to My Adhesion* is an attempt to convey my own psychological experiences of the pain-related fear of endometriosis and Adenomyosis through visual metaphor.

This small-scale self-portrait painting, as with all of my other paintings, starts in a miniature diorama at my studio. I create my own private world in a small room setup, and it represents my internal body as well as the perception of my own being. Standing in the room on my own is a metaphor for the private and lonely nature of pain - no one feels the same pain, nor can it be shared.

The white Korean dress I'm wearing can be interpreted either as a traditional Korean petticoat or funeral dress. I often interchange between them in my paintings as they are not only similar in colour and cut, they also stand for a state of vulnerability. A woman in her petticoat in public is considered absolutely taboo in Korea, as the utmost private moment is exposed. A funeral dress is a symbolic representation of mourning for loss – for my independence, dignity, vitality, and even self-worth. In this painting, I am wearing only the bottom half of the dress to portray the feeling of incompleteness as a person, a woman, a mother and a friend. I turn my back to conceal from the viewer that I have my hands around my throat, overwhelmed by the extreme pain and helplessness.

The large bonsai tree standing next to me relies on an outside source, the water, to maintain its vitality. But there are so many questions; what if the water stops flowing, what if this water isn't water at all, or is something toxic, what will happen to the tree? This relationship between the tree and the water represents the cycle of corrosive and fearful thoughts that feed my pain.

From outside of the window a visceral substance creeps in and attaches itself to the objects in the room, my private world. This is how I imagine the inflammation and adhesions inside of me. Whether it is behaving systematically or arbitrarily, it's hard to say. On the other hand, the dragon seems to thrive on this red substance, as if it is encouraging its presence in the room.

Every element inside this room, whether it's beneficial or detrimental, clearly seems at home in this environment, and some, like the tree and the dragon, are even flourishing. Although it is difficult for me to acknowledge, indeed each element in this painting portrays a part of me.