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The Darkness is Passing

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Grace Heeeun Park

Light is often taken for granted, but only through light are my five senses enlightened; in light, I see and feel the world. Space is dark and empty when stood alone, yet it offers meaning to its surroundings. Emergence of light into darkness creates a platform for my sensations and perceptions that have a personal significance to me as an artist. My artwork is about transferring the enlightenment of light onto the canvas.

My life was once filled with darkness, as an empty space without any light. Frustration and depression came upon me after immigration to the United States. I did not allow any expression of these emotions, disguising and making them go unnoticed, but I was deep in darkness; alone and with nothing to hold onto. Years passed before I found a sliver of light in my expansive dark space, and gradually, the warmth and comfort of light spread. Light revealed opportunities and opened my eyes to endless possibilities. Light did not all of a sudden make me fluent in English, but it helped me find a visual language that everyone in the world can understand and appreciate- painting- and a moment to breathe and candidly express myself without boundaries. Light revived my artistic emotions that had been dormant, deeply buried and forgotten as a childhood fantasy. Light gave me the strength and dared me to pursue my dreams.

I freely express my artistic self through painting of light, becoming alive, honest, and serious. Painting challenges me with its own hardships and questions. My work begins with plans and excitement, but soon it is followed by frustration and struggle. Now I know to overcome and enjoy the darkness: no longer to suppress it but instead, to express it with freedom, confidence, and comfort. For me, painting is finding myself in the world. I have learned to perceive light as more effective when it coexists with darkness, so I

continue painting the exciting relationship between them filling with their interdependent complexity.

When light touches darkness, its angle and volume form distinct scenes. My paintings convey the mystic atmospheres and impressions uniquely created by light in diverse settings, their layering effects embodied in multiple strokes of paint. Previous applications of paints are still revealed through the vague space created by the layers while blending with the later applications. I create this blurring of layers to communicate the power of penetrating light. I am drawn by a sense of mystery and an openness to interpretation that the blurriness and translucent provide. Canvas provides a playground on which I fully express my artistic vigor with a sense of control. Purposely leaving certain parts of a canvas blank, I mark my own space with black oil paint. Rough and strong black impasto is a source of confidence. It makes communication possible.

My paintings involve conscious efforts to conserve the initial impressions of an object with layers and impasto. I am fascinated by the richness of color. What excites me is the seemingly infinite effects with the layers of color. This is indeterminacy and uncertainly propels me toward greater mysteries, which gives me, ironically, a sense of freedom and joy—along with struggle and frustration.