A Suggested Improvement upon the Traditional Easel Used in the Medium of Western Painting

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- SUMMARY -

One might say that the working environment when we express and create something will consequentially have not a little influence on the work itself. Whereas analysis of the western artist and his or her work has advanced in Japan, comparatively, research on the materials and tools and the production environment that materially support the work of art tend to be disregarded, and the study of western art remains shallow in this respect.

This thesis attempts to focus on the easel in its relation to the production environment and to suggest various considerations for its improvement. There are a lot of light, portable easels of the folding type that seem to be widespread now because the structure is not complex. Moreover, they are excellent in storage because they don't take up space when folding. Therefore, they are often used in art education at schools that have large numbers of students. I will focus on this folding type as the main research object in this thesis for such a reason. The basic structure has hardly changed throughout history. In other words, it might be said that it is a shape that in a sense is complete in itself. However, there are some weak points that seem to be ameliorable in these ready-made easels. I would like to design and make a more comfortable easel based on verification of the easel's structure, because I think that not only will the comfort of the production environment be increased, but also the quality of the work produced will be enhanced.

I try not to conform to the stereotype in the design and production, and attempt to improve on all the doubtful points. To give some examples: Most folding-type easels often have the bridge at a distance of about 30-40 centimeters from the floor or ground. However, I designed the height from the bridge to the floor to be 50 centimeters. By this design, the problem of weakening posture by putting one's foot on the bridge was solved. Moreover, the space between one's feet was made ideal by designing it to the height of which the bridge came on the knee, and the distance of the aspect and the easel can be freely set by being able to place the leg in a favorite position. A small work can be placed with stability by putting plywood on the central part. The strength of the entire easel will be increased considerably by using this plywood, an advantage though the main part was made from the frame by narrowing it in consideration of lightening. The thickness of the receiving stand is constructed to the minimum requirement necessary to prevent obstruction of the lower part of the artwork placed upon the easel. The wedge was bonded to the receiving stand and integrated. As a result, the work of inserting the receiving stand into the main body can be done in one step.

I seem to have achieved another result from these improvements. It is comfortable in that there is actually no obstacle under the knee. Moreover, it isn't limited to a small work; a psychological stability is obtained as there is a plywood part, and strength is increased structurally. The main part was painted orange this time. To correspond widely to various styles and preferences, the option of more color variations to fit surroundings might be considered.

Needless to say, I am not saying this is the only ideal type of easel that should be produced at this time. The working style and preference of individuals vary; for instance, the hole in the palette is not a necessity for the person who is always putting it on a table by one's side. However, if this attempt

at improvement and its verification become a help in some measure in groping for a more comfortable working environment, the attempt might be considered a success.