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| Fauvism in Korea |
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| Korean Fauvism emerged from within a larger avant-garde art movement of the 1930s and 40s. During this period a few Korean artists, such as Ku Bon-ung, Kim Chong-tai, and Lee Jung-seop, began producing works that reflected the influence of Fauvism after they were exposed to the style while studying modern Western oil painting in Japan. Their Expressionist-style works were marked by a strong subjectivity in the depiction of forms, and a use of colour that eschewed balance to explosively convey emotion. |
| Korean Fauvism emerged from within a larger avant-garde art movement of the 1930s and 40s. At that time, most Korean artists were producing works in the style of Academic Realism, as represented and supported by the Joseon Art Exhibition. However, during this period a few Korean artists, such as Ku Bon-ung, Kim Chong-tai, and Lee Jung-seop, began producing works that reflected the influence of Fauvism after they were exposed to the style while studying modern Western oil painting in Japan. These artists bypassed major government art exhibitions, such as the Official Japanese Salon (Bunten) or the Joseon Art Exhibition in Korea, in favour of exhibitions presenting works by independent artist groups, such as the White Savages Group, the Mok-il Group, and the Association of Free Artists. Their Expressionist-style works were marked by a strong subjectivity in the depiction of forms, and a use of colour that eschewed balance to explosively convey emotion. Despite these bold characteristics, Korean Fauvism did not endure long enough to become a substantial art movement with a distinct legacy.  Ku Bon-ung (1906-1953) produced avant-garde artworks as a member of the White Savages Group (1930) and the Mok-il Group (1934). Ku was exposed to Fauvism while studying art and aesthetics in Japan, first at Nihon University (1929) and then at the Taiheiyo Art School (1934). His work *Woman* (1930s), which uses thick brushstrokes and intense colours to present a distorted depiction of a woman, is known as the archetypal work of the Korean Fauvists. This work reflects the influence of Japanese Fauvist artist Satomi Katsuzo, as well as Maurice de Vlaminck. While studying in Japan, Ku participated in the Nika Exhibition (Nikaten), along with other artists who renounced the government exhibitions.  Korean Fauvist Kim Chong-tai (1906-1935), worked exclusively in Korea. Kim often used light colours and a very basic background to highlight the people in his paintings, almost like an ink-and-wash painting. He learned and experimented with various new aesthetic styles, including Fauvism, Expressionism, and Cubism, as can be seen in his work *Yellow Top* (1929*)*.  Lee Jung-seop (1916-1956) became known for his bold, rough, linear expressions. He went to Japan in 1935, studying first at the Imperial Art Academy (Teikoku Bijutsu Gakko) and then in the Art Department at Bunka Gakuen University. In 1938, while in Japan, he became a member of the Association of Free Artists, an avant-garde art group. One of Lee’s trademark motifs was a simple rendering of an ox with thick outlines. The bold colours, powerful brushstrokes, and wailing facial expressions capture the solitude and despair of an individual, but also the suffering of the Korean people.  Korean Fauvists did not simply copy European Fauvism. Rather than utilising Fauvist expressions to convey primitive sensation, they sought to expose the intensity of the inner self. In particular, the works of Ku Bon-ung and Lee Jung-seop used intense colours and unrestrained linear expressions to convey psychological aspects, in much the same way as Asian calligraphy. |
| Further reading:  (Kim)  (Y.-n. Kim)  (Youn) |