

## Cultural Spheres

### Sawayama Ryo

Ikezaki Takuya's solo exhibition of new works has the theme of "recipes," according to which individual works were fabricated for the show. The circumstances of this process require some explanation. Ikezaki's recipes are fictitious ones containing "ingredients" such as power and love, and it is not as if one could really cook anything by following the recipes. For this exhibition Ikezaki asked others, including artists in China and Taiwan as well as his own mother, to create objects based on his recipes, which he would exhibit at the gallery. Ikezaki imposed on himself the principle that despite it being his own solo exhibition, he would not make anything, and adhered to the role of devising recipes.

When I heard that the theme of this exhibition was recipes, or cooking, I was reminded of the elemental quality underlying Ikezaki's work. I have sensed the presence of elements like fire, water, and air in Ikezaki's work in the past. Speaking of cooking, essayist Tamamura Toyoo writes in *Ryori no shimentai* (The Tetrahedron of Cooking) that it is composed of four elements: fire, air, water, and oil. According to Tamamura, all cooking can be mapped onto the "tetrahedron" formed by these four primary elements, and every dish can be placed somewhere within this mapping along the three basic axes of grilling/baking, boiling/simmering, and frying/saut e. As for recipes, they are non-authorial (generally recipes are not copyrighted), and originally intended to be provided to or shared with others. Speaking from my own experience, recipes are not necessarily followed to the letter to "replicate" dishes, and if the cook knows a bit about the basic principles of cooking, tend to be subject to omissions, modifications, and new applications. Ikezaki's work exhibits the same tendencies. In the "works of art" made by multiple others based on Ikezaki's recipes, we see the generation of a wide variety of interpretations, approaches, and algorithms, and they are not precise replications or imitations of his recipes in any sense whatsoever.

Of course, these "works" were made to be exhibited at Ikezaki Takuya's solo show, and ultimately one cannot help feeling some unease at the impossibility of the artist himself claiming authorship. However, they barely manage to steer clear of the appropriation (or exploitation) that runs rampant in the contemporary art world, in that all of the pieces were made by people with whom Ikezaki has close personal relationships. In the above-described context of this show, the "works" brought together at the venue slip into an ambiguous zone, neither collaborative nor readymade, fabricated to order, or embodying some relationship. Once again we are reminded of the underlying structure of cooking. Cooking is made up of a combination of four major elements, a potentially limitless number of ingredients, and human hands, and there is nothing we can call its center or essence. Cooking, or cuisine, is nothing but a form of "culture" that expands across the ambiguous zone that all these elements generate. In the same way, in light of the fact that all participants in this exhibition are residents of Asia (moreover, the part of Asia where kanji/Chinese characters are used), Ikezaki tried to create not a group of unique "works" but a single, intimately bound "cultural sphere" formed by loosely mutually related agents. And Ikezaki's name for this sphere is "Beautiful World."

BT December, 2017