

# MOTアニュアル2024

## こうふくのしま

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on the imagined terrain

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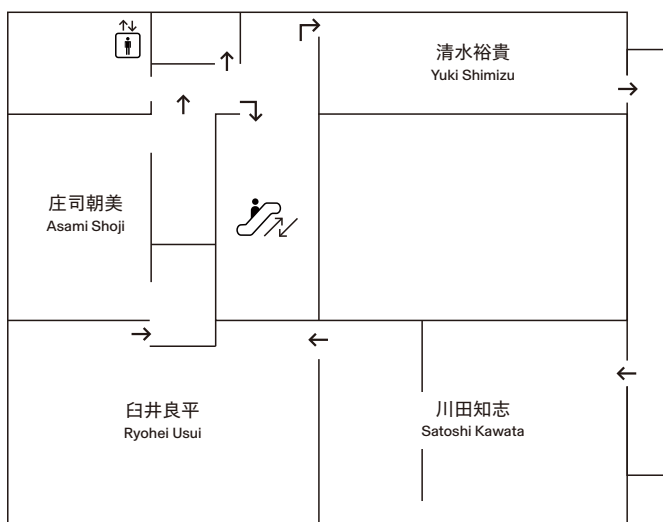
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## こうふくのしま

近年、「今ここに立っている」という身体感覚を持つことがますます困難になりつつあります。通信技術や交通手段の発達により、日々膨大な情報に否応なくさらされ、どこへでも移動しやすくなったことで、その傾向はさらに顕著になっています。こうしたなかで、自分自身の足元が何によって形をなし、どこにつながっているのかをあらためて問う行為は、私たちの身体が置かれる場への気づきを引き出し、進むべき方向を探るひとつの手だてとなるでしょう。

副題にある「しま」は、4名の作家が拠点を置く「日本」の地理的条件に対する再定義を含んでいます。この太平洋北西部の島々を、他の陸地から切り離されて海に浮かぶ「閉じられた地形」ではなく、地殻変動を経て海上に現れた地表の起伏であり、海底では他の大陸や島と地続きに連なる「開かれた地形」として捉え直すことは、水面下での見えざるつながり確かめるための別の視座を提示します。それは、従来の枠組みや境界を超え、あらゆるものが複雑に相互作用する世界を見つめ、深く思いを巡らせることでもあるのです。

本展の作家の仕事もまた、自身の足元を起点にしなが、より大きな文脈や関係へと開かれています。彼ら／彼女らは多様なアプローチを通じて、現実の世界を視覚的に置き換え、描き出すことにより、身の周りや自己の多義性や重層性と対峙します。これらの作品は、作者の解釈や意図を超え、見る者がそれぞれの視点や感覚、経験を通して主体的に意味を見出すための装置として働き、それぞれに異なる見かたや感じかたを促します。

日本の社会は、戦後その大半を失ったところから再建を始め、経済発展を根拠とする幸福と繁栄への道を歩み、1990年代以降は低迷と停滞が続いていると言われます。しかしながら、こうしたリアナな語りにおいて、複数の要因が絡み合う対立や葛藤は、しばしば解消されないまま見落されてきました。そこで本展では、身の辺の汲みつくせない出来事や状況を個々の視点から見直し、形を与えようとする作家たちとともに、もつれ合う世界の複雑さをいかに引き受けるのかという問いに向き合います。

## on the imagined terrain

In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain a sense of being “here and now”. With the development of communication technologies and transportation, we are constantly exposed to an overwhelming amount of information and can easily move anywhere, amplifying this challenge. In such a world, re-examining what forms the terrain around us and where it connects can help to bring awareness to the space our bodies occupy and serve as a means to explore the direction we ought to take.

The term “shima / しま / 島,” meaning “island” in Japanese, appears in the Japanese version of the exhibition subtitle “こうふくのしま” and reflects the intention to redefine the geographical conditions of Japan, a nation composed of islands, where the four featured artists live. It speculates on this archipelago in the northwestern Pacific, not as an “isolated terrain” floating in the ocean, separated from other lands, but as part of an “open terrain”, an uplifted land surface that emerged at sea through tectonic movements and is connected to other continents and islands at the ocean’s depth. This alternative perspective, which searches for and finds invisible connections beneath the water, makes us look beyond conventional frameworks and boundaries, allowing us to imagine a world where everything is inextricably interconnected.

The works of the artists in this exhibition are also open to broader contexts and relationships, starting with the terrain around them. Through their respective approaches, they capture and depict the world, confronting the multiplicity and complexity of both their surroundings and their own selves. Their works function as devices that encourage viewers to actively find meaning through their individual perspectives, sensations, and experiences, transcending the artists’ interpretations and intentions and thus fostering diverse ways of seeing and feeling.

After World War II, the Japanese people rebuilt from the ruins and embarked on a path towards happiness and prosperity, driven by capitalistic and materialistic development. However, since the 1990s, Japan has found itself in a persistent state of economic stagnation and decline. Within these linear narratives, the conflicts and ambivalent struggles arising from multiple intertwined factors are often overlooked and left unresolved. Consequently, this exhibition addresses the challenge of engaging with the complexity of an entangled world, alongside artists who revisit the myriad things and situations surrounding them, giving them form through individual perspectives and artistic practices.

## 「星の回廊」

大連の海岸と東京湾を巡る歴史から、架空の貝の一族の歴史を創造し、風景写真、潮による腐食のイメージ、朗読によって構成する。

中国東北部に位置する遼東半島は、低い山や丘が連なる起伏に富んだ地形で、海岸線は海の侵食によって複雑に曲がりくねっている。鴨緑江や遼河から淡水が流れ込み、水質は肥沃でプランクトンや底生生物、魚やエビ、貝類が数多く繁殖している。その南端にある小さな漁村は、幾度も勃発した戦火の中で異なる民族に代わる代わる支配され、大規模な港湾都市、大連に造り変えられていった。

遼東半島は黄海に大きく突き出し、朝鮮半島とロシアに近接していることから、特に十九世紀から二十世紀にかけて地政学的に重要な位置にあった。日露戦争で勝利した日本はロシア帝国から大連の租借権を継承し、関東州と称してその地を足がかりに満州全土を軍事支配。傀儡国家の満州国を建国した。大連の海岸は南満州鉄道が保養地として開発し、現在はそこに遊園地や高級レジデンスが立ち並んでさらに進化したベイサイドリゾートになっている。

東京湾岸にも似たような雰囲気があり、それは列強支配の中で培われたある美意識が多分に影響しているが、双方とも海と人々の暮らしが絡み合いながら、固有の風景を形作っている。

風景は、そこに立っていた人々の記憶を蓄積しながら、地形的特質に従って変化し続け、誰のためでもない、独立した存在として立ち上がる。遊園地の喧騒をカモメと潮騒がかき混ぜ、幾重にも重なる時間が砂の色を滲ませる。海面に浮上した岩は伝説の語り部となり、あちこちから聞こえる声が、風景の輪郭を描く。

清水裕貴

清水裕貴(1984年生まれ)は、水にまつわる土地の歴史や伝承のリサーチをもとに、写真とテキストを織り合わせて物語を創作してきました。近年は、波や潮汐によって刻一刻と変化する海岸線のように両義的な場に目を向け、架空の物語を立ち上げることで、近代以降の日本という彼女自身が立脚する地の輪郭を捉えようと試みています。最新作《星の回廊》では、中国・大連の星海湾と日本の東京湾を舞台に、川と海が接する汽水域で現実と幻影が交差します。星屑が瞬く夜の海を再現した暗がりの空間にイメージが浮かび上がり、テキストを朗読する声が漂います。語られるのは「星海湾」という地名の由来とされる隕石落下の伝承から構想を得た短編小説で、架空の種族の興亡がその地の領有と開発の歴史を想起させます。大連の風景をありのままに見つめ、切り取った写真には、こうした歴史の痕跡が刻まれる一方、東京から千葉にかけての臨海部を撮影した写真は、フィルムを大連の海水に浸して感光層を損傷させることで、両地の海をつなげるとともに、記憶の基層に沈殿する無数の瞬間を剥き出しにします。打ち寄せる波が砂浜を洗うように、見るという経験もまた一瞬のうちに儚く消え去るものだからこそ、それに形を与えようとする清水の作品は、現実の制約を遥かに超えた想像力を呼び起こすのです。

Drawing on the history of Dalian's coastal area and Tokyo Bay, the work, composed of landscape photographs, images of coastal erosion caused by the ocean tides, and recitations, envisions a fictional story surrounding a family of shellfish.

The Liaodong Peninsula, located in northeastern China, has an undulating topography comprising of a series of low mountains and hills, and its coastline is complex and anfractuous due to the effects of erosion. Freshwater flows into the peninsula from the Yalu River and the Liaohe River, making the water fertile and home to a large number of plankton and benthic organisms, as well as various species of fish, shrimp, and shellfish. The small fishing village seated on its southern tip was successively ruled by different ethnic groups amid the many outbreaks of war, eventually being transformed into the large port city of Dalian.

The Liaodong Peninsula was a geopolitically important location, especially from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries, due to it largely protruding into the Yellow Sea and thus being in proximity to the Korean Peninsula and Russia. After its victory in the Russo-Japanese War, Japan acquired the lease of Dalian from the Russian Empire, and using this territory as a foothold under its name of Kwantung Leased Territory, exerted military control over the entire province of Manchuria. This led to the establishment of the puppet state of Manchuko.

Dalian's coastal area was developed as a health resort by the South Manchuria Railway and has now evolved into a bayside resort with an amusement park and luxury residences.

The Tokyo Bay area has a similar atmosphere, which is largely influenced by a certain aesthetic cultivated under the rule of great powers, but in both cases, the sea and people's lives are intertwined to give rise to their own unique landscape.

The landscape continues to change according to its topographical characteristics, accumulating the memories of the people who have stood upon its ground, and emerges as an independent entity that exists for no one in particular. The hustle and bustle of the amusement park coalesces with the sounds of seagulls and the waves, and the overlapping layers of time blur the color of the sand. Rocks that rise to the surface of the sea become storytellers of legends, and voices heard from here and there map out the contours of the landscape.

Yuki Shimizu

Yuki Shimizu (b. 1984) creates stories by weaving together photographs and text based on her research of local history and folklore related to waterside. In recent years, she has turned her attention to ambiguous places such as seashores which change from moment to next due to waves and tides, attempting to capture the contours of the post-modern Japan in which she herself stands through the creation of fictional narratives.

In her latest work *Passage of Meteorites*, set in Xinghai Bay (originally established by the South Manchuria Railway Company in 1909 as "Hoshi-ga-Ura") in Dalian, China, and Tokyo Bay in Japan, reality and fantasy intersect in the estuary where the river meets the ocean. Images emerge in a dark space that recreates the nighttime ocean glistening under the light of the stars, while a voice reciting a piece of text sounds throughout. The narrative is a short story inspired by the legend of a meteorite fall from which the place name "Hoshi-ga-Ura" (literally meaning "Star Beach" in Japanese) was derived, wherein the rise and fall of a fictional species calls to mind the history of the possession and development of the area. While the photographs that observe and capture the Dalian landscape as it is bear traces of this history, the photographs of the coastal areas from Tokyo to Chiba were taken using film whose photosensitive layer had been damaged by being immersed in Dalian's seawater, thereby connecting the two seas and exposing the countless moments that precipitate in the substratum of memory. Just as the crashing waves wash over the sand on the shore, the experience of seeing is also fleeting and vanishes in an instant, and it is precisely for this reason that Shimizu's work, which attempts to give form to this experience, evoke an imagination that extends far beyond the constraints of reality.

道路脇の草木や看板、歩く人々、標識に従う車やバイク、自転車、同じようなビルに同じような家。日本のどこにでもあるような整理された景色が、平和な日常を支えている。安定した豊かな暮らしは、長い時間をかけて築かれた社会のおかげで、ときどき感じる理不尽さや周りとの差異も、日々に流されていると、まあ気にしないでいられる。本当にそうだろうか。京都の日本海側に拠点を移した数年前から、独りで過ごす時間が増え、インターネットが世間を知るための唯一の頼りになった。ただ、世界で起きている出来事を情報として触れているだけで、遠い世界の不均衡と安定した暮らしを比べてしまう。日常について考えさせられる。

私は今壁画を制作している。きっかけになったフレスコ技法との出会いから十数年が経った。それは水で溶いただけの顔料を漆喰に閉じ込める不思議な技法だ。基盤になる漆喰は、周りの環境から影響を受けるため、絵画材料の中では不安定な素材である。しかし、同時に空間との対話を私に与えてくれる。その対話は物質的な存在感を生み出し、壁面へ身体感覚を投影させる。私の表現は空間と一体化したとき、建築装飾から社会との繋がりを強く感じる存在になる。

やたら遠くを示す標識、誰かの落とし物、自然の地形に合わせで造成される法面とその隙間から生える雑草などは、平坦な景色に奥行きを与えてくれる。日常の安定と世界の不均衡との境目を映し出す。毎日の生活が単なる日常の羅列にならないように、私は現在という瞬間をここにとどめたい。

川田知志

川田知志(1987年生まれ)は、伝統的なフレスコ技法を軸とする壁画の制作・解体・移設を通じて、日本社会の基盤を支える構造や仕組みとその変化を探求してきました。既存の壁に漆喰を塗り、水溶性の顔料で描くフレスコ壁画は、可搬性を備えた絵画(タブロー)とは異なり、制作する場と物理的に不可分の関係にあります。漆喰が乾ききる前に素早く描画・彩色を施すという制約のなかで、川田は湿気を帯びた壁と呼吸を合わせるように、こてや刷毛を自在に動かし、豊かな質感と力強い色彩を壁に定着させます。

川田が描くのは、都市部と地方の中間に見られる風景です。幹線道路に設置された標識や看板、沿道の店舗や住宅、発電所から電力を供給する送電線や鉄塔が、行き交う人々の痕跡や土地特有の要素と重なり合い、風景は断片化・再構成されます。これらの半具象的なモチーフは、見る者の感覚を揺さぶり、記憶と想像力に深く働きかけます。こうした戦後日本の標準的ともいえる風景は、1950年代後半以降、科学技術による自然の支配と開発を是とする考え方を背景に全国に広がり、グローバルな消費文化の影響を受けて、近年とみに均質化が進んでいます。《ゴールデンタイム》というタイトルからは、高度経済成長期に家庭の娯楽として普及したテレビが象徴する夢の時間と、その輝かしい時代の陰で隠され続けた現実という二重性が読み取れます。

Trees, plants, and billboards along the roadside, as well as people walking, cars, motorcycles, and bicycles that follow the signs, and row after row of similar buildings and houses—it is the same organized scenery found anywhere in Japan that serves to support peaceful daily life. We are able to live a stable and affluent life thanks to a society that has been built over a long period of time, and as we busily go about our day-to-day, we tend not to be caught up with the occasional sense of injustice we may feel, or the differences between us and those around us. One wonders if that is really the case. Since moving to the area of Kyoto along the coast of the Sea of Japan a few years ago, I have been spending more and more time alone and the internet has become my sole means of learning about world events. However, by simply being exposed to information regarding what is happening across the globe, I find myself comparing the imbalance of the world far away with my own stable lifestyle. It is something that inspires me to think about the everyday.

I am currently working on the production of a mural. Over a decade has passed since I first encountered the traditional fresco technique that became a source of inspiration. It is a curious technique that involves applying dry-powder pigment mixed with water to freshly laid lime plaster so that the painting becomes an integral part of the wall. Lime plaster, which serves as the foundation, is an unstable material to paint with as it is affected by the surrounding environment. At the same time, however, it allows me to engage in a dialogue with the space. This dialogue is what gives rise to a material presence and projects a physical sensation onto the wall. When my work becomes one with the space, it is no longer a mere architectural decoration but that which evokes a strong connection with society.

Signs pointing to places far away, the lost items of someone or another, slopes constructed to match the natural geographical features and the weeds growing in the gaps between them, all add depth to the otherwise flat landscape. What it reflects is the boundary between the stability of everyday life and the imbalance of the world. I wish to capture the moment of the present so that my day-to-day life does not become a mere routine or repetition of the mundane.

Satoshi Kawata

Satoshi Kawata (b.1987) explores the structures and systems that support the foundations of Japanese society, as well their transitions, through the production, deinstallation, and relocation of mural paintings using traditional fresco techniques. Frescos are painted on existing walls through the application of lime plaster and water-soluble pigments, and unlike portable paintings (tableaus), are physically inseparable from the place in which they are created. Within the constraint of having to quickly apply the paint before the lime plaster dries out completely, Kawata moves his trowel and brush freely, as if to act in concert with the moisture-laden wall, imbuing it with a rich array of textures and dynamic colors.

Kawata depicts landscapes observed in places that exist between urban and rural areas. Signs and billboards along main roads, roadside stores and houses, and power lines and pylons supplying electricity from power plants overlap with the traces of people passing by as well as elements unique to the site, fragmenting and reconfiguring the landscape. These semi-figurative motifs stir the viewer's senses and deeply appeal to memory and imagination. Since the late 1950s, such standard postwar Japanese landscapes have spread throughout the nation against the backdrop of an inclination to control nature and implement development through science and technology. In recent years, these landscapes have become increasingly homogenized under the influence of global consumer culture. The title *Golden Time* suggests a duality between the magical time symbolized by television ("Golden Time" being an English word coined in Japan for the term "Prime Time"), which became widespread as a form of home entertainment during Japan's period of rapid economic growth, and the reality that remained hidden in the shadows of that glorious era.

旅先でも、そうでなくても、つい石を拾ってしまう。よさそうなのがあれば持ち帰り、文鎮にする。本のページを押さえたり、紙類の重しに使ったりするのだから、ちいさくても掌くらいの大きさは必要だ。海外からも運ぶ。旅行中の荷を重くするので、拾うときはいったん、躊躇う。それでも、これぞ、という石であれば、衣類の隙間にでも忍ばせて運ぶ。(蜂飼耳『空を引き寄せる石』白水社 2007)

こんなふうに石やブロック片などを拾って歩いたりする。時には持って帰ることのできない風景を記憶や写真に留めておく。純粹に拾っている時もあるが、制作のことも考慮に入っていたりして、少し不純な場合もある。

(中略) 硬い時間を重ねていく。そのことに引かれる。何十年、何百年後、一度は文鎮だった石たちが河原や野原に転がり、陽を浴びているところを想像するのは心優しい。手に包むと、体温が移る。すぐ温まる。これが石なんだと思う。いつかは雨や風のなかへ戻っていく石を額に当てて、頭を冷やす。(同上)

その成り立ちからすればガラスもまた石といえるかもしれない。作品に使われる石と同様に、ガラスでできた容器が地面に転がっている様を夢想する。

白井良平

白井良平(1983年生まれ)は、普段よく目にするプラスチック製品の形をガラスで精緻に再現し、既存のものど組み合わせることで、無人称の風景を仮構するシリーズ「PET (Portrait of Encountered Things)」を制作しています。

今回の展示では、何かを覆ったブルーシート、工事現場の仮囲い、フェンスといった公共空間を一時的に区切り、占有する資材とともに、長い年月をかけて形を変えてきた石やコンクリートブロックなど、身辺の眺めを構成するものが再解釈されます。これらは、路上の片隅に残されたペットボトルを通して、出来事の痕跡や人の気配を浮かび上がらせる写真のシリーズ「Forgotten Liquid」の延長線上にあります。いずれの作品も、日常のなかで「不意に出会う(encounter)」という受け身の経験を肯定し、些細なものを周りの環境とともに俯瞰的に切り出すことで、背景や余白を際立たせています。

日々大量に消費されるプラスチック製品は、ガラスに置き換えられることによって、本来の機能や意味から切り離され、「ただそこにあるもの」として存在します。そして、強さと脆さを併せ持つガラスの静謐な質感に導かれながら、見慣れたもの、あるいは視界に入っているものに対する再認識を促し、「それがあればどうということか」を私たちに問いかけます。

Whether I am traveling or not, I always find myself collecting stones. If I find one that looks good, I'll take it home and use it as a paperweight. While they may be small, since I use them to hold down the pages of books or to weigh down sheets of paper, they need to be at least the size of the palm of my hand.

I also carry stones back home with me from abroad. I often hesitate at first when collecting stones while traveling because they make my luggage heavier. Nevertheless, if I come across what I feel is the perfect stone, I carry it home with me, even if it may mean slipping it in-between my clothing.

(Mimi Hachikai, *The Stone that Pulls in the Sky*, Hakusuisha Publishing Co. Ltd., 2007)

I walk around picking up stones, block pieces, and so forth in the same way. At times I preserve the scenery that I cannot take home with me in my memory or through photographs. While there are occasions where I simply collect stones based on interest or habit alone, there are moments when my motives are slightly less pure, with the production of my work being an incentive.

(...) The accumulation of solid time is what draws me to stones. It is delightful to imagine that decades or centuries from now, these stones that were once used as paperweights will be lying on a riverbank or in a field, basking in the light of the sun. When I hold the stone in my hand, my body heat is transferred to it, and it warms up quickly. I believe that this in essence is the nature of stones. I take the stone, which will one day return to the wind and rain, placing it against my brow to cool my head. (Ibid.)

From the standpoint of its origin, glass may also be considered stone. Like the stones used in my work, I imagine containers made of glass lying on the ground.

Ryohei Usui

Ryohei Usui (b.1983) has engaged in the production of a series titled "PET (Portrait of Encountered Things)" in which he meticulously recreates everyday plastic industrial products in the form of glass sculptures and juxtaposes them with existing objects, in doing so giving rise to fictitious, anonymous landscapes.

Presented in this exhibition are reinterpretations of materials that serve to temporarily divide and occupy public spaces, such as blue tarp that appears to be covering something, temporary construction site enclosures, and fences, along with stones, concrete blocks, and other objects that have changed shape over time and constitute the scenes that we observe in our immediate surroundings. These are an extension of the "Forgotten Liquid" photograph series, in which traces of events and the presence of people are evoked through plastic bottles left in street corners. In each of these works, the artist affirms the passive experience of "unexpected encounters" in everyday life, and by bringing focus to trivial objects together with their surrounding environment through a holistic perspective, highlight what lies in the backdrop and margins.

Plastic products, which are consumed in large quantities on a daily basis, are replaced with glass, thereby detaching them from their original function and meaning, and enabling them to exist as "something that is simply there." Guided by the serene texture of glass, which possesses both strength and fragility, the work encourages us to take a fresh look at familiar objects and things that come into our field of vision, asking us "what does it mean for something to exist?"



例えば山を描くとして、見える通りにというよりも、山の在りかたについて描きたいと思う。筆のストロークが山の稜線を、絵の具の盛り上がりゴツゴツした岩肌そのものになるように。コーカサス。2022年から1年間、南北をコーカサス山脈で挟まれた小さな国、ジョージアに暮らした。山々を歩き回り、足や手を使ってその形をなぞった。ふと気がつくと、「コーカサス」という言葉は、異国の雄大な山の連なりを想像するための記号ではなくて、丈の低い高山植物、泉とそこに集まる牛や羊の群れ、高度が上がるにつれて変わっていく気候や空気の質、それらを纏って私の身体の中に立ち現れていた。そのことを、そのまま描けたら、と思う。

これまで、絵を描くことを通して世界の複雑さをどうにか飲み込もうとしてきた。絵画は、対立する価値や意味であっても、それらが等しく存在することが許される独特な言語である。始まりも終わりもなく、意味や関係の連なりすらなくとも、豊かに語り、伝えることのできる言語。絵を描くことは、見えないものに形を与え、聞こえない音を想像させ、触れられないにもかかわらず、皮膚感覚へ働きかけること。描くという身体の運動は、そういうものをキャンヴァスの上に誘い導いてくる営みだと思う。画家は、羊飼いまいたいなものかもしれない。

庄司朝美

庄司朝美(1988年生まれ)は、描くことや見ることの身体性を強く意識させる絵画の制作を通じて、作品内外の世界をつなげる試みを続けています。大学で銅版画を学んだ庄司は、2016年以降、半透明のアクリル板を支持体に、絵の具を置き、引っ搔き、拭き取るという行為を重ねて、筆触と描線がざわめく独自の画面を生み出してきました。昨年からはキャンヴァスも併用し、より豊かで雄弁な表現を探索しています。「筆を通してこの体を拡張し、肉体を超えたものへと開かれていく体験が絵画」と語る庄司の作品には、作家自身の「内なる場」が描かれています。それは普段、皮膚の下にあって見えないものの、確かに体内を巡り、脈動を伝えています。画中では鳥や動物、怪物、亡霊といった存在が交錯し、X線写真のように透き通った肉体を持つものたちは、しばしば長い両腕を伸ばしています。こうした身振りは、画面全体に視覚的な流れを構成するだけでなく、作品と置かれた空間の境界を溶かし、見る者が絵の内部に足を踏み入れることを促します。作品のタイトルは筆を擱いた日付であり、日記のようにその日の出来事や経験、感情が記録されています。山々を背景に異形の生き物が身を寄せるイメージは、相反するものが隣り合って存在する現実の世界を象徴するとともに、そうした世界で従うべきとされる規範や制約からの逸脱も想起させます。

For example, if I were to paint a mountain, I would like to paint the nature of its existence, rather than exactly as it appears. I want the brushstrokes to manifest as the mountain ridges, and the heaps of paint to represent the rugged surface of the rocks themselves. For a period of one year from 2022, I lived in Georgia, a small country situated between the Caucasus Mountains to the north and south. I walked around the mountains, tracing their shapes with both my hands and feet. Suddenly, I realized that the word "Caucasus" was not a mere symbol that led me to imagine this majestic mountain range of a foreign country. Rather, it also evoked within me its low-growing alpine plants, the springs and herds of cattle and sheep that gathered there, and the climate and air quality that changed with the increase in altitude. This is what I was inspired to depict, as it were.

Through painting, I have attempted to somehow grasp the complexity of this world. Painting is a unique language in which even opposing values and meanings are allowed to equally exist. It is a language that is capable of rich narratives and communication without needs for a beginning or end, or even any sequence of meanings or relationships. To paint is to give form to what cannot be seen, to imagine sounds that cannot be heard, and to appeal to the cutaneous senses regardless of not being able to touch them. I feel that the physical movement of painting is an activity that invites and guides such things onto the canvas. A painter could perhaps be likened to a shepherd.

Asami Shoji

Asami Shoji (b.1988) continues in her attempt to connect the world inside and outside her works through paintings that bring into sharp focus the physicality tied to the acts of painting and seeing. Shoji, who studied copperplate printing at university, has been using semitransparent acrylic panels as supports since 2016, repeatedly applying paint, scratching it, and wiping it away to create unique paintings characterized by their bustling array of lines and brushstrokes. Since last year, she has also started working with canvas in pursuit of richer, more eloquent expressions.

Shoji states that "paintings are the experience of expanding the body through the brush and opening it up to something beyond the physical." As exemplified by these words, her paintings depict her own "inner field," conveying that which is usually hidden beneath the skin and cannot be seen yet pulsates and circulates throughout the body with much certainty. The paintings feature an intermingling of presences such as birds, animals, monsters, and apparitions, and their translucent bodies reminiscent of X-ray images, are often seen with their long arms outstretched. These gestures not only create a visual flow across the entire painting but also dissolve the boundaries between the work and the space in which it is placed, encouraging the viewer to venture inside the painting.

The works derive their title from the date on which the artist put down her brush, and like a diary, they record the events, experiences and feelings of the day. The image of the strange creatures huddled against the backdrop of the mountains symbolizes the real world where opposing entities exist side by side, while also evoking a deviation from the norms and restrictions that one is expected to abide by in such a world.

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