

SOKYO
ATSUMI



Chie Aoki 《BODY 22-2 – Memory of Life –》 2022, Lacquer and hemp cloth on styrofoam, H56 x W93 × D44 cm
© Chie Aoki Photo : Hiraku Ikeda

Chie Aoki “Tranquil Bodies”

Preview : Friday, January 27, 2023 13:00 - 19:00

Saturday, January 28, - Friday, March 10

SOKYO ATSUMI

3F TERRADA ART COMPLEX II, 1-32-8 Higashi-shinagawa,
Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo, 140-0002, JAPAN

Open : 11:00 – 18:00 (Tue - Thu) 11:00 – 19:00 (Fri · Sat) Closed : Sunday · Monday

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Press Release

SOKYO ATSUMI (Tokyo) is pleased to present “Tranquil Bodies,” an exhibition by Chie Aoki. This will be Aoki's first solo exhibition at SOKYO ATSUMI.

Four Aoki sculptures, including one particularly large piece, are concurrently exhibited in the group show, “Roppongi Crossing 2022: Come and Go Alone!” (Closes March 26), held at the Mori Art Museum. Aoki uses Japanese lacquer (*urushi*), which she first experienced as an art student in Kanazawa, to create works that combine figurative representations of the human body with abstracted shapes. Sokyo Gallery (Kyoto) has held solo exhibitions of Aoki's work in 2018 and 2021. In this Tokyo show, we present latest works from her signature series, “BODY,” as well as charcoal drawings on paper, “From Drawing.”

Aoki produced the pieces in her “BODY” series, with smooth forms and deep jet-black luster, by employing traditional craft techniques of dry lacquer making. Pieces of cloth are applied to a rough base statue, which is then covered with very thin layers of lacquer which create the finished modeling and hard surface. Aoki says that the process of dry-lacquer making has become integral to her artistry. Works in her “BODY” series are characterized by their jet-black color and luster, which evoke a sense of infinite depth. Black, the color that absorbs all spectrums of visible light, paradoxically in the luster of her hard, shiny lacquer surfaces, also reflects light, and resonates deeply with the spirituality of her works, which seek to confront the loneliness and anxiety of people in contemporary society.

Aoki's figures convey to the viewer a sense of isolation, as if they have “shut themselves off from the outside world,” [1] as they curl, lie, sit, or stand silent. Introverted, self-sufficient, and faceless, her bodies are created out of life-like polystyrene base carvings, sized to her own dimensions. However, her most recent sculptures, epitomized in the title of the 2021 exhibition at Sokyo Gallery, “Melting Bodies,” are changing into images more of a fusion of self with the surroundings, a merging of human and material.

Of particular note is the large, 150 cm tall, “BODY 22-3 – Embrace the Universe – .” The standing figure seems to be liquefying and pulled into the black mass, evoking a great invisible force. Her use of reddish lacquer for the abstracted human figure contrasts with the jet-black lacquer of the primal form. This helps to suggest both a boundary between and a merging of the human figure and the material world. As in all her pieces, the smooth and burnished lacquer surfaces seem to transform weak and imperfect people into strong and beautiful beings. We hope you will take this opportunity to visit the exhibition.

[1] Chie Aoki “Chie Aoki —Body in jet-black -the precious pitiful human existence, ” (Sokyo Gallery, 2018) p. 46.

Chie AOKI

Born in Gifu Prefecture in 1981, Aoki completed her doctorate at Kanazawa College of Art in 2010. Currently a professor at Kanazawa College of Art, her atelier is in Nonoichi City, Ishikawa Prefecture. Solo exhibitions include “URUSHI BODY”, INAX Gallery 2, Tokyo, Japan (2011), “Shikkoku no Shintai”, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe (2017), “A Body in Solitude” and “Melting Bodies”, Sokyō Gallery, Kyoto(2018 and 2021). Major group exhibitions include: “Shizubi Project 4: The Human Form and Sculpture”, Shizuoka City Museum of Art, Shizuoka (2014); “World of Lacquer: Cycle of Time”, 3rd Hubei International Triennial of Lacquer Art, Hubei Museum of Art, Wuhan, China (2016 and 2019); “Spider’s Thread -Spinning images of Japanese beauty”, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Toyota, Aichi(2016); “Hard Bodies: Contemporary Japanese Lacquer Sculpture”, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN, U.S.A(2017); “4th Triennale of KOGEI in Kanazawa, 21th Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Kanazawa, Ishikawa(2019); “Design Miami,”Miami Beach Convention Center, Miami, FL, U.S.A. (2019); “FEMINISMS”, 21th Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (2021); Arts Towada 10th Anniversary Exhibition: Inter+Play Season 3, Towada Art Center, Towada(2022); Roppongi Crossing 2022: Coming & Going, MORI ART MUSEUM, Tokyo(2022). Awards include The Japan Lacquer Crafts Association Award (2015); Kogei World Competition in Kanazawa, Merit Award (2019). Her works are included in Kanazawa College of Art, Kanazawa, Ishikawa, Japan; Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN, U.S.A.; Hubei Museum of Art, Wuhan, China; Tokushima Modern Art Museum, Tokushima, Japan; Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, Miami, FL, U.S.A.; Yishun Art Space, Shenyang, China; Ise Cultural Foundation, Toyama, Japan and more.



Chie Aoki 《BODY 22-3—Embrace the Universe—》 2022, Lacquer and hemp cloth on styrofoam, H147 × W92 × D85 cm



Chie Aoki 《Drawing #10》 2021, Charcoal on paper, H51 × W35.5 cm

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Chie Aoki 《BODY 21-6 —Shadow of
Emptines—》 2022, Lacquer, hemp cloth
and makomo powder on styrofoam,
H150 × W43 × D60 cm



Chie Aoki 《BODY 22-1—Fear—》 2022,
Lacquer and hemp cloth on styrofoam,
H50 × W98 × D44 cm

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