

Voices from Artist to the World



No.3

Chie Nakamoto

Nihonga (Japanese-style painting) artist Chie Nakamoto, based in Paris, has been active in presenting her work to the world. We will ask her about the charm of her painting enriched with Oriental deep spirituality.

While making a steady development of her career as nihonga painter in Japan, Chie Nakamoto moved her base to overseas, first to Berlin in 2009, and currently lives and works in Paris -- not in Japan where people enjoy a happy environment filled with everything, but in Paris where she feels free in spite of living in solitude and inconvenience. There she involves herself in making pictures and tries to establish her own world. Needless to say, Nakamoto has an international point of view in presenting her work, saying that nihonga rather can be more international because of its deep spirituality.

--Winning a certain appreciation in Japan, you are making a steady progress as a painter. Why did you move your working base to overseas?

Nakamoto (hereafter referred to as N): The major reason was that I wanted to see the world out there, or a bigger world. In Japan, people are enjoying an affluent life, and I'm thankful that there're some people who treat me as a painter, but at the same time I'm afraid that we are too blessed with things to feel relaxed. In overseas, on the other hand, I'm nobody -- only a stranger from Japan. There I sometimes feel frustrated when treated like a girl even now, but I feel free after all in spite of living in great solitude as if left alone in a large space and told "Do as you like."

--Does that you feel free mean a great thing to your working, as well as to daily life?

N: Yes. In Paris, I can take "a stopper" out when working.

--It is important for artists to get a free idea for creating something. Why did you choose first Berlin as overseas base?

N: I then wanted to see contemporary art in Berlin, and I actually visited there, which was a start of the decision. In fact, the environmental condition was very fine, but the art scene in Berlin seemed to be a bit different from what I liked, though I was satisfied with the human relations there.

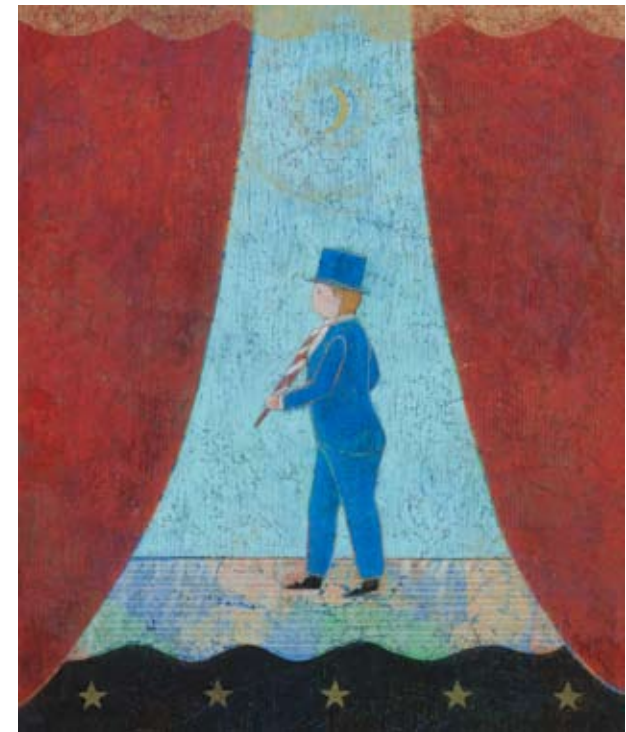
--So, coming back from Berlin, you soon went to Paris.

N: Yes. Concerning my life style, I'd like to live and work basically in overseas.

--In Paris, is there something you feel different from in Berlin?

N: I have a feeling that Paris psyches myself up.

--I understand that you, as an artist, want to



After the Rain F8

psych yourself up to keep working and develop your activities into the world. That is your dream or plan for now, isn't it?

N: My goal is to manage to survive as an artist in overseas. While I'm now living in France because I love to do so, I feel I must try to be more active beyond there in showing my work at every opportunity including international art fairs.

--We hear that you now have a busy schedule of exhibiting in KIAF in South Korea and Art Moscow, both in September 2012. You seem to be steadily proceeding to the establishment of your international artistic career.

N: Art Moscow is an art fair which I really wanted to participate in. There, I'd like to walk around booths to see other artists' exhibit and learn how the current art scene is. The experience will greatly inspire me, and I'm interested in how my work will be presented there or how it will look to visitors at the space.

I'd like to be active in showing my work at every opportunity including international art fairs.

Also, I'd like to observe how my work will look different as the time passes during the exhibition period. I feel fearful, but I really hope to see the change.

--Art fair is also a place for artists to compare their own work with overseas artists'.

N: There I'll find my work to be immature when it is displayed among artworks by the artists who I think are extraordinarily great, or by those who have been recognized even after they died. Or, I'll understand the reason that the active artists who are now highly appreciated have come into the spotlight. This will tell me what lacks in my



(Wishing glasses) F40

work and subjects to solve, which will make me feel excited wondering how to conquer the problem. The more difficult the problem is, the more I feel frustrated. But, after all, I feel excited about that.

--That's a positive way of thinking, isn't it?

By the way, what do you think about the characteristic feature of your work?

N: My painting is not a kind of work that inspires viewers to see in a short time. Rather, my work is probably like this -- viewers will go past my painting once, but after a while they will come back again and step forward to see it. I guess that such reaction of viewers must strongly reflect my background that I have studied copying of Buddhist painting. Buddhist painting is plain, but as I copy it, I have come to think of its spiritual depth contained there and love the painting very much. Buddhist painting has something deep in every respect including technical one, which is represented in its color.

Profile: Chie Nakamoto

1976 born in Kyoto
 2004 completed M.F.A., Nihonga Painting Conservation and Restoration, Tokyo National University of Arts
 2007 At Ph.D. Course in Nihonga Painting Conservation and Restoration, Tokyo National University of Arts, took a doctor's degree hakubi no. 202., with a thesis for a doctorate entitled "Study on Urazaisiki(coloring from the reverse side) in Sixteen Arhats introduced from Shojuraigou-ji Temple"

Currently lives and works in Paris.

■ Solo/Group exhibitions

2006 Two-person exhibition "Prayer"
 2008 Solo shows "Muso" and "A Musical Band"
 2009 Solo show "The Sky," Tokyo Bijutsu Club Art Fair, Visited Germany.
 2010 Exhibited "Mire and I" in the 10th 21st Century Exhibition of Japanese Art. Solo show "Chie Nakamoto Nihonga Exhibition." Obtained resident permit license "Competences et Talents" as a painter. Visited Paris.
 2011 Exhibited "Next Station Is Paradise" in the 11th 21st Century Exhibition of Japanese Art. Solo shows "Chie Nakamoto Nihonga Exhibition" and "Etranger -- Chie Nakamoto Exhibition"
 2012 Solo show "A Present from the Moon -- Chie Nakamoto Nihonga Exhibition"

■ Awards

2003 Ikuo Hirayama Scholarship
 2004 President Award at Japan Women's Association for Rehabilitation Aid, and Encouragement Award at the 89th Inten Exhibition
 2005 Encouragement Award at the 90th Inten Exhibition
 2007 Nomura Award for Graduation Work, Tokyo National University of Arts, and Encouragement Award at the 92nd Inten Exhibition
 2008 Encouragement Award at the 93rd Inten Exhibition

■ Public collections

"Kurashi no Techo," Imai Hisayoshi Museum, Shimane, "Feathers of Sound," "Eri," "Mizukiri," and "Terminal," which are all collections of Adachi Museum of Art, Shimane, a copy of reproduced "The 14th Saint of Sixteen Arhats" (national treasure, Tokyo National Museum), University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts, and "Dream Box," Tin Toy Museum in Kawaguchiko



(Journey) F20

--You mean that the spirituality you have learned from nihonga or Buddhist painting is an advantage, don't you?

N: I think that one of my advantages in developing activity into overseas is that I'm a Japanese or an Oriental artist. I mean that if we internationally challenge art scene, we must place importance on the elements built in Oriental DNA, such as a sense of color: spiritual depth, not impact, is very important. Buddhist painters in old times expressed not themselves but spirituality based on religious prayer. That's why viewers can immerse themselves into the painting.

--Your work, too, is a kind of painting which viewers can get into, isn't it?

N: I'll be glad if viewers get into the story that my picture tells and unconsciously immerse themselves into it as much as they hesitate to leave my picture.

--We hope that you will convey to visitors such charm of nihonga painting at art fairs where people tend to compete with each other for an

instantaneous impact. What do you want to be as an artist 10 or 20 years later?

N: I now again seem to have already started to move ahead. I feel I anyway must be active even more in showing my work in overseas.

--We hope you will develop your artistic career with great prospects.

KIAF
<http://kiaf.org/2012new/Eng/main.html>
 the Eve of the Fair: Sep.12
 period:Sep.13 -17
 place: Hall A & B,1st Floor of COEX, Seoul

Art Moscow
<http://www.art-moscow.ru/en/>
 Eve of the Fair: Sep.18
 period:Sep.19 -23
 place: Central House of Artists, 10 Krymsky, Moscow

A Present from the Moon -- Chie Nakamoto Exhibition
 period: Oct.31 - Nov.6
 close at 16:00 on the final day
 place: Art Gallery at the 6th Floor of Tenmaya, Okayama