

To the Pure Person

When I hear a song that speaks to my heart, I appreciate the musician for playing the song. For a play that moves my heart, I cannot keep my eyes off of it and I leave the theater while thanking the actor for being such a good actor.

In a similar vein I see Anju as “a person that makes paintings,” and thinking back, I felt like I was always surrounded by the blessed sunlight whenever I was with him.

The little boy I met in the light on the beach in Venice became a young boy, and now he is a young man. While in his room in Nezu, he was painting incessantly without even looking at a visitor, in the middle of the warm sunlight coming through the window. His mother Ritsue is an important friend of mine, so naturally I feel very close to Anju.

But, what about Anju himself? Although he does not communicate well with others since it is difficult for him to be aware of what is going on with the outside world, Anju holds onto his own. What I feel close to is the world he paints and I try to read his mind through his creations.

I like his series in which he uses a very clear blue appearing in various shapes on the flat surface. The series gives me a cyclical image of what could be a natural landscape or mindscape. I was wondering how he would fill those picture planes in a short amount of time without hesitation (perhaps), and asked Ritsue about it.

“His painting starts with an action,” said Ritsue and I can sense her deep understanding of Anju’s practice, which would not be attainable if not for Anju’s mother who observes his artmaking every day. He stands in front of the canvas and he knows his expression starts as he moves his body; for him the act of painting starts from here, with no specific order. It feels like he paints by reacting to things that are already on the screen and he makes things work even when he starts painting from the edge. “He is not scared at all,” added Ritsue.

That is why, perhaps, he finishes his painting quickly.

And the images he creates generate a sense of relaxation.

In my own words, that is elegance.

If there were a pure human being on earth, that would have to be Anju.

There is no excess in his soul.

He is like that person who would arrange flowers when he sees them.

Or a monk going through Zen training.

Without needing to know about the art world, he paints.

Anju, thank you very much for becoming an artist.

Kazuko Koike

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