

About Ohiii series

Masaya Chiba

“Ohiii” is a sound of call in Japanese which is used to call out to somebody/something in the distance. A viewer, the third character of the paintings, will watch the situation where A is calling out to B. In *Sound of Ohiii In the Mountain*, B is the deer on the mask. In *Sound of Ohiii Into the Moon and the Sun*, B is the circles on the canvases. And in both paintings, A is the persons on the soles of the feet drawn with marker pens (traveler-like or hunter-like images), something that goes into the woods, I meant. I used a female model, so I just drew male hunters (or travelers) on the soles of her feet. I believe the placement of the persons drawn with the marker pens and my simple story (travelers are calling out “ohiii” to the nature) are very oriental motifs.

Generally, when a human figure is painted on a canvas, the other parts other than the human figure become background. However, in these paintings I treated a living person as the background. By treating a person like a framework of a stage setting, and with the difficult posture and the details emphasizing skin sensation, I tried to make it easy for viewers to empathize with the background too. It’s a matter of course, though, as the background is a person. At the same time, it can also be said that the composition conflicts with the intention to cause people to empathize with the background. I wanted to achieve this particular balance. I almost succeeded in it.

In *Sound of Ohiii Into the Moon and the Sun*, the circles on the canvases are the sun and the moon, so the backgrounds of them are the universe. The small signs at the edges of the canvases are signs of Ultraman and Ultra Seven. I heard that they are actually seen in the Ultraman series. According to my limited reading, these signs were created with the intention to look like Hebrew ambigrams that were used to sign a pact with the devil.

(November 2013, from the artist’s notes)