

[Press Release]

2022/3/31

Leiko IKEMURA
infinitely transparent

Thursday, April 14 - Saturday, May 28, 2022



Leiko Ikemura, *Trees out of Head*, 2021, cast glass, 27x32x20cm

infinitely transparent

a ray of light looking from the darkest point

the light appearing in the darkest place

there is light in the darkness

Leiko Ikemura

About the Exhibition

ShugoArts is pleased to present its first solo show in five years with artist Leiko Ikemura. Ikemura has left a vivid and lasting impression on people's minds with her richly profound oeuvre and sophisticated presentation grounded upon her remarkable ideas, as was showcased at her solo exhibition at the National Arts Center, Tokyo in 2019. This exhibition at the gallery, which opens on 14 April, will feature six paintings, as well as six glass sculptures the artist has recently produced with a kiln that she had set up in her studio.

About the Glass Sculptures

Leiko Ikemura's life as an artist has always been an encounter with new materials and methods, at times ensuing a struggle, and is in essence a series of activities that have eventually culminated in her achieving mastery in establishing her distinct style. For example, in the early 1990s, when Ikemura began producing ceramic works, ceramics was not yet actively recognized as a material for sculpture in the context of contemporary art. Subsequently, Ikemura worked with bronze, ultimately realizing a monumental work measuring well over four meters. Following such endeavors, in recent years she has also produced works using mosaic and stained glass, and she has now come to channel her efforts towards glass sculpture.

Originally producing ceramic works with a glassy glaze, Ikemura familiarized herself with and was fascinated by both the transformation of glass through high heat and how glass takes on form with a sense of light-containing transparency. The artist mentions the exceptional joy of engaging herself in the creation of glassworks in her studio while taking her time in the process of their production. The series of glass sculptures that illustrate a high degree of perfection has been created with the aim of producing "forms summoning colors while instilling them with nuance, with the transparency of the forms and colors being integrated with each other."



Leiko Ikemura, *Cat*, 2020, cast glass, 20x26x14cm

About the Painting

If the glass sculptures contain light within themselves, then Ikemura's series of paintings that illustrate her new artistic developments intends to capture "the light that appears in the darkness" and preserves it within the pictorial space. Such works strongly convey Ikemura's "desire to venture beyond the mere level of expressing something, transcending both time and space to arrive at one's most transparent self-universe." Beyond the dualism of figurative/abstract, captured here are Ikemura's thoughts regarding metaphysical meditations, or the ideas and spirit conveyed through painting.



Leiko Ikemura, *Blackscape*, 2022, tempera and oil on nettle, 180x110cm

About the Poetry

Another "material" that Ikemura has engaged with over the past two decades are "words", which indeed can be regarded as a more metaphysical material. For over ten years, Ikemura has often treated the words that she has written herself as important constitutional elements in her exhibitions, in a manner that takes a step away from the formalities of poetry. Ikemura had published a series of poems intermittently over a one-year period in *Gendaishitecho* (Contemporary Poetry Journal) until June 2021 at the recommendation of the poet Koichi Tanokura, who had recognized Ikemura's poetic talent from an early stage. Such poetic works are noteworthy examples of Ikemura's artistic achievements through words.

If glass is the transformation and crystallization of silicon as a result of exposure to heat in the kiln, it could be said that, for Ikemura herself, poetry is another artistic medium that has settled on and crystallized within her over the years she spent in Europe, where she to this day has continued to build her life since leaving Japan at the age of 20.

In Closing

While working with various materials and methods, Ikemura has continued to pursue the “light and life” that never cease to shine throughout the times. We invite viewers to witness the latest fruits of Leiko Ikemura’s practice. Even in today’s increasingly challenging world, Ikemura continues in her unremitting artistic efforts to capture and give form to things “from a cosmic perspective that transcends individuals and nations”.

March 2022, ShugoArts

About the artist

Leiko Ikemura (born in Tsu, Japan) is a Japanese-Swiss artist working in Berlin and Cologne. Ikemura studied at the Osaka University of Foreign Studies and the University of Fine Arts in Seville. Featuring motifs such as animals, people, and horizons, Ikemura's work delves into the genesis of worlds through a variety of mediums, including painting, drawing, photography, and sculpture. Selected solo exhibitions: *Leiko Ikemura: Here we are/Aquí Estamos*, Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias, Valencia, Spain, 2022; *Leiko Ikemura – Usagi in Wonderland*, Norwich, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, UK; *Leiko Ikemura: Aún más mañanas*, Fundación Caja de Burgos, Spain, 2021; *Leiko Ikemura: From East to East*, Kunsthalle Rostock, 2020; *Leiko Ikemura – In Praise of Light*, St. Matthäus-Kirche, Berlin, 2020; *Toward New Seas*, Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland; *Our Planet – Earth and Stars*, National Art Center, Tokyo, 2019; *After another world*, ShugoArts, Tokyo, 2017; *Poetics of Form*, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, Nevada, 2016; *All About Girls and Tigers*, Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst Cologne, 2015; *Pioon*, The Vangi Sculpture Garden Museum, Shizuoka, 2014; *i-migration*, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, 2013; *Transfiguration*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Mie Prefectural Art Museum, 2011.

Her works can be found at, among others, Museum Ludwig in Cologne, Kunstmuseum Basel, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, and The Centre Pompidou in Paris.



Leiko Ikemura Interview movie, June 2017
<https://shugoarts.com/en/news-en/2909/>



Leiko Ikemura Interview text
<https://onl.la/dKXrqfP>

Exhibition overview

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Dates: Thursday, April 14 - Saturday, May 28, 2022

*Spring Holidays: Friday, April 29, and from Sunday, May 1 to Thursday, May 5.

Venue: ShugoArts, complex665 2F, 6-5-24, Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0032

Opening Hours: Tue-Sat noon-6pm, closed on Sun, Mon and Public Holidays

The opening reception will not be held this time. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, we have shortened our opening hours.

◆Other artists' news are available on : <http://shugoarts.com/en/topics/>

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