

Sculptor and painter. Gensho Sugahara, known for his portraits in which the sense of materiality is abolished through the use of plasticine techniques and homogenous painting on the surface of FRP, and Shinnosuke Tojo, who scratches and oxidises the metal plate that serves as a support to form multiple layers, may often be referred to by the aforementioned titles. However, in this exhibition of two artists who have a mutual affinity for the superficiality of materials, the characteristics of their works blend together and the existing perception of sculpture and painting becomes almost meaningless. Rather, what we can expect is what we might call a re-presentation of the world that the two artists are opening up to the confusion of our times. This means that both artists are fundamentally involved in questioning the very world that surrounds us.

In the portraits that Sugahara has created so far, he has not focused on a specific person, but has ensured anonymity with a smooth surface. They are reminiscent of people drifting aimlessly through urban space, and while maintaining a certain form, they are intended to be a mixture of multiple images. The shapes are also related to the changeability of fashion, a phenomenon that interests the artist. The image of a man and a woman in clothes is at the same time homogenous and fluid, and in the softness of their blending together, they are similar to the contemporary age. In this exhibition, Sugahara will present a Pantone chair and a succulent cactus, both of which were first mass-produced in the 1960s, in the same grey colour as the female figure. Sugahara's work is interesting because it emphasises the equality of all things, without attaching value to the presence or absence of life, in a hyper-real contemporary society where vast amounts of objects, people and information move and circulate. The cactus, with its strong impression of stillness, not only symbolises the age of the corona disaster, but also reminds us of the many times we have been restricted in our movements. The cactus, like the figure and the readymade Pantone chair, has the duality of being both an individual and a networked group, thanks to its graftable ecology.

In Tojo, too, the surface of the work reveals a plurality that cannot be reduced to a single term. Using a variety of materials such as oil-based inks and pigments on steel plates, Tojo's two-dimensional works create delicate and complex scenes, which may give the viewer the impression of a kind of vagueness, a kind of chaos. However, it is the artist's own synaesthetic imagery and the "tagging" of graffiti on the wall that has been at stake, the implementation of multiple layers on the surface. The work then stands before the viewer as a very vague landscape of individual perception and memory, and at the same time as a wall showing the traces of a culture and history differentially formed by countless people. In this exhibition, Tojo attempts to create a colourless world in which, as the artist says, "there is no colour". In this exhibition, Tojo will attempt to create a colourless world which, as the artist says, "eliminates colour". This will also question the significance of his previous attempts to

make an uncertain world exist, in resonance with Sugahara's work.

The title of the exhibition, "Have you ever seen a ghost?", is an apt one if we regard the exhibition as an attempt at co-creation between Sugahara and Tojo. The title of the exhibition, "Have you ever seen a ghost?" is apt, since "ghost" is a very ontological object in that it is only allowed to exist between the visible and the invisible, implying a return and forth between the different worlds of "here" and "there". Sugahara's sculptures, in which the imagery of today's fast-moving world is depicted as a false representation of the human body, and Tojo's two-dimensional works, in which time and space are disturbed and the self and other become indistinguishable landscapes, become interfaces that mediate between different worlds by daring to remain on the surface. It is the plurality and singularity of the world to which I, you, or no one else belongs and to which it is de-territorialised that each work brings to our attention through its tactile superficiality.

Keisuke Mori (Curator, Chiba City Museum of Art)