



The World of Takami Sakurai's Paintings 5

by Osamu Fukano

Her head is adorned with a modest flower. The strong rim of her face is streaked with the depths of a loneliness that has yet to heal. The intensity of her eyes, raised straight up, foreshadows the blossoming of Sakurai's subsequent pictorial world.

After a year, he returned to the U.S. again. The spiritually isolated beatnik movement had just entered the heart of the masses, and a tremendous hippie vortex was brewing. LOVE AND PEACE - In the midst of the raging slogans of the American youth driven to Vietnam to prove themselves as human beings, Sakurai clearly grasps the testimony of human love that crosses the valley between oneself and others.

In Sakurai's new painting, a boat is rowed out to sea, propelled by the oars of countless people. The bow of the boat is crowned by a statue with a broad chest, and the women are adorned with a sky full of gorgeous flowers. LOVE and PEACE appear not as political slogans, but as ideological principles that Sakurai has grasped as weapons for human beings to live as human beings and to overcome all kinds of discrimination.

I believe that Sakurai reached a peak during the second of his two periods of residence in the United States. I have heard that the painter Sakurai Takami started out with a devotion to Gauguin, who had the following to say.

“A person's work, in other words, describes that person. There are two kinds of beauty. The first comes from instinct, the second from exploration. The various transformations that these two combine to create are indeed complex and fruitful, but the art critic must make an effort to recognize them.”