



## The World of Takami Sakurai's Paintings 7

by Osamu Fukano

The expression of the black painting reminds one of the starry sky at night. Black is often a symbol of denial and aggression. However, this is not the case in Sakurai's third period. Sakurai's black paintings are bright and deep, just as when we gaze at the night sky, our hearts are filled with a longing for the infinite. It is the opposite of darkness, a flight into space. It is the depths to which we have abandoned practical prosperity and arrived at the thought of universality.

And what does the red nudity mean? I believe that this mysterious red color, discovered by Takami Sakurai, is the richest crystallization of Sakurai's expression to date.

Red is the skin color of Indians in terms of race. Consider the presence of red-skinned Indians in American society, a racial crucible. Although they are Native Americans, they have been subjected to discrimination and oppression since the pioneer days. New discoveries of their social existence have been induced with the development of the beatnik and hippieism movements and the upsurge of black power. And with the popularization of the movement, the recognition of the existence of white, yellow, black, and red people as the same human being has slowly been spreading. The reality, of

course, is far from a total solution to the race problem. However, the development of the hippie movement, which is generally regarded as a mere genre phenomenon, was in the mainstream a great cry for human liberation.

The world belongs to the masses without discrimination. When Sakurai arrived at this intense human perception and worldview, the figures in his paintings stood out with their red naked bodies. The people generously sing and march along. We live hand in hand to overcome the shadow of skepticism through mutual human trust. It is a wonderful thing to live. No matter how lonely each one of us is, or rather, because we are small beings overcome by loneliness and desolation, human life is wonderful. Sakurai's paintings speak to this in the most sincere way.