



The World of Takami Sakurai's Paintings 3

by Osamu Fukano

Looking back on Takami Sakurai's twenty-five years of painting, we can roughly divide his career into three periods.

There is his early works before his first trip to the U.S. in 1964.

The paintings of that period, such as those shown in the small solo exhibition he held in Inaba-cho, Fukuoka City, just before his departure for the U.S., were based on dark green and grayish-blue colors, with many motifs of emaciated figures with bones and sinewy skin writhing in longing for the skies above.

There was a dark and depressing world, combative and aggressive, yet inescapably lonely, in which only longing was concentrated in the sky.

The sentimentality and loneliness of a young man in his twenties were shown in his bare and painful nakedness, revealing his feelings as well.

The poems of Otsuru Toshiro, a poet of the same generation as Sakurai, were also the subject of Sakurai's paintings.

Wet and blue like seashells, we were on the seashore

We were waiting for nothing, for there was nothing to block our view

We were as thirsty as the very grave

We were not to be looked upon, and without wings or fins, what else could we do but stand still?