

Kazuna Taguchi (*1979, Japan)

you are a mirror, reflecting me

21st of January 2016 – 2nd of April 2016

Using existing images such as magazine, newspaper and found photo clippings as her motif, Kazuna Taguchi paints anonymous, imaginary women and still lifes with astonishing realism. She then photographs the resulting acrylic painting and, after a patient operation in the darkroom, produces a photograph which will be shown as the final work. Standing in front of her skilfully finished photographic print, a viewer will feel the strange yet irresistible sense of reality in the image. Her works veil the marks of her brushwork, and their photographic aura makes some of the portraits feel like pages from a magazine fashion spread. But in another sense, the ambiguity of their surface – is it a photo or not? is it canvas or paper? – positions Kazuna Taguchi as an artist who is not primarily satisfied with obvious readings of her outcomes.

Kazuna Taguchi's portraits foreground the act of 'freezing' her figures. We could term this effect a 'friezure' – seizure in frieze. As visible beings of post-human portraiture, all of the women appear to be in the act of becoming something else – something other than or beyond themselves. Caught in the moment, their faces evoke varying degrees of trauma – catatonia, withdrawal, delusion, desperation, mania, shock. Their melodramatic posture is heightened in a manner that hauntingly echoes late 19th Century photographs of women interred in insane asylums. Swimming in a fog of grey, the women appear simultaneously lost and trapped within the frame. Again, the blur between identifiable content (the women) and their representation (their photo-painterly rendering) queers any simplistic reading of the image. The women are marked as being somewhere else. Their presence is more ethereal than photographic. This is why Kazuna Taguchi's elusive creatures squirm like they are interred somewhere within the fluid granular epidermis between the glass and the print.

The gorgeous ocean of wavering focal gradations across the forms of the still life's and visages of the women – organically ordered in each print – is less an arty visual effect and more a drawing of the emotional aura of each portrait or object. Arguably, there is no real background, mid-field or foreground in these prints. In place, there is the mirage of depth created by the emotional aura. Their grey surrounding void and the surface amalgamates multiple energy fields – emotional, psychological, spiritualist, materialist – into a dimension of a fleeting existence. Their torsos-with-heads or cups hover like liquefied ghosts emerging from a swamp of 'swimming grain'.¹

Kazuna Taguchi conferred a Doctorate for Painting Major from the Tokyo University of the Arts in 2008, and was awarded the Nomura Prize. In 2010 she won the Gotoh Memorial Prize Foundation Newcomer's prize of art. She has also recently received a scholarship in the Agency for Cultural Affairs' Program of Overseas Study for Upcoming Artists and resides in Vienna. Major solo exhibitions include "It is as it is" at ShugoArts 2009 and 'Half in Gray' at void+ 2009. Taguchi gained significant attention from the group exhibitions 'Taipei Biennial – Dirty Yoga,' at Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2006, 'Trace Elements' at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, 2008, Yokohama triennale 2011: OUR MAGIC HOUR' at Yokohama museum, 2011, 'somewhere between me and this world – Japanese contemporary photography' at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography 2012 and 'Sleeping Beauty', Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima 2014. Furthermore she was part of the 'TOKYO2020 group exhibition at Christophe Guye Galerie in Zurich in 2014.

Her first monograph "blueness of the blue" by torch press, Tokyo, will be published in conjunction with the exhibition. The 96 page publication with FM screen prints will be available at the gallery.

¹ Excerpts from two essays by Philip Brophy and Kyôji Maeda