OKAMOTO Mitsuhiro: Makkuro Pop
October 25 - November 22, 2014
curated by Takeshi Kudo, curator of Aomori Museum of Art

eitetsukou is pleased to announce a solo exhibition ‘Makkuro Pop’ by OKAMOTO Mitsuhiro (b.1968). The exhibition is curated by Takeshi Kudo, a curator of Aomori Museum of Art. Makkuro means entirely black in Japanese. The word is also used with the meaning of the worst, and the basest.

about OKAMOTO Mitsuhiro: Makkuro Pop by the curator:

As my own personal impressions, the Tohoku earthquake evoked the acceleration of the hypocrisy. There is a lot of money making behind the reconstruction. I can’t distinguish the merchant of death of war and the merchant improving the victims under the name of ‘Contribution to society’. Of course, almost all the people working in the disaster regions have pure motives, I believe. But a huge whirlpool of the capitalism swallows such individual feelings. Definitely his tragedy creates money. Therefore the current situation in that area is a natural reflection of a society. It indicates the strength of the human life in a sense. Still the dignity of each person concerned with tragedy should be called into question. Some people engaged in art jump into the mainstream proactively (because art is also one of the economic activities), but I do not want an artist utilizing tragedy for profit. If we do not want him or her to do easy criticism to a society, I hope the artist should be careful not to look at the tragedy from a special privilege-like viewpoint. If anything, I believe rather the people who are fluctuated in front of the tragedy.

By the way, it will be the 70th anniversary of the end of the war in the next year. So a lot of discussions about postwar may occur again and again. But why the postwar talk about the WWI has not so done in Japan today, in spite of its 100 years? Because of Japan got a victory? Because the one before last? I think the WWI was the first experience of the modern war. The WWI changed our social system and the recognition of the existence of us much, rather than the WWIII. Both of the defeat of the WWIII and the reasoning which obscures the war responsibility of state high command are not the cause of the problem in Japan today. In my opinion, could the generation who enjoyed material prosperity of postwar Japan do self-questioning? It is etiquette for intellectuals, so I have to be serious. Anyway, people those worry about Japan criticize the others. But it looks like they have a narrowed view of the world. They should only take care of themselves.

I am afraid of a natural disaster as same as an accident of a nuclear plant, I think war is bad, it maybe. It is ordinary feeling, Nobody wants his or her life to be in danger. The war happens many times, even now it goes on. History says that there were a lot of sacrifices for an ideal of world. So, the world is an irrational thing. The most important thing is how we adapt ourselves in the other words, we should be careful about history and the world as possible. Acquiring knowledge and thought, and loving our life make us not taking the excessive and simplistic behavior to credit. In opposite, people tend to hate the others that have different opinions, with ignoring troublesome things, or using flights of rhetoric, or committing wrongs in the name of justice. That’s too bad. The right or the left, either lead to the same in the end. Fascism is not only a meaning of the right.

The current culture seems a simple, easy thing. There are a lot of dazzling art, self-creating art. Such a cool-style art looks screamingly funny. It could be interpreted as a reflection of the surface of the world that consumes a lot of heartwarming stories and life lessons. But I want the art to be the device which is a chance to deepen an individual thought. And at the same time the art should be a kind of prescription that makes free from any pressures. Art is never means to lead a person, I person.

These preliminaries gone on too long. In that sense, the work of OKAMOTO Mitsuhiro is opposed to the time which is characterized as the present. It is not an honest, it has not a weight. It rather makes a kind of viewer, or it seems to be being ridiculous. This is why his work is understood easily. OKAMOTO Mitsuhiro is, by the other words, being scene like art, Makuro Pop, which is based on doubting it. OKAMOTO is an artist thoroughly distrusts about a right, a power and a public opinion called a common sense. OKAMOTO’s attitude to making his art is consistent. He directly throws a question in a society. The question is formed by his own experience, his thoughts and recognition of the world as an Kyote-life (Japanese who were born and live in Kyote). And not to be committed to the others and a society, it is always crystallized with his personal filters in his brain. The process is strictly executed in the overseas, so somehow OKAMOTO made the work which the people on the spot could never understand. This attempt is considered as the perfect relativization. From his work, we can find out the relativization of ‘I’ and ‘You’, Japan and the world, the present and the past, and the front and the back. The subject. The question has no correct answer. The artist just indicates the gap of the meaning and the recognition which is occurred by the relativizations.

In recent years, OKAMOTO is known for his work about the problem of the copyright that does not protect a culture but uses for a concession. It suggests the situation like that culture dwarfing culture. Hence the reconstruction of a motif in a society is his body of the work even if the meanings were arranged, or were thrown away in the chaos. The gap by the relativizations causes various feelings such as the surprise, laughter and the anger. And there is a something new viewpoint in his work. The OKAMOTO, the important thing for taking OKAMOTO’s work deeply is thinking about where the various feelings come from. Today parody and irony are not permitted, and also humor and wit are not recognized as effective means of the critics. The work of OKAMOTO reminds us the pleasure of thought which is given from an intellectual play as well as the visual pleasure to open the mind from a closed society. That is not a bland-new way. It continues from ancient. For example, a tragedy can transform into a comedy. It is easy to point out that is imprudent, but it is a fact that there is a person those who consumes a tragedy for his or her own feeling of satisfaction. Truth is not one thing, it changes easily by interpretation. Even one human being can have a lot of feelings, so it is impossible to understand a whole society, which is accumulating a mass of the unconscious minds. When it was interpreted, the different interpretation will be brought soon. I rather say the work of OKAMOTO indicates the world is still multilayered of the meanings, as though it seemed that the world today advances homogenized. Even his viewers can think about the meaning of the others. Culture is an accumulating body of the intellect, and it is a complicated textile of the quotation. It generates both of the feelings and its meanings liminally. It is easy to make a beautiful thing by the surface of it. OKAMOTO does not want such a pure white, does not want to reflect us in a mirror of our surface. The artist aims to indicate a light in the darkness of the chaos. OKAMOTO reveals how our consciousness is controlled, and he gives us a hint about how to make a value which is rooted by each living. Pretending to be bad is better than white hypocrisy. That is the reason why I titled this exhibition ‘Makkuro Pop’.

Takeshi Kudo
Curator, Aomori Museum of Art