

Makoto Taniguchi

Untitled

2014. 3.1 - 3.29

NANZUKA

Makoto Taniguchi was born in Tokyo in 1982 and completed studies in Intermedia Art at the Graduate School of Fine Arts at Tokyo University of the Arts. Past exhibitions include Art Award Tokyo in 2007, neoneo Part 1 [Men] in 2009 (Takahashi Collection Hibiya, Tokyo), Daughters of the Lonesome Isle in 2012 (sprout curation, Tokyo), and solo exhibition *Ano kono iru basho wo sagashite* (2005-) in 2012 (SUNDAY, Tokyo).

Taniguchi's works are based on the imagery of girls in Japan as they appear as characters in comics and anime, and as heartthrobs and idols. These images of girls, passed down steadily to Taniguchi since his youth in the 1980s, are acknowledged as a common, general occurrence within contemporary Japanese society. Despite the repeated cultivation of these images as encoded forms whose origins are found in currency circulation and consumption, they evoke within the viewer the feeling of a vivid, living presence. Taniguchi reiterates a dialogue with this imagery, continuing the discussion in terms of the relationship between real existence born out of "strong feelings" and "emotional involvement", and the act of painting.

Taniguchi's paintings, using acrylic sheets and mirrors, are some of his strongest works, bringing the efforts of his studies to fruition. The two images, one reflected in the mirror and one painted on the acrylic sheet, express the distance the artist senses between the cognitive experience and that which exists. We are unable to make out the image of the girl reflected in the mirror from straight on. Further, that image would cease to exist without the deformed image in front of it, which seems to be melting away. Coming face to face with this piece, we realize that we can never get any closer to the girl that lives in the world of the mirror. At the same time, however, we also realize that as a dialogue with the viewer the girl in the mirror will exist for eternity. Like a fleeting yet endless journey, lyrical and sweet, the artist repeatedly questions the eternal.

In regards to his work, Taniguchi says:

"When you look at anything which you sense exists, the moment when you sense that it exists it immediately becomes an 'image'. That is to say, a mixture of memories, impressions, and image in the purely visual meaning of the word: something that can only truly be understood by oneself. In an attempt to confirm that the images do indeed exist, we try to conjure them before our eyes by painting or creating objects. When I try to draw the interior 'images' which though invisible to the eye surely do exist, the dazzling brightness and the ephemeral nature of that existence surges forth, and I start to think about my own ideas of 'existence' and my views on life."