

***Exhibition Critique: Art, " written by Norio Sugawara,
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Although high-technology art is in fashion now, that does not mean that the medium of painting has died out. The popularity of specific artistic media tends to rise and decline over time, and today the medium of painting does not seem to correspond with the trend of the time. In such a state of affairs, it is necessary for us to explore various painting expressions in order to be prepared for the next generation. This thought came into my mind when I saw Keiko Inoh's exhibition featuring shadow pictures and entitled "Shadow Works." The technique of shadow pictures is a simple and popular two-dimensional expression. Inoh's works in this exhibition entitled "The Patio" projected two shadow pictures of fences and flowers. When I noticed that the shadows were slightly blurred, I went to look at the device that generated these shadows. The blur was due to cellophane papers with weeds and flowers drawn and placed in between cutout papers with similar designs. When these papers are lit up, the delicate tones of the distance and shade are manifested. Inside the dimly lit room, there were two large-scale shadow pictures, and several other works, which utilized mainly charcoal and gave the impression of looking out through a corridor to a Spanish-style garden. These charcoal works were displayed as if to envelop the space. Viewers at the site would feel as if they were inside the fence of a patio (Spanish word for court yard).

This artist's interest lies in "the marginal," or in "the boundary," for instance, the boundary between a person's interior and exterior, between this side and that side of a border between countries, and between the inside and the outside of a house, which is depicted in her current works. "The boundary" has been Inoh's consistent interest in the idea that a great change in a situation or an environment could occur if we were to step over the threshold of "the boundary." When she was invited to take part in the "Japanese Contemporary Art Exhibition" held in Seoul, she exhibited a work entitled "The Last Door," which could be seen both as the inside or the outside of a house. In this work, she sought to symbolize the tightly closed state that people are in today.

On the other hand, "The Patio" could also be understood as referring to how women were often kept inside the house. From this point of view, the theme of "gender" comes within the range of her work. The meaning of the title of her exhibition "Shadow Works" signifies labor that exists behind-the-scenes of the wage earners life, or, in other words, "housework." Inoh's works gained recognition by incorporating a current issue, "femininity," for the theme, through her flexible idea of "the boundary," as well as by utilizing low-technology techniques to create shadow pictures that are far removed from today's high-technology world.

Born in Tokyo in 1963. Keiko Inoh's exhibition is being held at Key Gallery until the 26th.