

A Message to Crystal

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How much time does it require for a piece of work to be completed? And what exactly does the creator think about during this flow of time? These vague questions were running through my mind as I stood before the work of glass.

It emitted a cold light from the inside, and was spatially positioned in a way that projected a feeling of quiet, translucent presence, like travertine formed in a limestone cove or an icicle hanging from the ceiling of a cave in the depth of winter. Kazuo Kadonaga's work stood before me, not as something to be taken as sculpture, or even as cubic molding, but rather as the spatial event of an object.

It has been fifteen years or so since Kadonaga began experimenting with the use of glass as material, and his current piece can be seen as a fruit of the many trials and errors he experienced along the way. However, glass as a material possesses an overly wide variety of expressions and artistic elements, and holds many dangers when it is used as a material for molding expression. But avoiding conventional techniques such as molding and blowing glass, Kadonaga developed a unique methodology. He built a system which can handle the process of melting and dripping glass. The glass is melted in a furnace, and then dropped like thin threads; new layers of melted a swirling form is created.

Glass, when it has been melted at the high temperature of 1450 centigrade, becomes essentially formless, and the conditions for it to take form finally come together when it is exposed to a minimum amount of action. The process of melting and dripping takes place over a period of two days and two nights, and is followed by a four-month span where the glass cools and becomes a work of art. Kadonaga established his own artistic language by establishing this system of metamorphosis while carefully observing the original nature of the material.

Kadonaga has never produced works using many techniques. In his early works he used materials such as wood, paper, and bamboo, avoiding techniques as much as possible; rather he created works from the special characteristics of the materials themselves or of the changes they underwent. This stance is consistent with his glass works. Borrowing his own words, "My works are process art. The works emerge from a simple methodology."

This one-man exhibition is Kadonaga's first exhibit in Tokyo in 19 years. It is not that he failed to produce any work during these years. Rather, he continued his activities with great vitality, basing himself in Los Angeles, and exhibiting in places such as the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark

He is planning to hold exhibits in a variety of countries starting in June 2001, with the first in Los Angeles. In other words, it is probably fair to say that he has consciously avoided exhibiting in Japan. This is an expression of silence toward Japan, and absolutely not a silence regarding the creation of work. Kazuo Kadonaga's artistic stance is to refuse to be tossed about by trends in the artistic world and the times, and rather to work in pursuit of his own ideal system.