

THE VERGE OF AWARENESS

shingo tanaka

2011.09.02 (fri.) - 09.30 (fri.)

open on fri., sat., and sun. 12:00-18:00

weekday appointments also available

opening reception on 09.03 (sat.) 18:00-20:00

In my dark studio, I light a flame.

The fire just being born begins to burn into the contours of the paper so gently, so quietly – as if a rising sun gradually shines on the ridge lines of distant mountains. In the darkness of my studio, where I cannot even make out my own hands, my existence fades away. It seems as if only the flame exists in my world. Time, losing its speed, flows unbelievably slowly, until it is almost as if time has stopped.

The word “fantastic” is somehow not adequate to express this light -- but it is actually nothing special, I suppose. The flame itself disappears as soon as we start to describe it.

I just stare at the flame outlining the objects around me, at the shadows of the space where I exist. I cannot take my eyes from this swaying flame.

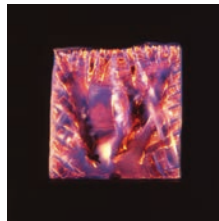
My studio becomes again pitch dark once the flame is completely vanishes.

When I hit the light switch, time starts to shift back its usual speed.

Shingo Tanaka

The works of Shingo Tanaka, without fail, involve “FIRE”. Tanaka has constantly evolved in creation employing fire. “Fire” has been an interesting theme for a number of artists in the history of art. “Fire” has been also a popular theme in artistic expressions in different media. But Tanaka’s works are without doubt totally unique.

He separates his works into four different series: “TRACE”, “LIGHT”, “TRANS”, and “HEAT”.



TRACE

The theme of the current exhibition, *On the Verge of Awareness*, is announced in the color photographs of flames of the Trace series. Even though each work is as beautiful as a jewel, they also express the fear that fire produces. The works of this series, overlaying pyrotechnical events in time and space, contain images of flames from all directions reset on a single plane. These powerful works make one feel the overwhelming power of fire as well as the time and space in which flames exist.



LIGHT

In this series, Tanaka expresses flames in photography. In his last exhibition “*Dreams and Reality*” at eN arts in 2009, black and white photographs of the flaring flames were exhibited. The works in the LIGHT series capture the figures of the flames in the different stages, beginning to burn, bursting into a blaze, and fading out. Both of the actual flame started on the metal plate and its reflection are equally photographed as one figure. Co-existence of the real and the false flames in one photograph seems like a metaphor of the sense of mortality.



TRANS

This is Tanaka's dynamic sculpture series. The works are created in a unique manner in which he combines the nature of the fire with simple materials, such as paper or wooden panels, to create sculptures. In contrast to the LIGHT series, his works in the TRANS series freeze both time and motion. But after the work is complete, we enjoy observing their transmutation over time caused by the frailty of the ashes, which are a significant part of each sculpture.



HEAT

Tanaka creates his works in this series by combining fire and the chemical reactions of paper and *Shikkui* (Japanese Plaster applied on walls of traditional Japanese houses). He creates a panel using a wood and *Shikkui* as if building a small wall. Then, with a torch, he begins to burn the surface of the panel. Depending on the duration of exposure, the strength of the fire, and his motions as he moves the torch, the textures, the colors and the motifs form differently on the *Shikkui* panels. Upon viewing the works of the HEAT series, the observer's imagination builds from and beyond their own experiences.