

GENTA ISHIZUKA: INTERNAL

A few years ago, I had a gastroscopy for the first time. I endured the fear of a foreign object entering my resistless body under anaesthesia, remembering the scene in the film "Alien" where the alien tears through the stomach of the actor. During the procedure, the gastroscope pressed against my skin from the inside, and I contemplated the relationship between skin membrane and its internal structure, the fundamental concept of my work.

There are six pieces titled 'Taxis Groove' which form the centre of this exhibition. For these pieces, I created knot-like shapes with aluminium duct hose, normally used for air conditioning, and covered them with elastic cloth to make their foundations. A groundwork is achieved through application of lacquer coats using the *kanshitsu* technique, or dry lacquer technique, to form their basic structures. Colours emerge on their surfaces, emphasising the continuity of the forms and the movement generated by knots. This is a visualisation of energy being pushed out from the inside, and my attempt to illustrate the relationship between the inside and the outside of a structure on its surface. I endeavour to express the organic elements of *urushi*, a natural material, by means of lacquering. My aim is to achieve a deep and dynamic expression through the variation of colour in each piece.

Insects have a habit of instinctively gathering to light. This response, called phototaxis, is the animal's subconscious behaviour caused by the stimulation of light. Using phototaxis as an example, certain behaviours of animals in reaction to stimuli from the outside world are called taxis. In working with lacquer, when I am trying to make the best use of the characteristics of the material, it sometimes becomes ambiguous to me whether it is my intention or the intention of the material. I titled some of my works in such a way to suggest that I am unconsciously influenced by the stimuli of the lacquer.

There are two pieces with holes, which are inspired by the worldwide pandemic of viruses. A few years ago, I had the feeling that the virus, and the fears and information associated with it were entering my body whether I wanted them to or not. The physical skin that was supposed to separate me from the world was no longer functioning, and I was permeable to the world through my eyes, ears, and breath.

At that time, I thought that by making holes in a membrane, I could create a work as the existence of such a membrane based on the absence of its content, as opposed to one that contains an internal substance. Applying lacquer is like creating a membrane, and I have developed my work through this process. To bring out the characteristics of lacquer such as tension and gloss, I stuff styrofoam balls into an elastic cloth and apply lacquer to the shape created in this way using the *kanshitsu* technique. By making holes in the protrusions of the forms and removing their contents, these works are structures of which the membranes stand on their own.

Producing lacquer works is a repetitive process of lacquering and polishing. The structure of the lacquer as a membrane, consisting of a foundation, a groundwork and coats of lacquer, reminds me of the human body, with its skeleton, flesh, and skin, and makes me aware of the physicality of my work. I make lacquer works by layering the *urushi*, the skin sensation which I feel with the surface of my body and the visceral sensation inside my body. I hope that my work will connect my senses more widely with viewers and expand their awareness.