



photo : YAMAGUCHI Kazuya

Hiroshi SENJU

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SENJU, Hiroshi is an artist of "Nihon-ga", which is a style of Japanese traditional painting. He completed the Ph.D. Program in Fine Arts at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music in 1987. In 1995, he represented Japan at the Venice Biennale in Italy. He was awarded an honorable mention for his 42-foot waterfall painting in the Japanese Pavilion. While living and working in Japan and New York, his works have been exhibited in many museums and galleries world-wide. He became a Professor at KUAD in 2002 and was recently also appointed a Vice President of the same university.

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The 20th century has seen a chaotic transition to the 21st century. Some historians say that the 20th century began with World War I. If we accept this notion, we could say that the 21st century began with the 9.11 terrorist attack. At the moment when this attack occurred, our sense of value was completely changed. I believe that much of contemporary art of the 20th century was all about "shock" and "sensation". And, after experiencing such a horrible terrorist attack, we came to realize that contemporary art of the 20th century had no value to us after all. It may be that contemporary art of the 20th century served merely as topics of conversation for people of wealth who made huge riches through Internet-businesses.

Coming to the 21st century, we bade farewell to contemporary art of the 20th century, which came to appear to us like a bad joke, realizing that only art works which are recorded in history can lend us encouragement, vitality and healing. What the 20th century lacked was imagination. It was an era in which we forgot the existence of other people. Our imagination was so limited that the inhumane consequences of bombing and airplane crashes were not considered at all. A lack of imagination was the most characteristic aspect of 20th century contemporary art. I feel the necessity to understand this, facing the reality that performances that leave us feel senseless, conceptual arts that prevent us from using our imagination, and many other thoughtless artistic expressions have been very easily weeded out of history.

Kyoto University of Art and Design (KUAD) has a long-cherished dream of fostering the talents of artists who could play active roles on the international stage. In April 2004, the dream took a step towards reality, with inauguration of the International Research Center for the Arts (IRCA). We will start work with a few Fellows, constantly questioning the real meaning of "being international". The 21st century is an era that craves imagination. Imagination is none other than the heart to sense the beautiful. We call for Fellows who understand this and could become leaders of the 21st century, compensating for what the 20th century has neglected. We are setting high goals at the international level and welcome the participation of talented artists who can meet these easily. We are ready to support such artists with our utmost efforts.