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The main characteristic of KABATA's work, be it oil painting or ballpoint pen drawing, is the way in which she builds up numerous, long, repetitive strokes to fill the surface of the picture. In the case of oil paints, the artist does not use brushes; rather she uses the palms of her hands or her fingers to rub the paint in. She does not depict anything so much as leave traces of having flung paint then pressed it in with her hands. In actual fact, KABATA uses her entire body, performing extremely large strokes, employing all her strength, experiencing resistance from the surface of the picture but finishing it remarkably quickly. She does not move away from her work, but remains within arm's length as she devotes herself to her painting.

Her almost violent, unceasing action of 'building up' is evident in her ballpoint pen works too. The ballpoint pen, which is generally considered to be a tool for writing or drawing lines, is 'exploited' in KABATA's work, the ink built up endlessly until it creates solid layer. She grasps her pen (sometimes more than one) and works repetitively in an almost automatic fashion, until the surface of the work goes beyond the scope of strokes to take on the appearance of the accumulation of an endlessly repeated action. If you draw closer to the work, you will see a wild dance of extremely fine lines, and a heavy black surface that is the result of the built-up mass of violently drawn lines. The flat, smooth surface produced by the ballpoint pen shading is seasoned by the inkjet paper to which it has been applied, creating a ceramic-like texture, a mirror surface resembling shiny metal, allowing it to reflect the viewer and surrounding environment. It deflects the viewer's gaze, leaving it to move randomly across its surface.

KABATA started using a ballpoint pen to draw lines in this way when her high school teacher said: 'Use a pen to run a full marathon and draw a line 42.195 kilometers long.' KABATA tried this. 'I thought the paper I used was quite large, but it was soon covered, it possessed a dull gleam like metal and it was easy to be fooled into thinking that it was no longer paper. Despite this, I continued to draw lines and the pen scraped away the surface of the paper. In the places where it peeled away the paper was revealed, strongly emphasizing the truth that it was in fact paper.' This extreme, overwhelming, repetitive action, her single-minded endeavor where the whole cannot be seen, is what is so characteristic of her work.

KABATA says 'I always want to go to the other side of the picture, I want to enter into the picture.' ... 'I always feel that something exists in the depths of the picture, something that I can never grasp, I know that I can never enter into the work, but want to try.'

Even though the artist did enter into the picture, the places where the ink had peeled away to reveal the paper below would sum up the artist herself, she wants to do it but knows it is impossible.

The artist says, 'The subject that I want to depict is one that cannot be "seen" and from this we can understand that she tries to express something that is invisible or unknowable. The title of one work on display in this exhibition, *event horizon* refers to the borderline between a black hole and the outer world, it consists of two sheets

of paper that have been coated with shiny, black ballpoint pen and if the viewer looks through the gap between them, it reveals a black, charcoal-like surface that absorbs all the light. If there is no light, then nothing can be seen, likewise, if the light is not reflected, it will be unrecognizable and so KABATA has colored it black, using a physics concept to try and portray the 'invisible' that she could not arrive at otherwise. In this context, *event horizon* can be described as possessing a straightforward structure. Likewise, there is her *54 Metrics*, that consists of fifty-four drawings on rectangular sheets of paper. 'Metric' is a cosmological term and by using the visible she has tried to highlight the outline of the invisible thereby producing a way of making the invisible recognizable. Depending on the angle from which it is viewed, the white ground and the black figure appear to reverse and seemingly change places, revealing a different layer that has not been drawn.

She says that her *Superposition* represents the structure of her painting. No matter how many paintings may be built up on top of each other, we can only ever see the top one. Using polyester cloth a base, her work, *Sleepless Night under Noisy Stars* is a work created using ballpoint pen and it represents a new experiment by KABATA to portray the 'other side' of a painting, something that is generally only seen from the front. In this work, the ballpoint pen adheres beautifully to the highly transparent fabric to produce hard, shiny 'surface'.

This artist always remains very aware that the viewer can only ever see the surface of the work and it will be interesting to see what work she will produce in the future. Her attempts to depict the invisible represent a major challenge and it could be that what we are seeing now is only the beginning.