

As I look at paintings by Suzuki Atsuko, I cannot help thinking that I would like to place them in my room like pieces of furniture and look at them quietly every morning. Her paintings express an esthetic sense rooted in everyday life with marvelous sensitivity and a sense of intimacy. The motifs of many of her works are based on familiar natural phenomena – clouds, rain, trees – but she uses her precise and painstaking technique to evoke memories of nature diffused in our bodies rather than presenting the sort of landscape we see in front of our eyes.

Viewing the two works shown in this exhibition, *Orange* and *Blue*, one images the rustling sound of leaves rubbing together.

These two paintings are conceived as a pair, representing day and night. At first glance, the motifs are flattened and simplified, but subtle textures have been created on the surface of the canvas. The leaves are depicted with light, pastel colors, each one slightly different from the others. The medium used on the leaves is watercolor, which penetrates the linen support. The area between the leaves, which appears as the ground of the painting, is built up with an underlayer of gesso and covered with oil paint, so it has a stronger material texture. Combined with the complex overlapping pattern of the leaves, the different techniques and textures used in rendering the figure and ground give a unique multi-layered effect to the painting. Bands of orange and blue are added to the bottom of the respective paintings, providing an effective color accent. The orange band foreshadows the coming of dusk and darkness and the blue suggests the lightening of the sky just before dawn.

Suzuki carefully and concisely turns an unseen presence emitted by nature into a painted world just as a poet skillfully manipulates words. Her paintings convey a pleasant sense of physical touch. They are attractive paintings that appeal to the tactile sense as well as the sense of sight. For these reasons, I would like to experience Suzuki's paintings up close on a daily basis.

Hirano Itaru

Curator, The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama