

MIZUHO KOYAMA

Calli-Graphiti

New Liberation of *Sho*

In the East, the history of *sho* (calligraphy) has been passed down unbroken since ancient times. The magnificent restrictions backed up by the history of this art-form are so binding that new expressions transcending the framework of *sho* are rarely generated. Up to now, only a few creators derived from Japanese *sho*, such as Yu-ichi INOUE and Toko SHINODA, have been recognized on the global art scene. But today, we are witnessing the emergence of a new liberator of *sho* who creates an original world while employing an innovative style different from those of her predecessors. The name of this artist is Mizuho KOYAMA.

She devoted herself for many years to the study of calligraphy under a teacher who placed a high value on traditional *sho*. Subsequently, in the course of her exploration of her own expressions, she has eagerly read, listened to and paid close attention to a variety of things including poems and stories in order to absorb them, a practice that has eventually enabled her to make three innovations.

Her first innovation has been to make use of poetry in English and other types of alphanumeric writing that people all over the world can read.

Secondly, she has incorporated factors taken from the free graffiti that grew up on the streets of New York, which can be regarded as the extreme opposite from traditional *sho* with its rigid rules of character expression.

Thirdly, she has ingeniously harmonized on paper the classics and techniques of *sho* that she has learned with the two innovations above to establish her original style of expression.

At the core of these three successful innovations is her grand wish to create works that touch the conscience and aesthetic sense shared by people around the world deep in their hearts beyond the borders of nationality, religion and the era—a wish that she expresses in simple black and white.

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