

Etsuko Ichikawa

Judith van Praag

Etsuko Ichikawa is an artist who creates site-specific art installations as well as smaller objects and prints. The first time I encountered her mesmerizing work, was during ArtDetour 2003. At that time she had a home studio in Columbia City, and was showing an installation as part of a juried show at the Bemis Building on South First.

A mass of carefully manipulated plastic piping –an artificial web without spider– awaited viewers in a cul de sac, a curiously filled empty space, off a main hallway. From a chair to the side, Etsuko presided her installation, offering explanations for the used material, which looked fragile, resembling blown glass.

Since then, she's been busy, creating new work and exhibiting in Haiochi, Japan, in California and Washington State. In 2004 she showed "Funiki: Floating Feelings", an installation made of hundreds of strategically hung, glass droplets, and mixed-media objects –each a universe in itself– caught under a glass dome, at Viveza Gallery in Seattle.

Earlier this year, she participated in the "Tacoma Contemporary: urban art installation", in the Woolworth Building, and showed her signature pyrographs (mono prints created by pressing hot glass onto dampened paper) at several venues in Seattle.

During Bumbershoot 2005, she offered her interpretation (fire - thread & paper) of the curator's guideline: "Raw & Refined".

Etsuko is the recipient of several awards, among which the Poncho Artist-in-Residence Program and a George Tsutakawa Memorial Scholarship, both at the Pratt Fine Arts Center. In 2005 she received a 4Culture grant. Her work has been exhibited in

Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States.

Favoring glass, Etsuko fearlessly mixes media.

"My father was a tailor. There was always thread and fabric around to play with."

In her hands crocheting transforms from craft to art form.

She may experiment, and the result may always be different, the theme of Etsuko's work, large and small, is constant: her aim is to capture the moment, feelings, and atmospheric impressions.

Her latest line "Deia" is focused on encounters, the momentary caught by bringing water, paper and fire together, a brief moment eternalized in a print.

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