新収作品  フランク・ブランギン《しきの日》

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Frank Brangwyn [1867-1956]
Stormy Weather at Sea
1889
Oil on canvas
98.0 x 124.0cm
Signed and dated lower right: F. Brangwyn 1889
P. 2001-3

Provenance:
Kôjirô Matsukata; The Jung Bank 1927-28; 3rd sale of the Matsukata Collection, Tokyo, 1930, no.8 repr.; Private collection, Japan; On loan to the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo 1960-2001.

Exhibition:

松方幸次郎がヨーロッパで西洋美術品の収集をした際に、最も依頼したアドバイザーのひとりであったブランギン像については、改めて述べるまでもないが、美術家としての業績に関しては我が国では稀なながらあり知る機会がない。ベルギー、イギリスの世紀末から今世紀の前半を生きたこの作家は、自然主義、象徴主義、唯美主義、アール・ヌーヴォーなど、さまざまな傾向を取り込みながら自己形成を行なった。ウイリアム・モリスなども親しかった彼の作品は、油彩のみならず、膨大な数の版画を中心に、壁畫、ステンドグラスやタペストリー、陶器、ポスター、家具デザイン、ブック・デザインなど非常に多彩である。そして松方幸次郎のためには「共楽美術館」の設計も行なった例であった。

本作品は、ブランギンの一連の油彩作品の中では「灰色の時代」と呼ばれる、比較的早い時期に属する作品として貴重である。海景や労働の情景を好んで描いたこの時期の初期の作品は、いずれも単色に近い重厚な色調で描かれており、本作品もその例外ではない。また、風の中で遊覧しかけている船といった主題は、かつてジェリコやターナーなどロマン主義世代が開拓し、のちに再びホッチャやマネ、ティソなどのレアリズムの洗礼を受けた人々、そしてとりわけ1880年代の自然主義の流行の中で再び扱われた「現代的」なモーヴである。本作品においては、中景に黒々と描かれた船は外輪と大きな破損を被った蒸気船であるが、後景には帆を振った帆船の姿も見える。

本作品は、1930（昭和5）年の第3回「松方氏蒐集絵画展覧会」（東京国立美術館）に出品され、売り立てられた作品ひとつで、その後1960年以降、国立西洋美術館に寄託されていた。松方コレクションの成立の上でブランギンが果たした役割はきわめて大きく、また松方自身、多数のブランギン作品を購入していたにもかかわらず、これまで国立西洋美術館には寄託作品を除いて油彩によるブランギンの作品はなかった。
As is well known, Frank Brangwyn was one of Kōjirō Matsukata's most trusted advisors as the Japanese businessman collected Western art works in Europe. Unfortunately, while Brangwyn is well-known in Japan as an artistic advisor, there has been no corresponding opportunity for the Japanese public to know of Brangwyn's own personal achievements as an artist. This painter who lived in Belgium and England from the end of the 19th century through the first half of the 20th century developed his own personal style while incorporating elements from such diverse artistic trends as naturalism, symbolism, aestheticism, and Art Nouveau. Brangwyn was a close associate of William Morris, amongst others, and his oeuvre is extremely diverse. It spans the media of oil paintings, a massive number of prints, wall paintings, and preparatory drawings for stained glass and tapestries, ceramics, posters, furniture design and book design. Brangwyn also lent his hand to the planning of Matsukata's Sheer Pleasure Arts Pavilion.

This painting dates from his so-called early Grey Period when he produced a series of oil paintings, and thus is an important example of his relatively early work. Works from his early period which, as here, depict either seascapes or scenes of labor, were all created in an almost monochromatic, heavy palette, and this work is no exception. Further, the subject of boats in distress amidst stormy seas was a modern motif that had been pioneered by such earlier Romantic painters as Gericault and Turner, then re-addressed by such Realists as Whistler, Manet and Tissot, and yet again reconsidered by the Naturalists of the 1880s. The boat which looms blackly in the middle of this composition is a steamship fitted with an external paddlewheel and large smokestack, but we can also see sailboats with sails unfurled in the background.

This painting was one of the works exhibited and sold in The 3rd Exhibition of the Matsukata Collection, Tokyo, 1930 (Tokyo City Museum of Art). It has been on deposit at the NMWA since 1990. Brangwyn's role in the formation of the Matsukata collection was enormous and Matsukata himself purchased a large number of Brangwyn's works. Nevertheless, while there are works in other media on deposit at the NMWA, there had been no oil paintings by Brangwyn in the NMWA collection.

It is said that Matsukata, as the president of Kawasaki Shipbuilding, was particularly fond of Brangwyn's works on marine and ship themes, and this work is a typical example of Brangwyn's efforts in this genre. We hope that the NMWA purchase of this work will lead to a reconsideration of this fin-de-siècle painter in his own country of Britain, where he is relatively overlooked, and will shed a new light on the relationship between Brangwyn and the Matsukata Collection.

(Akiya Takahashi)

Notes

1) Works by Brangwyn account for catalogue numbers 104 through 312 (with one additional work) of the collection catalogue, The Old Matsukata Collection: Occidental Art, Kobe City Museum, 1990.

2) At present, the NWMA collection includes four pastels (Archer, Woodman, Harvest, and Fishing, numbers Dep. 1985-1-4 respectively) and a large number of prints. Regarding these latter prints, see Michiko SATO, "The Provenance of 104 Prints by Frank Brangwyn Deposited in the National Museum of Western Art", Journal of The National Museum of Western Art, No.3, 1999, pp.45-60.