

S202

Shadow Play

かげえあそび

■ Purpose of Exhibition

Shadow pictures, which have been popular since ancient times, consist of creating silhouettes with the shadows of light using the hand or something made of paper or wood. While becoming familiar with the shadow, and coming to understand it, it can trigger the imagination. By becoming familiar with shadow pictures, you will understand lights and shadows, and how they work to create imaginative scenes and stories.



■ Additional Knowledge

[Try Making Different Things Using Shadow Play]

Hold various shaped objects to lights and reflect silhouettes on the screen. When you change to turn them toward different directions, they sometimes seem to become unexpectedly different objects. To infer the third dimensional shape from only the second dimension will help you enhance your cognitive ability of seeing space. Now, please pay attention to the size of the silhouette reflected on the screen. The reflected silhouette should be larger than what it is. As it comes closer to the light source, it will become larger. As it moves farther away from the light source, it will become smaller. Please make sure by your own experiment.

It is a wonderful world created with dolls made of cow skin, light and shadows. Also, in Thailand, Nang yai is well known, while in Cambodia, shadow pictures called Sbaek Thom are popular.

Article by Shoji Nishimoto, curator

[Clarity of Shadow Pictures]

The silhouette made here is quite clear. However, there are some cases when the outline of shadow pictures is seen as being obscure, not clear. Why is that? It is caused by a difference in size of the light source. As the light source gets smaller, the shadow will be smaller. A clear shadow picture can be taken even if it is far from the light.

When the outline of a silhouette becomes obscure and you place shadows of fingers towards it, both fingers appear to be touching on the shadow side, even though they are separated in reality. In the shadows produced by a certain size of light source, there is a spot where light doesn't appear at all and a spot where light appears around it. When two lights approach, the portions overlapped by half shadows can be seen as deepened and connected to each other.

[Shadow Pictures throughout the World]

The performances in which shadow pictures were utilized are familiar to us in a number of countries. In Japan, by combining the shape of one hand with the other, hand-shadow pictures in which figures of dogs, cats, fox, etc. are represented are well-known, and shadow dramas are played by hand-shadow pictures.

The dramas of shadow pictures in Indonesia are famous, and were registered as World Abstract heritage in 2009. These are called Wayang kulit, and are performed in accordance with music. The performance is called Gamelan, in which a tale is told based upon Indian poems.