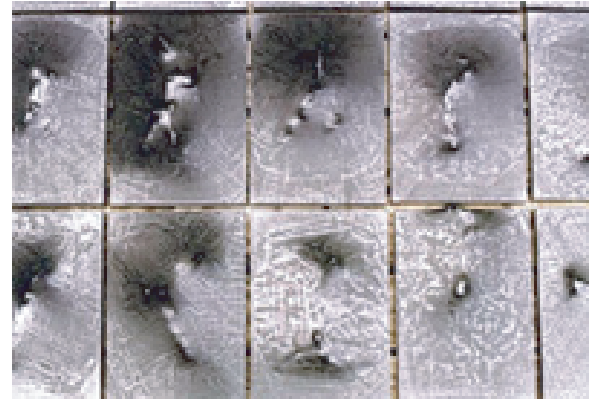


前田 比呂也

I was born into the house where *URUSHI* was a family business. *URUSHI* is a natural lacquer, and one of the traditional craft materials of Japan. In Okinawa, *URUSHI* was developed important trade goods of the Ryukyu Dynasty.

When I was a child, though helping with the family business, I became interested in the art of lacquer and learned techniques for making *URUSHI*. However, I did not use the Urushi as a material of my artistic expression for a long time.



Totome is Okinawan dialect meaning a family memorial tablet. In Okinawa, ancestor worship is popular and we often have dialogues with them in front of the *totome*. I have had an image for *totome* of a thin skin which divides this real world from the next world, after death.



I live in Nakandakari, Tamagusuku, a small village in Okinawa. On holidays I go down to the beach to pick up fragments of corals. Each of them has a different shape, which proves it once had a life. I stick each of them to a panel and cover it with nylon stockings. This product, which we often see used by bank robbers, is are presentative of uniform or standardized manufacturing. For the next process, *URUSHI* or lacquer is covered on the surface of the nylon film.

This other skin is strong enough to seal something beneath the nylon stockings. The strength of *URUSHI*, I believe, is the reason why it is used as a paint for *totome*. After finishing a piece, I produce a negative of it.

I repeatedly lay them out in different places.

