

YU-WHUAN WANG

SKIN • TIME

ConsciousnessUnconscious

DRAWINGS

August 6 - September 24, 2017

Gallery Hours

M - F 10am - 2pm

Sunday 9am - 1pm

OR by appointment

Dr. Sheldon Hurst, Curator 503.748.9419

ARTREACH GALLERY

at First Congregational UCC

1126 Park Avenue

Portland, OR 97205

www.uccportland.org/artreach



Open-Mindedness, 8.5" x 5.5" oil pastel

A CONVERSATION Yu-Whuan Wang, *Artist*
Sheldon Hurst, *Curator*

Sheldon Hurst: Welcome to ArtReach Gallery. We are so pleased that your drawings are here.

Yu-Whuan Wang: Thank you. It is good to be with you. My first time in Portland!

SH: How did you become focused on your particular path in art?

YW: I came to art through self-discovery. In Taiwan, I used to be a designer, working as a director, dealing with business and making money for the company. Then, one day I realized I was just working on the surface of life without much deeper reflection. I decided to go back to school, where I met passionate professors who opened my heart to a richer dimension. I studied sculpture under the master sculptor Yamamoto Kakuji, and Kishiro Yoshiji.

One day, busy with my studies, I saw Yamazaki Masayoshi sensei (sculptor, professor) giving his complete attention to repairing some used wire for his next sculpture. Suddenly, I realized I had been missing process in my work. For me, the simple basics of process bring my attention to the truths hiding around the corner, or to the layers of work and time that go into our lives, artwork and nature. That attention is what guides me as I work in the many different media I love.

SH: I was fascinated by your drawings when I first saw them. They seem so still and also so dynamic at the same time. The process by which you create these drawings involves an intimate kind of work.

YW: I made these drawings with oil pastels and some mixed-media, creating a number of small worlds, just the right size for the moment, quickly catching my feelings and thoughts. In fact, these drawings are mixed with memories and *now*. I join as a partner, writing them down. I work together with my art. When I give my attention to each moment, the art teaches me. I focus on what the art says to me and what the art wants to be. I think about nothing and I work freely.

These drawings are the process of consciousness and the unconscious mixed with time.

SH: When you describe this, it suggests meditation to me.

YW: The work can be like meditation. When I started these drawings, they were a pure kind of Zen work -- simple, minimal. But my life continues with everyday consciousness, and my attention is always there with each 24-hour cycle. The meditation happens; it can be in any time, in any place as needed. With attention, time and place are together, not separated.

SH: Given that kind of attention, spontaneity nevertheless appears in your work.

YW: I mix the Chinese mind (others first) and Japanese heart (harmony) with American vision (everything goes). Together these make me lighter, more open, more caring. They shape me. They shape my work. In this way maybe they come across as a kind of spontaneity.

SH: Each of your drawings is a wonderful excursion for me, as I wander among the marks you so carefully consider.

YW: 'Space' in my pictures is precisely what intends to invite better seeing. Each drawing begins a journey within the rhythm of a simple thought. Then, like people, the thought grows, and sometimes it is reborn. As I draw, the image develops its own familiar community of lines, shapes and colors. The drawing gradually opens space so that other qualities can creatively breathe without congestion. The thought's journey continues and never finishes. These incomplete and imperfect pictures invite us to join them and to complete them in our own looking.

SH: You seem to defy a plan, and yet a very detailed image emerges, as if out of nothing.

YW: There is no plan to my drawings. I learn every day from doing and seeing, I learn from trees a lot more than anything else, learning from their colors and truths. These daily kind of understandings guide my work. I build myself first and then let my hands dance with my understandings, with my learnings.

SH: When you “let your hands dance” it is like you are listening to some special music. Is this a reference to a kind of spirit in your art?

YW: I do think about spirit. I use blue in my sculptures as an element of spirit. Really I do not need to -- thinking or talking seem extra, not really necessary because I am dancing with spirit already. It’s like how I was saying earlier: I build myself first, or see first, then I draw with that seeing and understanding, without needing to think about it as I do it. For me, spirit is the core of things. Spirit lives in everything. Care, attention, and thought make things present to us. I see works of art as having their own lives, their own messages, but those messages are hints, introductions, openings.

SH: That message becomes evident in your titles. Perhaps you can say something about how your art and your titles come together.

YW: I see art as my language. I speak with drawing, sculpture, and other media, and my titles are the direction of or the introduction to my speech. Works of art can present themselves in many ways with many meanings. Sometimes I feel the need to skip titles in order to keep meaning open. Nevertheless I am now with my Consciousness: I start with the art already being open, and I use the title as a way of diving deep into the ocean of deeper and diverse meanings. I hear some voices that speak in silence, and I lift them up: the title plays a role in between, working as a partner with the artwork. With as much attention as I pay to the process of creating and to the work I create, there are more meanings I can find that are far beyond my intentions. They are invisible until I create: they are the unheard word until they become the image I create.

SH: You have 108 drawings. That is a very significant number in various traditions of meditation. I know a Yoga teacher who led her group in 108 sun salutations on the Summer Solstice. And certain Buddhists have 108 prayer beads with which they meditate. Tell me about your choice of that number for your work in this show.

YW: When you first mentioned 108 drawings, I knew immediately it was time for me to work on it. I already knew I was going to do a lot, even more than 108. But 108 is not just a number; it is a number that fits my process right now, my process of opening up colorful desire and honoring my heart. In thinking about it, I welcomed this 108 process as a kind of “keeping” or “cleaning,” a “retaining” or a “throwing away.”

Beyond other moments that have affected my art, there were two trips I took

that have affected the focus and media of my work. On a life studies trip to France in 1996, I sketched figure drawings. In these studies, I didn't exactly sketch figures from what my eyes saw by themselves, but from what I saw in my mind. Then, in 2014, on a trip to Canada, I sketched a series of what normally would be called landscapes, except that, like I had experienced with the French figures, I was sketching not the land my eyes were seeing, but lines and spaces from what my mind was seeing. After that trip to Canada, I started using the pastels in my studio to create the drawings that brought me to this 108 series. In a way, I'm writing them down as they arrive. I say "writing down," but of course I'm drawing. I've kept my art alive in many ways through different projects, but now 108 is like flying in the sky. I see something and draw. I'm drawing, or writing down, now.

As I did in France and Canada, I am doing a series of my mind; that is the constant. 108 is not a project about the colors, shapes or styles. Nor is it about letting desires loose. To borrow from Thoreau, it is a project "to set all well afloat." This is important. It is a project about taking it all and writing it down, sending it out into the world, like a message well afloat, like the Japanese temple bell ringing 108 times at the end of the year. 108 worldly desires. The normal idea is to clean them. But my project is about sending them out to be whole, afloat, flying, open, transformed. The bell rings, then rings again, and keeps ringing. It is a kind of constant.

I am not finished yet. I am passing through this moment, and I may draw many more groups after this group of 108, each with their own momentum and character. But that was a magical moment for me when you suggested 108 works. On this point, I believe you see something that is close to what I see. 108 creates a fresh perspective, a spiral that brings us back around to the new.

It is my pleasure to meet you and thank you for making this gift of time happen.

SH: This brings us to the title of this show. It is so evocative: Skin•Time suggests touch and the duration of sense experience. But then your subtitle is ConsciousnessUnconscious. This calls attention to the constant interaction of your mind at work.

YW: *ConsciousnessUnconscious* exists in our life every day. In my work, it is the way I draw. When I pay attention to the work, then I go with it and dance in lost awareness. *ConsciousnessUnconscious* brings things together, or exists as

they interact and show themselves in the process. The elements of my art come together in the specific time of the act of making, the moment, the “touch.”

Skin is alive, breathing, making connections. These drawings are the Skin of *ConsciousnessUnconscious*. What we see are suggestions, touches of time, drafts of time. We see the mind work with the visuality of deep surfaces, rooted in the land, breathing in the air— *Skin•Time*.

SH: No wonder *now* is so important to you. It is the Skin•Time of your present experience, wherever you are.

YW: *Now* is a strong focus in my work. Often, I am traveling between countries and I notice the differences in culture. I really notice the differences in materials or tools, or even small things like coin wrappers, which I have used in installations. When I become part of a new place I become more aware than usual of all these little things that I encounter *now*. I meet some specific things that can only be found in that specific place. Things present themselves as themselves; they are telling me their ‘identity of place.’ For example, my installation Heavy Air comes to mind. In it I used specific style napkins which could only have been created in New York City.

SH: I look at your drawings, and I realize that there was the *now* of the time you were drawing them. You actually invite me into that *now* which was when you created the drawings. This is precisely why I am so moved with what you create. Your *now* which was then, is *now* again for me in looking at the work. It is a kind of eternal *now*.

YW: *Now—Past, Present, Future* is the title of one of my sculptures, as well as a painting. We are here now in a live moment, not a disconnected moment. That means we are here *now* along with past and future at the same time. My drawings memorialize time, a specific living moment, and because it is alive it gets creatively embedded with the future. The future leaves its footprints *now*. We cannot duplicate the same complete original work. We can only do it once, *now*. By doing it, by being present, we draw the past and future into *now*. If you can be conscious of that in looking at my work, great.

SH: We see this in the small drawings in this exhibition. Have you ever thought about drawing on a large scale?

YW: Since my childhood, I have always thought in large scale. For example, when I think about progress, I don’t just think about progress for a country but

for the whole world. I easily expand my vision, as well as my will and actions, to go further than just myself, to include others, even beyond my immediate vision. I like to see far, not just distance, but also time and mind, like the light of an ultramarine sky joining with the air, interpenetrating space.

As a result, my work has a tendency to scale up or zoom out; the size of work never is about small. These drawings are little as individual pieces. But they are growing in number—they are not just a single butterfly but a swarm of butterflies.

In the same way, I want to make an installation in a forest, or use any large space, painting a whole room or wall. In fact, right here now, I have a paper roll 3' x 30' waiting in my studio for a project I could do anytime.

SH: With what principles do you work in your drawings and other forms of art?

YW: Balance is one of the key principles to create in all my art: drawing, photography and installation art. It exists with spaces in between or as space itself.

I want to give the right amount of value in order to balance each work. When there is this balance, then the space in the drawing or in the photograph or in the installation has a condition that is alive.

SH: I look around the exhibition and realize that color is such a presence in your work. This room is so rich with color now.

YW: When I was a designer, I loved color. But, since my youth, I also have loved *wabi-sabi*: *wabi* (the beauty of the common) and *sabi* (the beauty of decay). When I started making sculptures with *wabi-sabi*, I ended up leaving behind most surface colors, except blue with its transparent qualities speaking to me of inner spirit, soul and mind. Other than that, I just made color with India ink and water, playing with its tones and layers in my sketches. As an example of my thinking and process, *Colored Shirt* is a title I gave one of these ink drawings.

For a long time then, I kept my distance from colors. Time, however, brought me back to them. In America, I started teaching many children, and pastels, with all their colors, were my main tools for working with these young artists. As I started working with the pastels, my relationship with the color blue allowed or invited other colors to join in. I had all these colors in my studio, and I decided to use them just like I had in my childhood. I reopened my heart to these desires I once had left behind, welcoming them to shine again in my life.

SH: Given all of that, I know that nature is really at the heart of your own creative spirit. In fact your work seems to grow, to become out of some natural process that you are part of.

YW: Nature is my teacher. It is like a book, something like a dictionary, full of discovery. I learn and find meaning from the world of nature, from its aesthetic sensibilities, its living colors and differences. I especially learn through time, by going out into nature to discover nature's way of making its own culture. One time simply tasting wild mangosteen in the mountains shocked me with its vivid flavors -- it taught me about a kind of far-reaching reality.

I am in love with these ways of seeing and feeling and learning nature's nuances. I spend time watching wind and water, which sounds very basic when I say it but which goes wild in my art. A sense of impermanence affects my life, values and philosophical thinking. Raw, minimal expression comes naturally to my art from how I see time and now, from my sense of what it means to put in the time to ride the Zen ox of impermanence or transience. Putting in the time with nature is what makes the difference for me.

SH: I find a delightful relationship between your drawings and your photography; there is also a correspondence to your installations. Could you comment on that relationship?

YW: I see the relationship between my drawings, photography, sculptures and installations as the dance of philosophy, or mind or seeing. This happens through time, through different media as I explore the balance and imbalance that exists between materials of all kinds and between various cultures. For example, Japanese ideals of beauty, of emptiness, of *Wa* and *Ki* often show up in my works, whatever the media or project. This kind of philosophical thinking plays in all my work, like light on a tree or skyscraper. Buddhism, Tao, Zen, or any process of thinking opens me to all life, to the whole picture, to differences and layers and other sides.

SH: Please say more about these terms: Can you explain what *Wa*, *Ki* and Emptiness are for you?

YW: In my work, *Wa* (harmony) represents tranquility. I find *Wa* coheres with and binds together all my various sculptures, photos, drawings, and even my own life. Often, I experience my work as it connects to *Ki* (air/energy/spirit/mindfulness). When the work is full of *Ki*, the work is alive.

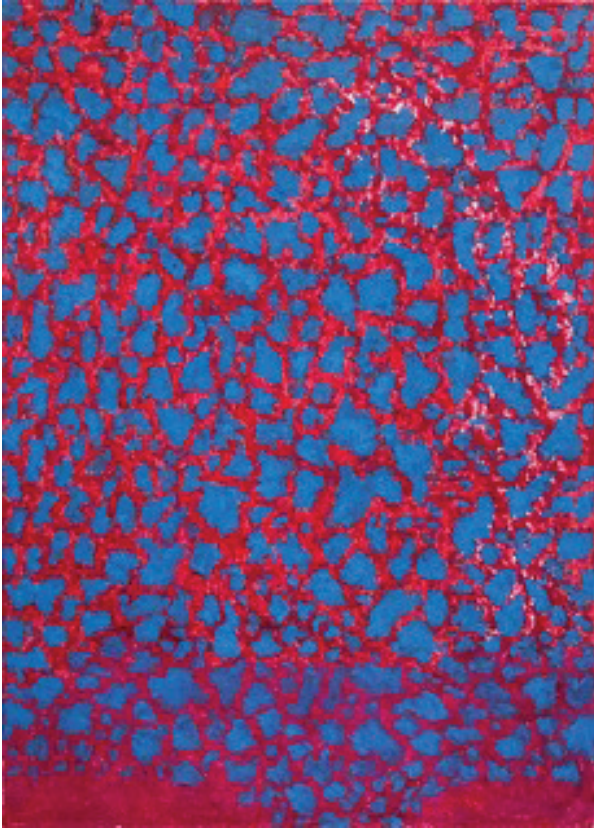
Emptiness keeps me going, creating. I let things go, so I can reach toward nothingness, zero mind. Then I can work in the balance of desires. Emptiness is the most powerful invisible force for life to reach.

SH: One last question. You are part of a community of artists who have inspired you in various ways. Who are some of the artists who influence you? The ones whose work you keep going back to see and consider?

YW: In terms of other artists, I have loved Alberto Giacometti, Paul Klee, Jan Dubuffet, Anselm Kiefer, Cy Twombly, and so many more. I often find myself getting “stuck” in galleries, museums and temples. NYC is such a good place to work, but I also travel and have exhibits in Japan and Taiwan, so I get “stuck” in their museums and temples too.

SH: Thank you for reflecting on all these matters. You make our life richer with your insights.

YW: It has been my pleasure.



Reason, 7" x 5" oil pastel



Come Across, 7" x 5" oil pastel

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

YU-WHUAN / 王玉環

Artist of Installation, Sculpture, Drawing, Conceptual

CONTACT

Website: www.yuwhuan.com

www.artslant.com/global/artists/show/116795-yu-whuan

Email: yuwhuan@yuwhuan.com

Facebook: Yu-Whuan Wang, [facebook@yuwhuan.com](https://www.facebook.com/yuwhuan.com)

EDUCATION

Studied with painters Mr. Shen Zhe Zai and Mr. Zeng Pei Yao, Tainan

Studied at The National Art School, Taipei

Studied with sculptor Master Yamamoto Kakuji, Kyoto

Graduated Kyoto University of Education The Art Dept. B.F.A. 1990

Completed Kyoto University of Education, Contemporary Sculpture

Independent Study & Research 1992

LIFE STUDIES

Li Guo, Itokin, Textile Design experiences, graphic design, Tainan, Osaka, Japan

Art Study World Trips 7 months: Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, German,

Austria, Switzerland, France, Monaco, Spain, Singapore, Malaysia,

Thailand, Myanmar, India, Nepal, Taiwan, Japan 1996

New York Chinese School

Founder - Children Drawing Art Department '99-'03

PhilosophyBox Gallery Founder 2003-2005

AWARDS / HONORS / GRANTS

Scholarship Kyoto University of Education 1987-1990

Award *Murasaki* of 47th Kyoto Art Exposition 1993

Japan Kyoto TV, Studio Visit Interview, '96

Kyoto Sculptors Association Member 1993

Japan Sculptures-Gwa-Un Member 1992-1999

New York Pleiades Gallery Member '01-'04, 2014

PhilosophyBox Gallery Curator/Educator '03-'05

Received LMCC Grant 2005; PhilosophyBox, LMCC Grant, 2005

REVIEWS / NEWS / MAGAZINES

Kyoto Newspaper, "Time's Gift," SanJo Gallery 1994

Kyoto Newspaper, Hane-Usagi Gallery 1996

Kyoto TV News, Sculpture - "A letter for Shirock" (Hane-Usagi Gallery)

Mai-Niji Newspaper, KyoTo Newspaper, Ohkubo Gallery 1998

Mai-Niji Newspaper, "2 Views" AyaBe City Plaza 1999

Art Time Magazine, 2002

heavy air <http://citylore.org> at The New York Historical Society, NYC
Gallery & *Studio Magazine*, Review "Minimalism with Meaning"

Inheritance Wet/Dry, Installation, Nov-Dec 2002 -Jan 2003

Korea Newspaper, Road Gallery Opening Commemoration Show 2002

loosefish.com "Oneness" 2003

PUBLIC MONUMENTS

Monument "Encounter" Kyoto Joyo City Jr. High School, Japan, '95

Monument "Harmony" Kyoto Joyo City Jr. High School, Japan, '96

DONATIONS

Sculpture – New York Chinese School, 2001

Painting -- United Way of New York City via MACY's 2014 Painting —
TAG Fundraiser 2015

Photo — TAG Fundraiser 2016

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Mrs. Takatsuki, Sanjo Gallery, Japan '92 Mr. Nakajima, Japan '94

Tatashi Matsuura, Japan '95

Custom of SanJo Gallery, Japan '98

Custom of Hane-Usagi Gallery Art Fair, Japan '99

Steven/Conductor, New York '02

Professor Tang, Los Angeles '03

Mr. Bronzell/Writer, New York '09, '10

Composer Jan Feddersen, Germany 2015

Art Historian Doctor Sheldon Hurst 2015

Writer Bronzell, New York 2016

SELECTED EXHIBITION HISTORY

INSTALLATIONS

Zero, Consciousness Unconsciousness, Mar 22 - Apr 16, 2016, Pleiades Gallery, NYC
24 Hour I The Process of Consciousness, Nov 3 - 28, 2015, Pleiades Gallery, NYC
Oneness, Sept. 23 - Oct.11, 2003, Pleiades Gallery, NYC
Heavy Air, Spring to Summer 2002, The New York Historical Society
Inheritance Wet/Dry Inheritance, May 31-June 30, 2002 Taller Boricua
Gallery, Julia De Burgos Culture Center , NYC

MUSEUMS / GALLERIES

- 2017 *Skin•Time: ConsciousnessUnconscious*, Aug 6-Sept 24,
ArtReach Gallery at First Congregational UCC,
Portland, OR (Drawings)
ConsciousnessUnconscious: Sadaharu Horio & Yu-Whuan,
May 12-21, Space 31, Japan (Installation/Sculptures)
- 2016 Opening Commemoration Show, *Chemical Reactions*,
Gallery 31, Japan (Installation)
Shoebbox Art Tour Show, Gallery SunMoon, Gallery Begin, Japan
Zero, Consciousness Unconsciousness (Solo Installation)
Pleiades Spring Fever show, NYC
- 2015 Annual Invitational Show, Pleiades Gallery, NYC
24 Hour: The Process of Consciousness, Pleiades Gallery, NYC
(Solo Installation)
Pleiades Gallery Group show, NYC
- 2014 *Dacapo* at Madison Avenue, PhilosophyBox Project, (solo)
- 2010 Tibetan Singing Bowl Ensemble, Metropolitan Museum of Art
Open Studio -JRS Art Studios, LIC, NYC
- 2009 Open Studio-Brooklyn Arts Studios, Brooklyn, NY
- 2005 LMCC Grants
Wa Laku Gallery Exhibit (Japan)
PhilosophyBox Gallery Director, Curator

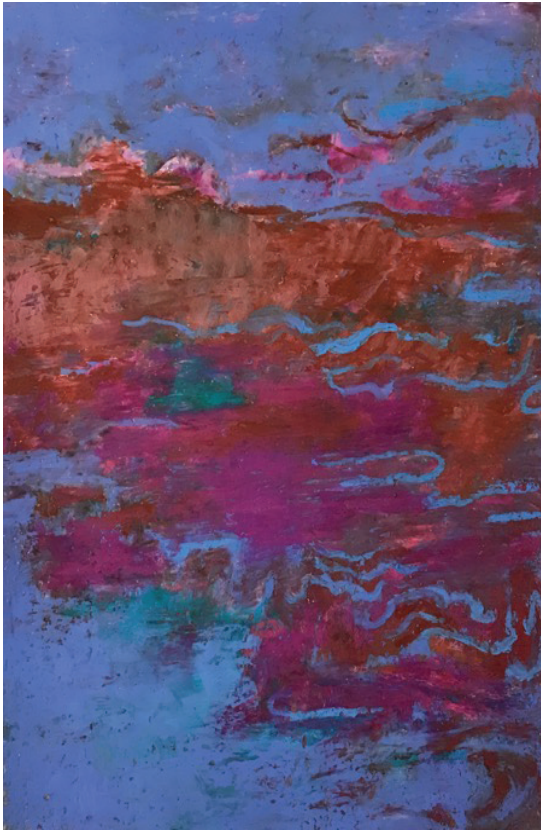
- 2004 *PhilosophyBox* Gallery Director, Curator
- 2003 *PhilosophyBox*, Gallery Founder
Oneness, Pleiades Gallery, New York (Solo)
- 2002 Taller Boricua Gallery, NY (Solo Installation)
Inheritance Wet/Dry Inheritance, Pleiades, NY (Solo Installation)
Heavy Air, NY Historical Society, <http://citylore.org/citylore.org>
Miniature Exhibition, Gallery Sanjo, Japan
Heavy Air, Taller Boricua Gallery,, Installation, NY (Solo)
Expression of Intension, Opening Commemoration Show, Road
 Gallery, NY
- 2001 *Open Studios Show*, Crane Street, Long Island City, NY
- 2000 *Miniature Exhibition*, Gallery Sanjo, Japan
Hira Museum ---Next Thousand, Hira Museum, Japan
- 1999 *Miniature Exhibition*, Gallery Sanjo, Japan
The Moment Throbs, Gallery Yo, Japan (Solo)
Opening / Day Off, Gallery Hane-Usagi, Japan (Solo)
Kyoto Sculptors Association Exhibition, Kyoto Prefecture Cultural
 Hall, Japan
Kyoto Exhibition, Kyoto City Museum, Japan
Art Fair, Kyoto City Hall, Public Art Space, Japan
Special Guest Solo Show at the Sixth Sculpture-Gwa-Un
 Exhibition, Kyoto Museum, Japan
Breath, Ando Tatao Architecture, Ayabe, Kyoto, Japan, Ayabe City
 Plaza, Japan (2 Artists Exhibition)
Osaka Sculptors Association, 30 year Commemoration
 Exhibition, Osaka Modern Art Museum, Japan
Kyoto Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition, Kyoto Botanical Garden, Japan
Uji Community Center Exhibition, Uji Botanical Garden, Japan
Sketch Exhibition by Sculptors, Gallery Zen, Japan
- 1998 *Miniature Exhibition*, Gallery Sanjo, Japan
Present Transition, Gallery Hane-Usagi, Japan (Solo)
6 Native Modern Artist Exhibition, Gallery Ohkubo, Japan

Fragment of Memory - If it turns around, Gallery Yo, Japan (Solo)
Kyoto Outdoor Sculpture, Kyoto Botanical Garden, Japan
Kyoto Sculptors Association Exhibition, Kyoto Prefecture Cultural
Art Hall, Japan
Kyoto Exposition, Kyoto City Museum, Japan
Vessel -Becoming One, Gallery Sanjo, Japan (Installation)
Uji Community Center Exhibition, Uji City Botanical Garden Japan
Deep Blue, San Exhibition, Gallery San, Japan
Water, Kyoto Museum, Japan
8 Sculptors Exhibition, Gallery Nakai, Japan
Kites Exhibition, Gallery Doraku, Japan

- 1997 *Small Voice Talking to You*, Exhibit '97, Gallery Shima, Japan
Kyoto Exposition, Kyoto City Museum, Japan
Kyoto Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition, The Global Warming
Prevention in Kyoto Convention Celebration
Between— Elements Approaching Toward the Sea, Kyoto Botanical
Garden, Japan
Sculpture -- Gwa-un Exhibition, Kyoto City Museum, Japan
Solgente Exhibition, Kyoto Prefecture Cultural Art Hall, Japan
Uji Community Center Exhibition, Uji Botanical Garden, Japan
- 1996 *Sculpted a monument, Harmony*, Joyo Jr. Hi School, Kyoto, Japan
Kyoto Exposition, Kyoto City Museum, Japan
Sculpture Gwa-un Exhibition, Kyoto City Museum, Japan
Art Study World Tracking 1996 for 7 months:
Europe—Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, German, Austria,
Switzerland, France, Monaco, Spain Asia—Singapore,
Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, India, Nepal, Taiwan
- 1995 *Sculpted a monument, Encounter*, for Joyo Jr. High School,
Kyoto, Japan
Kyoto Exposition, Kyoto City Museum, Japan
Time's Gift, Gallery Sanjo, Japan (Solo)
6 Contemporary Artists Exhibition, Opening Commemoration
Show, Gallery Hane-Usagi, Japan
Be Gentle, A letter for Shirock, Gallery Hane-Usagi, Japan & Paris

Solgente Exhibition, Kyoto Prefecture Cultural Art Hall, Japan
Miniature Exhibition, Gallery Sanjo, Japan

- 1994 *The Time's Sculptures*, Gallery Sanjo, Japan (Solo)
Kyoto Exposition, Received an award for Murasaki, Kyoto City
Museum, Japan
- 1993 *Sculpture Gwa-un Exhibition*, Hyogo Inhabitants of a
Prefecture Hall Art Gallery, Japan
Kyoto Exposition, Kyoto City Museum, Japan
- 1992 *The Untouched Shape of the Mind* (Sculpture Sketch in ink)
Gallery Sanjo, Japan (Solo)
- 1991 *Kyoto Exposition*, Kyoto City Museum, Japan
- 1990 *Sculpture, Gwa-un Exhibition*, Kyoto City Museum, Japan
The Zen Kansai Fine Arts Exposition, Osaka City Museum, Japan
Kyoto Exposition, Kyoto City Museum, Japan
- 1989 *The Zen Kansai Fine Arts Exposition*, Osaka City Museum, Japan
- 1988 *The Zen Kansai Fine Arts Exposition*, Osaka City Museum, Japan



When It Speaks, 7" x 5" oil pastel

Each drawing is \$350.00
See Dr. Hurst to purchase.