

Toya Shigeo: Sculpture

February 25 – May 14, 2023



POMPEII・79 Part1, 1974/1987 photo: Yamamoto Tadasu
© Shigeo Toya Courtesy of ShugoArts

■ Exhibition Outline

After majoring in sculpture at Aichi University of the Arts, in the 1970s Toya Shigeo (b. 1947) threw himself fully into a career as a sculptor. Amid the then-dominant art world fashion for criticizing and deconstructing the genre of sculpture, Toya was dedicated to exploring the origins of sculpture, and sculptural expression from around the world and every era, persistently interrogating the very nature of his chosen art form. From the mid-1980s he embarked upon the highly-acclaimed Woods series of lumber pieces with chainsaw-carved surfaces. After taking part in the Venice Biennale in 1988 he continued to present work around the world, earning a reputation as one of modern Japan's leading sculptors. A prolific practitioner of sculpture for 50 years now, since the 1990s he has been working on the From 'Borders' and Minimalbaroque series, since the 2000s on the Cave series, and more recently, the Body of the Gaze series.

In this exhibition, we will look back on half a century of practice through about 40 pieces, including representative works such as those in the Woods series. We will also focus on Toya's early exploration leading up to Woods, introducing sculptures depicting the human body submitted for his graduation project and related materials, made public for the first time, to examine the origins of Toya Shigeo's creative work.

■ Artist Profile

Toya Shigeo

Born in Nagano, Japan in 1947. He completed the sculpture major at Aichi University of the Arts graduate school in 1975. Since his first solo exhibition, *POMPEII · 79* (1974), he has attempted to reconstruct sculpture as a genre, as it had been deconstructed amidst trends in contemporary art, and presents pieces which question the fundamental origins and structures of sculpture. His Woods series, which he began producing in 1984, has received high acclaim. Major solo exhibitions have included *Forest of Visions* (Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995), *Toya Shigeo: Folds, Gazes and Anima of the Woods* (Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, 2003), *Memories in the cave* (Vangi Sculpture Garden Museum, 2011), and *Toya Shigeo – Sculpture to Emerge* (Musashino Art University Museum & Library, 2016). He has participated in many international exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale (1988) and the Gwangju Biennale (2000/Asia Prize winner). He is a professor emeritus of sculpture at Musashino Art University.

■ Exhibition Highlights

1 First solo exhibition at an art museum in Saitama Prefecture, the artist's creative base

Toya Shigeo: Sculpture will be staged in Nagano, Toya's place of birth, and Saitama, where he is based. He established his studio in Chichibu District, Saitama Prefecture in 1998, and has been working in this prefecture since.



Death of the Kiln of the Elephant of the Woods, 1989
The collection of Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo
photo: Yamamoto Tadasu © Shigeo Toya, Courtesy of ShugoArts

2 Masterpieces of Toya Shigeo, Japanese leading sculptor

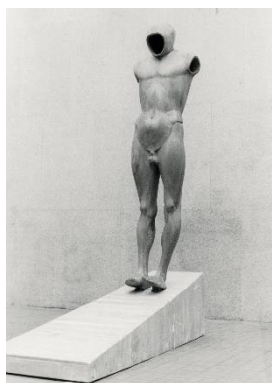
In addition to the reproduction of *POMPEII・79 Part 1*, presented at his first solo exhibition in 1974, other representative series such as Woods, Minimalbaroque, and Body of the Gaze will be introduced together. Approximately 40 pieces will be on display, ranging from works made as a student to his latest series.



Woods IX, 2008, The collection of the Musee Bernard Buffet
photo: Yamamoto Tadasu
courtesy of Musashino Art University Museum and Library

3 Toya's early works which can only be seen at the Saitama venue

Toya majored in sculpture at Aichi University of the Arts. At the Saitama venue, you can view two sculptures depicting the human body submitted for his graduation project. In addition, the sculptural pieces *Underground Room*, derived from a performance in 1983 in which he burned part of his work, will be public for the first time in about 40 years.



Man I, On a Slope, 1973



Underground Room, 1984,
photo: Yamamoto Tadasu



Going Underground II, 1984
photo: Yamamoto Tadasu

■ Exhibition Structure

1 Early Works: From His Time at University to First Solo Exhibition

After entering Aichi University of the Arts, Toya learned the basics of Western-style sculpture under Yamamoto Toyochi, who had studied under Aristide Maillol. At the Saitama venue, we will represent figurative sculptures, as well as drawings produced during his school days.

POMPEII・79 Part 1, presented at his first solo exhibition, was inspired by the ancient city of Pompeii on the outskirts of Naples, which was buried as a result of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The bodies of Pompeii's citizens were vaporized in the hot volcanic ash leaving voids, which thousands of years later were filled with plaster to recreate their forms.

2 Exploration Leading Up to the Representative Woods Series

The pieces he produced from the late 1970s to the early 1980s are diverse in both materials and form, and can be positioned as being part of an exploratory period. In this exhibition, we present the From 'Carving' and From 'Construction' series, in which Toya attempted to conceptually recapture the idea of sculpture itself.

In 1983, he reached a major turning point, with a performance in which he burned a part of his past work along the coast. At the Saitama venue, we will introduce the Underground Room series which inspired him to confront his images.

3 From Minimalbaroque to the Latest Series, Body of the Gaze

Toya Shigeo came up with the term "Minimalbaroque" around 2000. This concept combines the contrasting notions of minimalism, which reduces formative elements to the extreme, and baroque, which is characterized by complex and dynamic forms. It clearly shows his approach of capturing conflict between differing concepts, such as the self and others, inside and outside, and Japan and the West, and creating expressions from there. Five large-scale sculptures, including representative pieces from the Minimalbaroque series, as well as his latest series Body of the Gaze, will be on display.

■ Exhibition Overview

Toya Shigeo: Sculpture

Period	February 25 th (Sat) – May 14 th (Sun), 2023
Days Closed	Mondays (except May 1 st)
Opening hours	10:00 - 17:30 (Last admission at 17:00)
Admission	Adult: 1,200 yen (960 yen) University and High school students: 960 yen (770 yen) *Prices in brackets are for groups of 20 or more. *Admission of junior high school students and younger, and those with a disability certificate (including one attendant) are free of charge. *You can also visit the MOMAS Collection (Exhibition Room on the first floor).
Organizer	The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, Toya Shigeo Exhibition Executive Committee
Cooperation	ShugoArts, KENJI TAKI GALLERY
PR Cooperation	JR East Omiya Branch, FM NACK5

■ Related Events

Talk: Toya Shigeo (Sculptor) & Akira Tatehata (Museum Director)

Date	March 12 th , 2023 (Sun) 14:00 – 15:30 (doors open at 13:30)
Location	Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, 2nd floor auditorium
Capacity	60 people (no reservation required, first-come first-served basis)
Price	Free

Artwork Commentary by Curator

Date	February 26 th , 2023 (Sun) 14:00 – 15:00 (doors open at 13:30)
Location	Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, 2nd floor auditorium
Capacity	60 people (no reservation required, first-come first-served basis)
Price	Free

■ Slide Talk Information

We will guide you through the highlights of the exhibition through a slide presentation for your group on demand (reservation required).

For inquiries and reservations, please contact the department of Education and Public Relations (048-824-0110).

■ Concurrent exhibition

MOMAS Collection

3rd Term: December 3rd (Sat), 2022 – February 26th (Sun), 2023

“Selection” / “Round and Around”

4th Term: March 4th (Sat) – May 7th (Sun), 2023

“Selection” / “Kurata Hakuyo and Morita Tsunetomo” / “Okuhara Seiko / Kikuzawa Buko”

■ Press Conference

Press Conference

February 25th, 2023 (Sat) 16:30 (reception opens at 16:00)

Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, 2nd floor auditorium

Private Viewing for Related Parties

February 25th, 2023 (Sat) 15:15 (reception opens at 17:00)

Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, 2nd floor auditorium

■ Venue/Access

The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama

9-30-1, Tokiwa, Urawa-ku, Saitama-shi, Saitama 330-0061, Japan

Tel: 048-824-0111 Fax: 048-824-0119

<https://pref.spec.ed.jp/momas/>

The museum is located inside Kita-Urawa Park, a 3-minute walk from the West Exit of Kita-Urawa Station on the JR Keihin-Tohoku Line.

JR Kita-Urawa Station is approximately 35 minutes by train from JR Tokyo or JR Shinjuku Station.

Parking is not available at the museum. Please use the coin-operated parking lot named “Mitsui Repark, the Museum of Modern Art, Saitama East,” which can be used at a reduced price (300 yen off for special exhibitions and 100 yen off for the MOMAS Collection). Please contact us prior to your visit if you are planning on coming by chartered bus. Persons with disabilities can use our business-use parking space. However, space is limited.

We ask for your understanding and cooperation regarding measures for preventing the spread of COVID-19. Depending on the circumstances, the museum may be closed, or the exhibition period may be changed. Please check the latest information on our website before visiting.

■ Contact Us

Please contact us if you would like us to provide images. Images will be provided digitally by the museum. Please send an email to kouhou@aria.ocn.ne.jp (Manaka, Head of Public Relations).



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When publishing images, please include the following captions. Also, please do not crop the artwork or add text over it.

1 POMPEII・79 Part1, 1974/1987 photo: Yamamoto Tadasu © Shigeo Toya Courtesy of ShugoArts

2 Underground Room, 1984 photo: Yamamoto Tadasu ©Toya Shigeo Courtesy of ShugoArts

3 Death of the Kiln of the Elephant of the Woods, 1989, from the collection of Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo
photo: Yamamoto Tadasu © Shigeo Toya, Courtesy of ShugoArts

4 Double Reflected Body II, 2001, from the collection of Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art
photo: Muto Shigeo ©Toya Shigeo Courtesy of ShugoArts

5 CaveIII, 2010 photo: Muto Shigeo ©Toya Shigeo Courtesy of ShugoArts

6 Cave V, 2011 photo: Yamamoto Tadasu Image courtesy of Musashino Art University Museum and Library

7 WoodsIX, 2008, from the collection of the Musee Bernard Buffet
photo: Yamamoto Tadasu Image courtesy of Musashino Art University Museum and Library

8 Body of the Gaze - Linkage, 2020 photo: Ito Tetsuo ©Toya Shigeo Courtesy of KENJI TAKI GALLERY