

Yoshio Ikezaki

Yoshio Ikezaki is a Japanese artist who resides in the USA. Yoshio was born in Kitakyushu on January 12, 1953. He received BA and MFA from Florida State University concentrating in painting. Then he went back to Japan and intensively studied traditional Japanese papermaking with Shigemi and Shigeyuki Matsuo on master papermakers in Yame, Fukuoka, Japan. He had spent 6 years with them, learning and experimenting with papers for his own painting and sculpture. He creates paper for his own artworks in order to control the uniform thickness and fiber distribution taking ink's reaction to the paper into account and creating a ratio of different fiber materials.

In his sumi ink painting, the images are deeply associated with the memories of landscapes he saw during his childhood in Kitakyushu island Japan. He visualizes them as if they were slow-moving photographs. To him, there are no man-made objects, but all natural elements like water, earth, nature light, wind, and moon. He shares that experience with his audience through his art as all human beings have experienced similar memories to some degree. Ikezaki's painting images are mysterious and evocative. This enigmatic quality is derived partly from the fact that he mixes his own ink, including in it mineral particles that give the surface of the painting a slight iridescence. The result is a kinetic composition, lending the piece a different dynamic as at the viewer moves around it. The truly incredible thing about the way his works is that he never physically paints with his hands. Having mastered his own "Chi" (the Chinese word for the vital life source that exists within every one of us), he uses that energy to move the ink across the paper.

For his sculpture, He first cook Kozo bark (mulberry fiber) with soda ash for a few hours and beat them after rinsing them with clear water. He uses a Japanese traditional paper-making technique called "Nagashizuki", translated as "sloshing way to make paper", to form a sheet of paper. Each sculpture is about 50-200 sheets accumulated on top of each other and pressed with several hundreds of pounds of weight to make the layers condensed and hard for 2 or more weeks. he seeds the handmade paper as human skin and spirit. Each sculptural composition deals with the philosophical idea of Zen Buddhism thought of "Shogyo-Mujo"- everything on earth evolves, changes, and perishes but the spirit remains to reborn a new life. He says "his wish to capture a trace of the enormous energy collision that happens in nature, the miracle of lives being born, the changing environments and mysterious living thing that settles deep within me, as well as on the paper, with the memories of the fiber."

His recent sumi ink paintings and sculptures deeply show evidence of his intention to uniform and meet "East and West", a coalescence of Western modern and Japanese tradition. He expresses the fusion with "Ma" , a Japanese aesthetic term to designate an artificially placed interval in time and space that include meaningful voids created by the deliberate use of blank space. The balance and unification between positive and negative space is the essential theme of his abstract landscape painting and his handmade paper sculptures.

In addition to his identity as an artist, he is also an educator, he has taught as a professor at Art Center College of Design, Southern California Institute of Architecture, visiting professor at Musashino Art University, and Tama Art University in Tokyo. He has also lectured at Pratt Art Institute, The Parson School of design in New York, Cooper Union, and Rhode Island school of Design in Rhode Island.