

# **AKIO MAKIGAWA**

## **SPIRIT AND MEMORY**

### **ARTWORK LABELS**

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## ***Akio Makigawa: Spirit and Memory***

Sculptor Akio Makigawa is remembered for his contemplative Zen-like works inspired by the elemental forces of nature. One of the defining characteristics of his practice was a unique sculptural language that balanced formality with an inner tranquillity. Makigawa's works draw upon his great creative energy and a deep-rooted Japanese cultural tradition that combines art with life and spirituality.

Makigawa was born in Karatsu city, Japan, in 1948, and arrived in Australia in 1974. At the time of his death in 1999, at only fifty-one years of age, he had become an important and respected sculptor in this country. His work is held in major public and private collections throughout Australia, and examples of his public commissions can be seen in prominent civic locations in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney.

Installed in the foyer galleries on each level of The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, *Akio Makigawa: Spirit and Memory* has been developed in close collaboration with the late artist's partner, prominent jeweller Carlier Makigawa. The exhibition presents a selection of works drawn from Makigawa's estate, some of which have never been exhibited before in public.

Exhibition essay available online at [ngv.vic.gov.au/essays](http://ngv.vic.gov.au/essays)

## For kids

Akio Makigawa was born in Japan and moved to Australia when he was a young man. Although in Japan he was a gymnastics champion, Akio really wanted to be a sailor and an artist. He wanted to sail around the world, painting as he went.

What do you want to do when you grow up?

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Corona**

1996

stainless steel, bronze, gold leaf

Private collection, Melbourne

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Untitled**

1999

stainless steel

Estate of the artist

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Untitled**

1999

stainless steel

Estate of the artist

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Circle of water III**

1999

bronze, water

Estate of the artist

## For kids

Akio made sails for boats when he first came to Australia, before going to university to study art. His first sculptures were made from fabric and looked a bit like sails.

At university he learnt how to carve stone and wood, and to make sculptures using steel and other metals.

See if you can find two works in this exhibition made from steel. What do you notice about them?



# Akio MAKIGAWA

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## Untitled

1999

corten steel

Estate of the artist

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Untitled**

1999

corten steel

Estate of the artist

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Untitled**

1999

stainless steel, resin

Estate of the artist

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Untitled**

1998

stainless steel, resin

Estate of the artist

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Untitled**

1999

stainless steel, bronze, water

Estate of the artist

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Untitled**

1999

stainless steel, bronze, water

Estate of the artist

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Untitled**

1999

stainless steel

Estate of the artist

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Titans I**

1999

stainless steel, resin

Estate of the artist



# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Work IV**

1990

marble

Estate of the artist

## For kids

Akio also made very large outdoor sculptures. Some of these are in Melbourne, including on Swanston Street in the city, near the Bourke Street Mall, and on St Kilda Road, standing in front of some office buildings.

Have you seen them? If not, look out for these sculptures when you are next in these places.

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Untitled**

1999

stainless steel

Estate of the artist

# Akio MAKIGAWA

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## Red

1984

paper, wood, cotton

Estate of the artist

# Akio MAKIGAWA

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## Eternal flame

1992

marble

Estate of the artist

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Untitled**

1981

wood, pebbles, rope

Estate of the artist

# Akio MAKIGAWA

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## Time keeper

1987

marble, inlaid lead, wood, papier mâché, canvas,  
graphite, oilstick, synthetic polymer paint

Estate of the artist

'My work deals with human attitudes and feelings, but not the human body or presence ... it is about what and how we perceive the fundamental things around us which give life: water, air, earth, fire.'

**AKIO MAKIGAWA**



## Akio Makigawa's public commissions

In addition to his studio work, Akio Makigawa created many monumental public sculptures that continue to enliven the urban landscape. These are some of his best known works and occupy prominent locations in civic centres throughout Australia. Makigawa created sixteen major public works in total. His first commission was for the City of Sale in 1984, and his last for the Sidney Myer Asia Centre at the University of Melbourne in 1999.

Like many sculptors, Makigawa created scale models, known as maquettes, for his large public commissions. These were used to demonstrate how the finished large-scale version would look, and were also used as a guide for the engineers and fabricators assisting in completing and installing the works.

Makigawa created his maquettes with the same care as his studio works, and used the same materials for them as he proposed for the finished sculptures. The maquettes on display here are at 1:10 scale. The *Akio Makigawa: Spirit and Memory* essay, available online at [ngv.vic.gov.au/essays](http://ngv.vic.gov.au/essays), gives more information on Makigawa's public works.

## For kids

When artists create a very large outdoor sculpture, they sometimes begin by making a small model to show people how the finished work will look. The sculptures here, in the cafe, are all models for larger sculptures.

Akio made his models exactly ten times smaller than he wanted the finished sculptures to be. Why do you think he did this?

# Akio MAKIGAWA

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## Elements and being

1988

marble

Estate of the artist

*Elements and being*, commissioned by Adelaide and Stations Environment Redevelopment (ASER), is the largest public work undertaken by Makigawa. Completed in 1989, it covers an area of 25 metres square and stands 5.8 metres high. Makigawa said the work 'is about directionality, orientating yourself. I wanted a Southern Cross plan, but couldn't do this because of the structural problems of being located on a roof ... The intention is to make interesting things happen in terms of space, light and shadows'.

# Akio MAKIGAWA

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## Equilibrium

1993

stainless steel, marble

Estate of the artist

The Queensland Government commissioned *Equilibrium* in 1993 for the entrance to the Commonwealth Law Courts building on North Quay, Brisbane. The sculpture is made from white marble, carved and polished in Carrara, Italy, and mounted on a towering stainless steel base fabricated in Melbourne, and stands 6.4 metres high. Describing *Equilibrium*, Jackie Cooper wrote: 'The obelisk base is extruded into a flawless, dynamic shaft; its equilateral form and the stainless steel expresses ideals of balance, strength, incorruptibility, and perfection. The white marble form, symbolising justice, is poised on the tip of the sword, symbol of power'.

# Akio MAKIGAWA

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## Under the obelisk

1989

marble, bluestone

Estate of the artist

Located on St Kilda Road, Melbourne, at the entrance to Norwich House, *Under the obelisk* consists of three elements, each constructed from bluestone and marble. For the finished sculpture, the marble was carved and polished in Carrara, Italy, and the bluestone was cut and carved in Port Fairy, Victoria. Makigawa said: 'I didn't know which building this was intended to stand in front of, so I [made it] face the road. The three figures suggest living forms. All living forms are equal – animals and humans. They are white shapes on grey obelisks. The bases are now in stone; previously they were galvanised iron'.

# Akio MAKIGAWA

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## Evolution of energy

1989

marble, bluestone

Estate of the artist

*Evolution of energy* was commissioned by Azcorp Limited and located at the entrance to a large office building at 479 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, currently occupied by credit information bureau Dun & Bradstreet. The large-scale version is composed of Marquino marble, Ordinario marble, resin and pigments. In her 2013 book *Akio Makigawa*, Jackie Cooper observed of this work: 'The flaming element in white marble streams from the grey and white striped marble shaft. The figure expresses an idea of a factory chimney and smoke. This is a tongue-in-cheek image: an office building on St Kilda Road is hardly an industrial environment but a place of bureaucracy'.

# Akio MAKIGAWA

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## Point to sky

1998

stainless steel, gold leaf

Estate of the artist

'The base of the tower is a house, the geometry transformed and distended, merging into the attenuated shaft surmounted by two seeds. The topmost seed is gold, recalling Ballarat's history as the centre of the Victorian gold rush, and also symbolising the sun'. So Jackie Cooper wrote of *Point to sky*, commissioned by the City of Ballarat in partnership with the Victorian State Government through the Victoria Commissions program. It stands 7.4 metres high and is located at the entrance to the Ballarat Cultural Precinct.

# Akio MAKIGAWA

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## Night sea crossing

1992

marble

Estate of the artist

Consisting of a central sculpture (shown here) and two wall-mounted pieces, *Night sea crossing* was commissioned for Chifley Tower, Sydney, in 1992. It is installed internally on the landing of the building's main staircase. Of his creative process, Makigawa commented: 'I have all these ideas sorted out before I start. The concept and the intended result have to be there from the outset. It has to be clear ... whether this is fishlike or plantlike. The bud is for life on land. The fish is for life in the sea. I am confident about what I am doing. Everything is pared down, clear'.



# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Recollection of memory XIV**

1999

composition board, stainless steel, synthetic polymer  
paint, oilstick

Estate of the artist

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Recollection of memory VIII**

1998

composition board, stainless steel, synthetic polymer  
paint, oilstick

Estate of the artist

# **Akio MAKIGAWA**

born Japan 1948, arrived Australia 1974, died 1999

## **Recollection of memory XIV**

1999

composition board, stainless steel, synthetic polymer  
paint, oilstick

Estate of the artist