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Godai

Art du Bambou | Bamboo Art. Tanabe Chikuunsai IV | Tadayuki Minamoto

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- This monumental work, six meters high and nearly as broad at its base, was installed in 2016 in the Rotunda of the Musée des Arts Asiatiques Guimet in Paris

This book is dedicated to Godai, an installation by Japanese artist Tanabe Chikuunsai IV, who represents the fourth generation of a prestigious line of kagoshi (master wickerwork weavers) in Japan. Godai is a homage to nature and to a tradition of handcraftsmanship. This monumental work, six meters high and nearly as broad at its base, was installed in 2016 in the Rotunda of the Musée des Arts Asiatiques Guimet in Paris and presented to the public from April 12th through September 19th, when the artist still presented himself under the name of Tanabe Shouchiku III. The structure, composed of 8,000 small pieces of bamboo prepared in Japan, was extremely well received. It represents a world in which the five elements, godoi, that make up our world (wind, water, earth, void and fire, according to Japanese tradition) intertwine. Tanabe couldn't find a more suitable material. Tough yet flexible, bamboo has been part of the lives of people in Asia since ancient times and used for numerous purposes. Because of its great significance (it represents 'principles, integrity and constancy'), it has also been represented in many historic paintings and used as a design motif in stationery and furniture. Tanabe's works are both historic and modern and invite a response from the viewer. His bamboo installations, presented in a form adapted to the space in which they are displayed, induce viewers to be aware of and appreciate that space. Each work is dismantled at the end of the exhibition to leave just its memory. And the same bamboo is used for new installations, giving a tangible sense to the concepts of 'continuity' and 'rebirth' and providing a sense of connection with space that transcends time. Godai is no exception: a monumental and ephemeral work, like a piece of organic architecture, it transmits positive energy. Text in English and French.

Tanabe Chikuunsai IV, who was born in Sakai (prefecture of Osaka) in 1973, was taught the art of bamboo from childhood by his father Chikuunsai III. Having studied in the Fine Arts department at the City Crafts High School in Osaka, then in the Sculpture Department at Tokyo's University of the Arts, Tanabe carried out his apprenticeship for two years in the city of Beppu (prefecture of Oita). Once he had completed this training, he returned to his father in Sakai to perfect his expertise in the art of bamboo and adopted his first artist's name, Shouchiku. He was the third artist to take this name, which means 'small bamboo'. While continuing traditional bamboo weaving practices, he also developed the skills handed down in the Tanabe line, and created his own sculptures. In 2017, three years after the death of his father, he attained the name Chikuunsai IV, literally 'bamboo cloud', and thus perpetuated the dynasty of basket weavers of which he is the latest member. **Shinya Maezaki**, Associate Professor at Kyoto Women's University is doctor of art history and consultant for numerous Japanese and American museums. **Tadayuki Minamoto**, celebrated Japanese photographer is author of some one hundred books in Japan. His photographs, reproduced in this book, have the intention of capturing and transmitting this same energy, these very concepts.

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