

**THE
MAYOR
GALLERY**

SHINKICHI TAJIRI

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Portrait of the artist with a *One-day sculpture*, Paris, 1949
Photo: Sabine Weiss

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Tajiri working on Seed no.4 in his studio in Baarlo, 1964
Photo: Ed van der Elsken

A boy's dream

The Netherlands are hardly known as the homeland of sculptors. This is mainly due to the unceasing importance given to (Dutch) painting. Great painters such as Rembrandt, Van Gogh and Mondriaan attract all our attention. But above all when the modern promotion campaign is let loose Amsterdam is entirely focused on this one sided image. That sacrifices occur within an imagery bereft of nuance should surprise no one as they are the consequence of a rapid cultural idiom, the fast lane through our cultural landscape. But this should not raise an outcry because many other reasons might exist that can explain such a situation. Protestantism in Holland does not stimulate visual expression and the Iconoclastic fury in the 16th century has not been an encouragement towards further nuance. But, let us imagine: we fill the black void and replace it by a land of sculptors. It would then become evident that The Netherlands from the 15th century onwards have produced important names such as Claus Sluter, Jan van Steffenswert and later, Carel Visser. Maybe it is no wonder that the Japanese-American sculptor Shinkichi Tajiri settled in The Netherlands and that he alone would inspire us to call it a country of sculptors. Admittedly the love for a woman also played a role in this choice. Tajiri married the Dutch artist known by the name of Ferdi and the openness of Amsterdam for foreign, preferably exotic influences gave him freedom in a country that was still escaping the narrow-mindedness of the fifties. Staying in The Netherlands was therefore a welcome follow-up for his years in Paris where he worked in the Zadkine workshop and he was able, as one of the rare sculptors, to gain a certain celebrity under the CoBrA flag. When he retires to the country in 1962 to live as a landowner, a new period follows where he can be true to his "roots" and at the same time follow the "less is more" path of the arts in the seventies and eighties of the past century. And this is the broad context in which this sculptor, graphic designer, movie maker, photographer (analogue) and (digital) video artist moves.

Rarely have I tried to describe such a complex history in so few sentences. And it is very rare to see such a complex evolution in the context of an art gallery presentation. James Mayor manages this perfectly as he brings together a beautiful cross section of the work for which Tajiri could be accounted. The picture of this many-sided artist might seem at first slightly chaotic because of his huge steps through CoBrA, Pop and Minimalism. They were generated by an enormous curiosity towards images and imagery that converge in a period of war, technological innovation, private drama (the unexpected death of his wife) and a radically new way of thinking in the arts all of which collided with each other. The fact that, as an American of Japanese ancestry, he had to look for a personal identity in this European context, did not make things easier.

Tajiri was helped by the downfall of religion and great ideologies in Europe. God and Truth were not that simple anymore and were not seen as applicable everywhere. In the aftermath of war and violence, the sharp boundaries disappeared between Good and Evil in their left and right political context. This last phenomenon happened mainly in Italy and Germany. Two movie directors can be seen as protagonists for this period: Hans Jürgen Syberberg and Pier Paolo Pasolini. One could not talk anymore in the broad sense of unambiguous modernism. For someone like Tajiri this meant that, without any form of restraint by ideology or centrally driven "high culture", the same paths could be chosen by everyone, on common ground, not bothered by ingrained thoughts and habits. His "audience" and artists were receptive to this (as never before). The down side however was that he was subjected to a maximum need for his faculty of assimilation. He managed this challenge more than satisfactorily. It is at the same time an explanation for the diversity of his oeuvre.

That diversity, not a synonym for lack of profundity or drive towards experimentation, can be seen in Tajiri's earliest sculptures. Four convincing examples dating from 1955/1963 are on show. *Victory* 1955, *Fetish* 1960, *Obiit* 1961, *Fortress* 1963 are typical examples from that period and are all based on the principle of bringing loose elements together in an assemblage where the different parts get united in a new coherence. Tajiri was not the first to do this but he definitely gave it a personal signature. The "objet trouvé" and coincidence certainly play a role in this but Tajiri still leans on classical principles of verticality and composition through figurative elements. *Victory* can be read as a butterfly and *Obiit* as a human body. He plays with forms where abstraction and figures hold each other in an ambivalent equilibrium, without too many references towards surrealistic measures of the subconscious. He remains close to his materials such as the making process of welding. The notions of Brick and Junk are used on purpose when he works in series and gives them their names. And there is one more element that keeps him with his two feet on the ground: the never ending reference to sex and namely eroticism. He never hides these impulses and a large quantity of phalluses and vulvae come to light in varying degrees of explicit expression. A jewel where those elements converge is the small sculpture *Fortress* made in 1963, a peepshow on a pillar, tender and touching. In the spirit there is on one hand a connection with work by the Americans H.C. Westerman and William N. Copley and on the other hand it is a homage to Ferdi, his wife. She has left a small compact body of work where everything comes together in a soft, colourful pleasure garden where "life sources" in the form of vulvae



Photo: Erhard Wehrmann, 1964

are the “flower power” connection between plants and insects. All this is made out of various textile materials, going from natural silk to various and much cheaper forms of kitsch fur imitations. The pleasure of fitting all those elements together radiates from it. It is a big festive fair that could not prevent her early death.

At the end of the sixties Tajiri, over a short period, acquired inspiration from the car and airplane industry that brought him to make aluminium assemblages that took place in his workshop and represented beings from other planets. *Astronaut*, 1973, is in the present selection, a perfect example of this period. But at the same time it is also an exception. It is one of the rare examples that does not stand on (high) legs. I will come back to this feature but not before having addressed the important group of *Knots*, that encompass ten years of his production. We are looking at knots cast in bronze or in exception made of polyester when monumental dimensions made this necessary. One of those bigger versions adorned the roof of one of the side buildings of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. It dominated the garden side of the building until *Sightpoint* by Richard Serra took over this function. (The older amongst us will remember this). For many years this was very intriguing because, together with a work by Kenneth Snelson in the pool, there came a moment where rationality and technique could be elevated to the level of poetry. The knot and the floating construction of threads and tubes moved in such a sense against what one thought was possible and what not possible, that reality and art could hardly be held apart: fraud and reality fell so obviously into each other’s arms that a moment of supreme insight and tranquillity took hold of me. The knots of Tajiri suggest that they were put together in a soft state and subsequently were heated into their solid shape. But of course this cannot be true and one is fooled by such an intense decorative power that the contrary gets affirmed.

The excursion of Tajiri into the world of impossible knots only went so far because soon he would fall back on his figures with two legs. All of a sudden and under the name of *Ronin*, he went towards a new phase. In 1996 he executed a 3-meter-high bronze statue *Sentinel*, commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Defence to commemorate the end of drafting. This was the start of a new series of *Ronin*, based on the legendary Japanese story of the 47 Ronin. Still one should remark that in all his work and through all periods Tajiri put his figures on two (high) feet; as if dealing with human beings. And here appears a new aspect. His Japanese roots come more to the surface. The Ronin are members of the Samurai that separated from the group and who continued their life alone, using more or less violence. They had been excluded by their master or became isolated through conflicts between their master and the Shogun and had the choice to continue their battle against bandits and enemies alone or they could form a group to take revenge upon their master. The *Ronin* are for Tajiri one big nod towards his position as an artist but at the same time it became the continuation of his playing with figures and materials in relation to a fantasy world of the past. He cuts the *Ronin* in multi-layered foam board before having them made out of steel plates or cast in bronze. They remind us of playing with little soldiers, but because of their human albeit bigger dimension, they radiate theatrically as if spectator and sculpture are standing on stage. Their flat, cut out “Da Sein”, implies shadows linked to a deceitful world. We are partially back into the youth to which Tajiri never said good-bye. He never stopped playing. This gives us many disarming moments and the liberating thought that his work will never let us go.

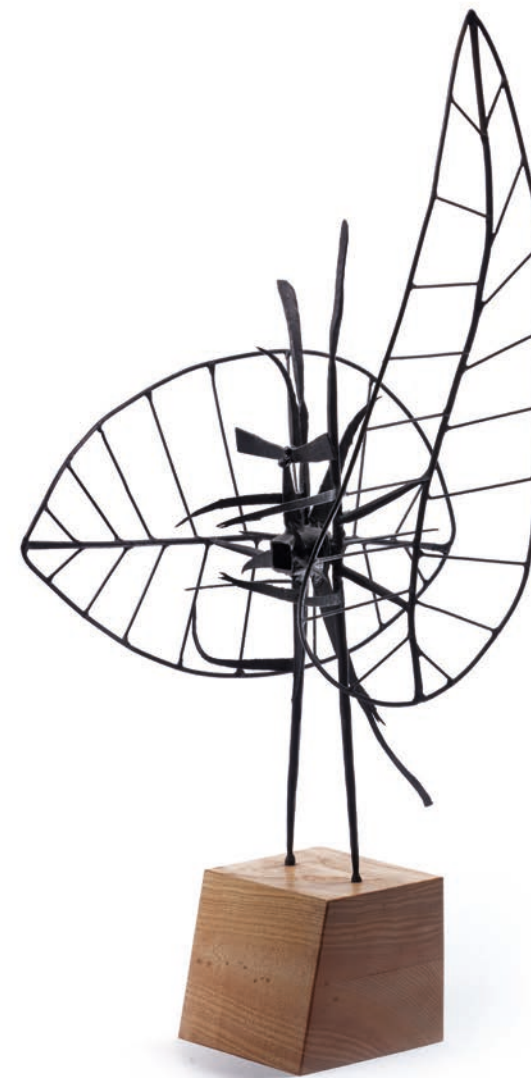
Alexander van Grevenstein, November 2016



Photo: Erhard Wehrmann, 1964

PLATES

Victory
1955
Iron
60 x 24 x 31 cm
23 5/8 x 9 1/2 x 12 1/4 in



Interplanetary Station
1953 - 1955
Brass
97 x 15 x 13 cm
38 1/4 x 5 7/8 x 5 1/8 in



Sentinel
1954
Iron
107 x 48 x 68 cm
42 1/8 x 18 7/8 x 26 3/4 in





Lock
1955
Iron
61 x 45 x 31 cm
24 x 17 3/4 x 12 1/4 in

Sentinel
1957 - 1961
Bronze & brass
132 x 19.5 x 34 cm
52 x 7 5/8 x 13 3/8 in





Tajiri with *Fetish* in his garden, 1964
Photo: Erhard Wehrmann



Fetish
1960
Bronze & brass
135 x 72 x 47 cm
53 1/8 x 28 3/8 x 18 1/2 in



Tajiri in his studio, Amsterdam, 1962
Photo: Erhard Wehrmann



Obiit
1962
Bronze
71 x 23 x 21 cm
28 x 9 x 8 1/4 in



Obiit
1962
Bronze
67 x 21.5 x 27 cm
26 3/8 x 8 1/2 x 10 5/8 in

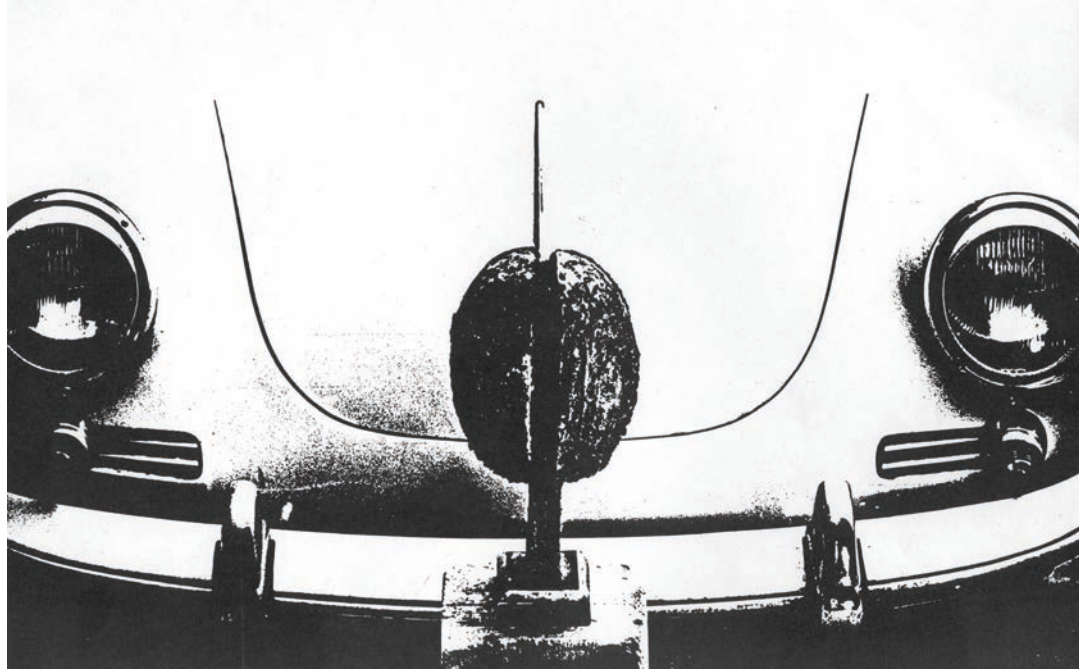


Tajiri in his studio, Baarlo, 1964
Photo: Erhard Wehrmann



Fortress
1961
Bronze
59 x 18 x 33 cm
23 1/4 x 7 1/8 x 13 in



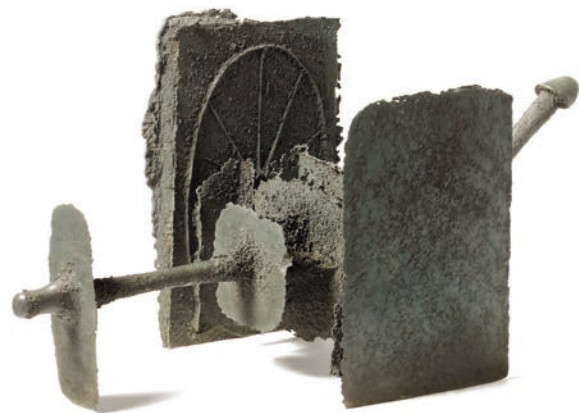


Pin-ups No. 1, Edition prints, 1968

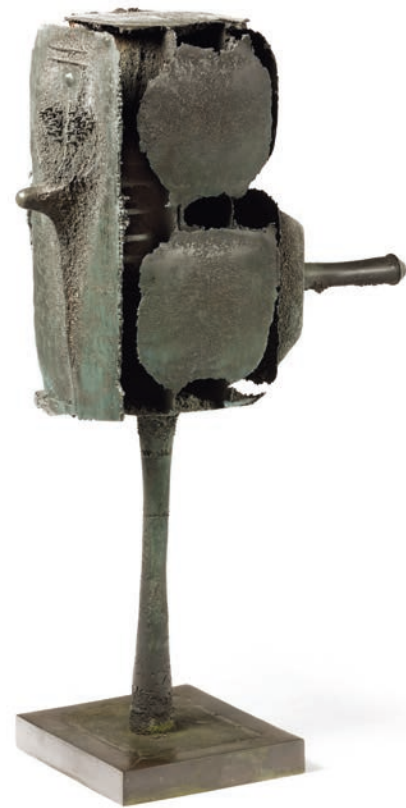
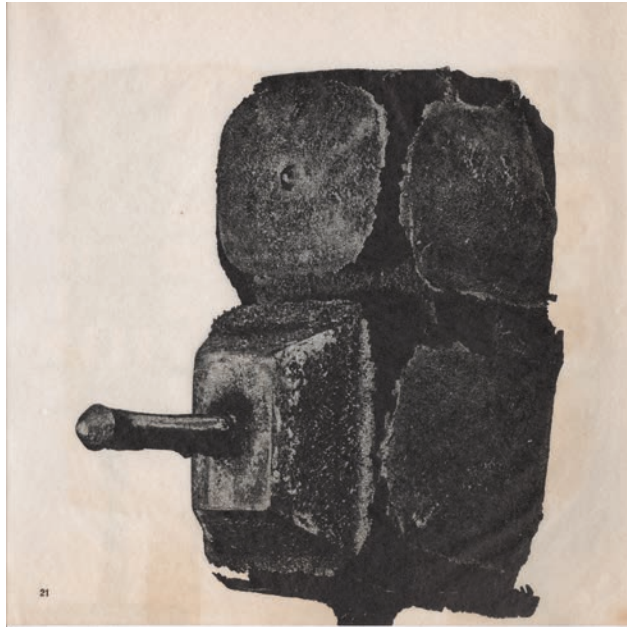
Seed
1961
Bronze
47 x 23 x 17 cm
18 1/2 x 9 x 6 3/4 in



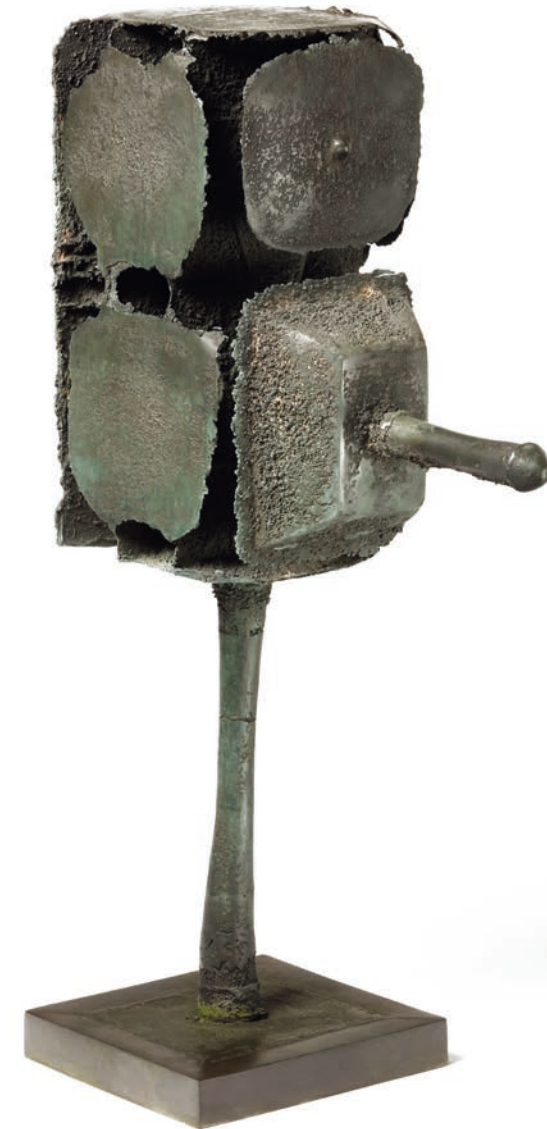
Untitled
1964
Bronze
43 x 32 x 71 cm
17 x 12 5/8 x 28 in



Tajiri Sculpture Catalogue,
Hamilton Galleries, London, 1964



Adam No. 4
1964
Bronze
86.5 x 26 x 54 cm
34 x 10 1/4 x 21 1/4 in





Tajiri in his studio, Baarlo, 1964



Blaubekin
1964
Bronze
67 x 38 x 50 cm
26 3/8 x 15 x 19 3/4 in



Tower of Babel
1972
Bronze
65 x Ø25 cm
25 5/8 x Ø9 7/8 in





Astronaut
1972
Aluminium
16.5 x 19.5 x 38 cm
6 1/2 x 7 5/8 x 15 in



Square Knot
1993
Cast iron
22.5 x 37 x 10 cm
8 7/8 x 14 1/2 x 4 in





Square Knot
1994
Cast iron
56 x 35 x 15.5 cm
22 x 13 3/4 x 6 1/8 in





Granny's Knot
1995
Cast iron
31.5 x 43.5 x 11 cm
12 3/8 x 17 1/8 x 4 3/8 in

Overhand Knot
1995
Cast iron
18 x 25 x 10 cm
7 1/8 x 9 7/8 x 4 in



Ronin
1995
Bronze
75 x 29 x 38 cm
29 1/2 x 11 3/8 x 15 in



Ronin
2002
Bronze
124 x 58 x 67 cm
48 3/4 x 22 7/8 x 26 3/8 in



Overhand Knot
2008
Aluminium
95.5 x 27 x 26 cm
37 5/8 x 10 5/8 x 10 1/4 in



Tajiri: The Sublimation of Psychosis in Sculpture

Shinkichi Tajiri was born in Los Angeles, California in 1923. Both his parents had come from Japan. His father, he somewhat proudly relates, was the last of a family of Samurai, before this traditional warrior class had been made illegal. Tajiri was thus born and educated as an American. To this day he speaks no Japanese and when he visited the land of his forefathers for the first time in 1962, for an exhibition at the Tokyo Gallery, he felt completely alien. Paradoxically, at the same time, the Japanese critics found his work more Japanese than native artists of his generation who imitate and emulate Western fashions.

It is from this complex core of paradox – Japanese heritage, American birth right, the conflict of cultures, an outsider in both worlds, that much of the curious mixture of elegance and brutality, aggressiveness and compassion comes in Tajiri's impressive work.

At the age of 18 he began studying sculpture with Donal Ford at San Diego and the with Noguchi, the famed sculptor and scape artist with similar racial origins.

At the outbreak of war he was interned with more than 100,000 American Japanese, a painfully humiliating experience which made a lasting impression. He later served for three years in the U.S. Army before returning to his studies at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Within a year he left for Paris and until this year, 1964, he has never returned to the United States. In Paris he worked with Zadkine and Léger, and at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. By 1951, when he left to teach at the Werkkunstschule in Wuppertal, Germany, he had already experimented with compositions of junk metals, which were among the first of their kind. From the banks of the Seine he gathered scrap iron-bedsteads, flue-pipes, oil-drums and the like, which he broke up and welded together. It was, in fact, long before the term or style 'Assemblage' had come into fashion. Among his early admirers and pupils, so to speak, were César and Tinguely who were to develop the idea in their own highly individual manners.

One-day sculptures along the river Seine in Paris 1949
Photo: Sabine Weiss



From the outset of his career Tajiri's work was stamped with the evocative brutality of his scrap material. The 'excreta' of our technological age. But it was also stamped with the hand and personality of its manipulator, by a grace and elegance directly stemming from Japanese sensitivity. This Japanese quality which the Japanese critics found so dominant, is allied to the curious pantheistic spirit of so much Japanese art, its identification with nature and the mysteries of growth and procreation.

This identification with, and evocation of, nature is the very opposite of the romantic Western conception. Nature is not seen as something merely decorative or playful, a backcloth to poetic concepts. Whilst in Japanese art nature is often beautiful, it is also menacing- less a colourful adjunct to life.

This is what I term pantheistic, an identification between human experience and the processes of natural growth, an instinctive commission of the senses.

After three years travelling throughout Western Europe, Tajiri settled in Amsterdam in 1956, with his Dutch-born wife, and has lived in The Netherlands ever since. He now resides in a charming, semi-derelict Chateau near the German border which affords him ample space for his elaborate techniques and experiments. A small, spare man, friendly and hospitable, he exudes an aura of vulnerable strength, a reserve which seems to insist on freedom of thought and action, without inhibiting human contact. It is, as one might expect, a far more oriental personality than a Transatlantic one, not by any means unsure or unstable, but with a kind of determination to resist emotional or spiritual violation which amounts to shyness.

Tajiri is now one of the most highly regarded sculptors of his generation. He has exhibited widely throughout Europe, participated in innumerable international exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale and this year's Kassel Documenta and has had a retrospective show at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Earlier this year he held his first one-man exhibition in London. So far his work has been little seen in the United States but he has accepted an appointment as Guest Professor for one year at the Minneapolis School of Art, which entails his return to America and no doubt he will hold a one-man show in his native country in the near future.

Tajiri's work has undergone a number of important stylistic changes since his artistic maturity, although there is a powerful personal current running through the whole of his oeuvre. He appears to fight a continuous battle against the elements of charm and elegance which are ever-present in his creations. There comes a time when instinctively the materials or techniques he uses arrive, virtually unpremeditatedly, at a kind of decorative seductiveness. Whilst this can never, and perhaps should never, be eliminated, he feels it can dangerously obtrude and mask other qualities with which he wishes to engage the public.

To some extent this dilemma has determined the changes of the last 10 years and certainly, in my opinion, accounts for the more forceful insistence in his current work on problems which preoccupy him, and which, whilst present previously, were subtly interrelated with stylistic pre-occupations. The new work, with its frankly sexual, procreative forms, may shock, but there is no denying the newly-found power.

His early post-war figures, in welded iron, bore such titles as *Warrior*, *Scorched Earth*, *Pagan Idol*, *Samurai*. Their worried aggressiveness is

inherent in the material and the titles. They not only relate to war as such but to their author's painful experience as a Japanese internee in the United States, after the bombing of Pearl Harbour. There is no doubt that this event made a fundamentally disturbing impression, no matter how resolved today. The traumatic experience of realising that whilst American-born, he was still regarded as having Japanese loyalties and was therefore a potential enemy and traitor to his country, cannot be minimised. As a true artist, and given his reticent, inarticulate character, Tajiri channelised his resentful anguish into his art. And even in these works the personal touch of fantasy and elegance is present.

The change in the mid-fifties to new materials and new subjects must be regarded as personal sublimation, coincident with his settling in Holland, greater happiness and a growing recognition. He hit on the strange idea of making sculpture from the bronze 'droppings' rescued from the foundry floor; his genius for decoration recognised immense possibilities. Thus was initiated a period of greater detachment and reflection. The elegant and beautiful works which followed bore titles such as *Germination*, *Seed*, *Stream*, *Tree in Flower*, *Insect*. They reflected the other side of Tajiri's instinctive character, the identification with natural forces, the delight in natural forms. From the rough castings, feathery strands of bronze studied with nuggets of more solid metal, he first made curious torsos. One of them stands amid trees in the grounds of his castle, a rare, realistic representation, painstakingly built up from small sections, as much air as metal. Initially it pleases by its easy grace and balance, then suddenly it reminds one of a bandaged warrior, and beneath the charm one senses aggressive horror. It is almost invariably so with Tajiri.

But most of the output of this period is stylised, abstracted forms based on vegetation. The most grandiose of these, *Seed*, shown at the Documenta is 400 cm high, one of a series of variations bearing the same title. Entrancingly delicate it is basically a huge sphere borne aloft on a steep stem, seemingly almost to bend graciously in the wind, for all its solid weight. Yet here again, almost unawares, one is struck by the resemblance of form to the 'blossom' of the atomic bomb, and one remembers Hiroshima, so much part of our contemporary sensibility and even more embedded in the psychosis of an American-Japanese.

Tajiri's latest work has abandoned the world of objet trouvé. With typical Japanese technical skill (his manual dexterity in all fields is prodigious) he has developed a method of casting bronze forms from porous brick. These brick slabs he carves and marks in an elaborate reverse process and the emergent pieces are welded together. The resultant texture is a mixture of spontaneously pitted deposits and more finished surfaces, some of which he treats and polishes on the final figure. Here again the instinctive decorative genius is at work, but more than ever before there is a conscious determination to combine this with a premeditated aggressiveness in stark sexual imagery.

The sculptures at their most direct bear the title *Adam*, but there are others with more complex symbolism which are called *Tower of Babel*, *Penal Colony*, *Obit*, *Samurai*. Almost all of them are frankly phallic. The stance of these strange, powerful, disturbing creatures is oddly human, although there is no suggestion of torso. The form of casting dictates a box-like centralism. They will remind many of the heavily armoured Samurai figures made familiar to us through Japanese films. Some indeed are entitled *Warrior*.

The *Adam* pieces are direct in their purpose and meaning. Combined with the main abstract form is a disturbingly realistic erect phallus. Some may find them too direct - the subtlety of the structure at variance with the insistent sex object. To emphasise his purpose Tajiri has himself taken some remarkable photographs combining the sculptures with the naked female form. When I referred to this dichotomy, Tajiri admitted that they were intentionally provocative; he objected to the misunderstanding of the significance, and the hypocrisy, about sex in human experience, to Western reticence on the subject in visual art. Pornographic art, practiced by some of the greatest Masters is a commonplace of Western Society. Inherent in our apparent desire to codify and normalise has been the parallel need to surreptitiously satisfy the senses. Even today when every hoarding advertises sex, and drama and literature describe natural phenomena with a new frankness, we cannot escape the prurient pleasure of witnessing or discussing what we basically believe to be forbidden. Non-Western civilisations, Moslem and Indian, for instance, quite apart from primitive societies, have produced a considerable literature and body of visual art describing the acts and pleasures of love in frank detail and an open enjoyment unknown to Europe's Christian conscience. I was interested to know the attitude of the Japanese and whether Tajiri's obsession stems from historical heritage. He was unable to enlighten me.

In Japan, Tajiri said, he had found it difficult to analyse sexual attitudes, since the Japanese have an imbued reluctance to discuss personal matters. But, pointing to a charming collection of painted dolls in his living room, known as Kokashi, he explained that in Japan they are regarded and collected as works of art, each one signed by their maker. The tradition goes back many years. The head of each doll, an elaborately realistic confection, is attached to a truncheon-like, armless torso. This, Tajiri regarded as an expression of the phallus symbol, of which, he said there were innumerable examples in Japanese art and life.

But the phallus in Tajiri's sculpture, it will be seen, is not merely a sexual organ, it is a military cannon. He makes the analogy abundantly clear in *Field Piece* where the phallus has become a gun barrel, erect, self-confident, ready to rape and destroy. Thus the ambiguity of assault is again stated, the manoeuvre for dominance and power in any human relationship, and nowhere more potent and subtle than in the sexual act. In these sculptures there is not merely a bald sexual frankness; the phalluses are rapist in their aggressive urgency and one is reminded of the often insistent demand for power and dominance in every facet of human endeavour. From the recognisable and succinctly understood act of sexual pleasure and procreation Tajiri has enlarged a metaphor on the complexities of life, on social and political conditions, on the nerve-ends of our precarious nihilistic age.

Charles Spencer, Sculpture Magazine, 1964

BIOGRAPHY

| | | | | | | | |
|------|--|------|---|--|---|--|---|
| 1923 | Born December 7, in Watts, Los Angeles, U.S.A., of Japanese parents: Ryukichi Tajiri (1877-1939) and Fuyo Kikuta (1896-1972), who in 1906, resp. 1913 emigrated to the U.S. They had seven children, of which Shinkichi George is the fifth. | 1946 | January 9: after being demobilised, settles in Chicago, U.S.A., with mother, brothers and sister. Works as an antiques restorer in Japanese antique shop. | September 1950 - September 1951. Studio at Rue d'Odessa (Montparnasse), Paris. | Birth of Giotta Fuyo, June 6, first daughter. | | |
| | | | Granted purple Heart Medal: one of the most recognised and respected medals awarded to members of the U.S. armed forces. | Starts the <i>Junk sculpture</i> series. | Invents <i>Molar brick</i> technique for bronze casting. | | |
| 1936 | Moves to San Diego. | | | 1951 | Begins sculpture series <i>Drippings</i> . | | |
| 1939 | His father dies on April 18. | | Works on <i>Father and Son</i> . | Designs the cover of the novel <i>Quiet Days in Clichy</i> by Henry Miller with photographs of Brassai. | Family moves to a house and studio on the Valkenburgerstraat 150-152, Amsterdam. | | |
| 1940 | Takes lessons in San Diego with the sculptor Donal Hord (1902-1966) in exchange for weeding his cactus garden. | 1947 | Works in studio of Isamu Noguchi, New York (August-September). | Henri Matisse as chairman of the selection committee of the <i>Salon des Jeunes Sculpteurs</i> in Paris chose Tajiri with three other sculptors for this exhibition. Le Corbusier is the designer of the exhibition. | 1959 | Founded the avant-garde group <i>A'dam</i> , together with Wessel Couzijn, Hans Verhulst, Ben Guntenaar and Carel Kneulman. This group was short-lived. | |
| 1941 | Attends High School Aerodynamics Technique. | | Studies for a year at the Art Institute of Chicago with G.I. Bill Stipend. | Stipend G.I. Bill stops. | Sculpture grant from William and Noma Copley Foundation, in the jury Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst and Hans Arp (William and Noma Copley Foundation later known as the Cassandra Collection). | | |
| | Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, December 7 (on his 18th birthday). | 1948 | Departs from the United States. September 28: arrival in Le Havre, France. Move to Paris, September. Follows from October 1948 to November 1949 lessons with Ossip Zadkine (Académie Colarossi). Lives in Clamart, Paris. | Guest professor at Werkkunstschule, Wuppertal, Germany. December - November 1952. | Birth of Ryu Vinci, April 25, second daughter. | | |
| 1942 | Imprisoned with circa 120,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans. | | First contact with Simon Vinkenoog, who works as a model at the private academy of Zadkine. Through this contact he meets the CoBrA-artists. | Works as wallpaper designer at Rasch Tapeten-fabrik, Bramsche, Germany. | 1960 | Begins using tubular brass elements. | |
| | February 19, president F. D. Roosevelt signs executive Order 9066, by which circa 120,000 Japanese-Americans, Issei and Nisei are evacuated and imprisoned without individual charges or trials in concentration camps. | | CoBrA is founded on November 8. | 1952 | Grant from the John Hay Whitney Foundation, New York. | | |
| | In May internment in the stables of the Assembly Centre Santa Anita Race track. | | Starts working on a series of sculptures <i>Warriors</i> , and <i>Samurai</i> , a reoccurring theme throughout his oeuvre. | 1953 | 1962 | Move to Castle Scheres, Baarlo (Noord-Limburg), The Netherlands. | |
| | In September internment in the <i>Poston 3, Relocation Camp</i> in Arizona, Colorado River Indian Reservation. | 1949 | Studies with Fernand Léger from September until September 1950. | Granted <i>First prize for best German Wallpaper</i> , international Wallpaper exhibition, Darmstadt, Germany. | 1963 | Granted the <i>Mainichi Shibusen Prize</i> for sculpture awarded at the <i>Tokyo Biennale</i> , Tokyo, Japan. | |
| 1943 | Volunteers for 100th /442nd Regimental Combat Team, U.S. Army. Basic training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. A special combat unit entirely independent, comprised (except for officers) of Japanese American volunteers. | | Makes <i>One-day sculptures</i> along the banks of the Seine, photographed by Sabine Weiss (published in <i>LIFE</i> magazine 1952). | Meets Ferdi Jansen. Starts living together in a studio behind restaurant Wadja, in the courtyard at Académie Colarossi and later in Sucy-en-Brie, a suburb of Paris. | 1964 | Karl Kleimann from Dortmund (Germany) and Isamu Kanamori from Tokyo become assistants in his workshop at Castle Scheres. Karl Kleimann remains his assistant for the rest of Tajiri's life. | |
| | | 1950 | Co-founder of Gallery 8 (Huit) for American artists in Paris. | 1954 | Divorces Denise Martin on May 13. | | |
| 1944 | In May the 442nd Regimental Combat Team is shipped to Naples, Italy. Liberation of Rome. July 9: wounded at Castellina, North of Rome. Hospitalised for 6 months in the 6th General Hospital in Rome. Reclassified as <i>Limited Service</i> and serves in France in the Army postal service and billeting section. | | Group show of G.I. students, Galerie St. Placide. In the review <i>G.I. students show the Left Bank</i> is mentioned that Pablo Picasso visited the exhibition and particularly liked the sculptures of Tajiri. | Moves with Ferdi to rue Vercingétorix, Paris; they travel together on a 650cc Triumph Motorcycle through Spain, North Africa, Belgium, The Netherlands, Austria, and Italy. | | Work is shown in group exhibition at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam with Max Bill, Alexander Calder, César, Lynn Chadwick, Wessel Couzijn, Naum Gabo, Emile Gilioli, Henry Heerup, Jean Ipoustéguy, Robert Jacobsen, Henri Laurens, Birgitte Meier-Denninghoff, Jaap Mooy, Louise Nevelson and Germaine Richier. | |
| | | | He received praise from major critics such as Charles Estienne; and well-known French, Italian, German and English art magazines published articles about Tajiri's work in which his work is presented next to works by Calder, Gabo, Duchamp, Giacometti, Chillida, Gonzales, Arp and other leading sculptors. | 1955 | Designs the cover of the novel <i>Molloy</i> by Samuel Beckett | Visiting professor at Minneapolis School of Art, U.S.A. Resides with his family and assistants in Minneapolis for one year, on invitation of the director Arnold Herstand whom he knew from his time in Paris. | |
| 1945 | Through stops in Marseille, Nancy (France) he went to Seckenheim. <i>Special Service</i> as artist, Seckenheim, Germany. Made drawings of <i>Displaced Persons</i> from Eastern Europe at Mannheim, Germany. On leave in Paris, France. | | <i>American Artists</i> shown at Gallery 8 (Huit): Robert L. Rosenwald, Carmen d'Avino, Sydney Geist, Burt Hasen, Al Held, Raymond Hender, Oscar Chelimsky, George Ortman, Harold Tovish. Studies at Académie de la Grande Chaumière from | Makes the film <i>The Vipers</i> which was awarded the <i>Lion d'Or</i> (Golden Lion) for the Best Use of the Language of Film at the 8th international Festival for Amateur Films, Cannes, France. | | | |
| | | | | 1956 | Moves to Amsterdam, The Netherlands, with Ferdi Jansen and they live at Oudezijds Achterburgwal 151. | 1965 | Makes <i>Column for Meditation</i> , a monumental sculpture for the city of St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S.A. |
| | | | | 1957 | Marries Ferdi. | | Travels for five months through U.S.A. and Mexico with family and assistants. |

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| <p>1966 Starts <i>Machine</i> sculptures. Tajiri's series of machines ended in 1968 with the <i>No. 8</i>.</p> <p>Participates in the local carnival parades with his friends and family. Taped on 1/2 inch Sony CV American System: video tape no. 1-2-3 <i>Carnival in Baarlo</i>.</p> <p>1967 Makes first <i>Polyester Knot</i> sculptures.</p> <p>1969 Nelson Rockefeller acquires <i>Granny's Knot</i>; shown at the MoMa, New York.</p> <p>Death of Ferdi Jansen, February 2.</p> <p>Visiting professor Hochschule der Künste (HdK, University of the Arts), West-Berlin, Germany. On intercession of the students (permanent appointment: professorship in 1973-1989).</p> <p>1970 Suzanne van der Capellen comes to live at Castle Scheres, Baarlo.</p> <p>1971 <i>Grand Prix</i> for the film <i>Bodil Joensen, A Summer Day</i> at the first <i>Wet Dream Film Festival</i>, Amsterdam.</p> <p>With his Sony Porta-Pak he records a series of interviews with artists and events.</p> <p>1972 Visiting professor at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, U.S.A. (second time).</p> <p>Creates video workshop and <i>Electronic Bulletin Board</i> which was put up in the hall of the institute.</p> <p>Death of mother Fuyo Kikuta-Tajiri.</p> <p>1973 Revival of the daguerreotype photographic technique. Tajiri starts to make a large series of over 1000 daguerreotypes.</p> <p>1976 Marries Suzanne van der Capellen, September 27.</p> <p>1978 Makes <i>Homage to Magritte</i>, installation with stereo photos in stereoscopic view experiment.</p> <p>1981 Granted <i>Honorary Citizen of Los Angeles</i>, U.S.A. and receives the Key to the City of Los Angeles by Mayor Tom Bradley.</p> <p>1986 Travels to China with sixteen students from the Hochschule der Künste, Berlin. Meetings and exhibitions in art schools.</p> <p>1988 Makes drawings of knots on the Commodore Amiga-computer.</p> | <p>1989 Retires from the Hochschule der Künste, Berlin. After twenty years of teaching in retirement: Students say goodbye with exhibition.</p> <p>1992 Granted <i>Officer in the Order of the Orange-Nassau</i>, May 29, chivalric order open to everyone who has earned special merits for society.</p> <p>Birth of first grandchild Tanéa Ferdi Teruo, September 29, daughter of Giotta and Alan Teruo Roberts.</p> <p>1994 Granted <i>Honorary Citizen Bruyères en Vosges</i>, France.</p> <p>Birth of second grandchild Shakuru Shin, December 13, son of Giotta and Alan Teruo Roberts.</p> <p>1996 <i>Sentinel</i>, commission for the Dutch Ministry of Defense to commemorate the end of the draft, Nassauplein, The Hague. This was the start of a series of <i>Ronin</i> based on the legendary story of the 47 Ronin.</p> <p>2001 Establishes TASHA B.V. (Ta-néa + Sha-kuru, his two grand-children) the Shinkichi Tajiri Estate.</p> <p>2002 Granted <i>Member of the Académie Royale</i>, Brussels, Belgium (nominated in 2000).</p> <p>2005 Granted <i>Honorary Citizen of Maasbree</i>, The Netherlands (Baarlo is part of this county).</p> <p>2007 May 2, Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands unveiled the four <i>Sentinels</i> on the bridge over the Maas river in Venlo, The Netherlands.</p> <p>Granted <i>Knight in the Order of The Netherlands Lion</i>, Dutch order of chivalry.</p> <p>2008 Granted Dutch Citizenship, December 7.</p> <p>2009 In the early morning of Sunday March 15, Shinkichi Tajiri passed away in his studio at home amongst his family.</p> <p>2011 Receives posthumously the Congressional Gold Medal for his distinguished service during World War II as a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. It is the highest civilian award in the United States.</p> <p>2013 The sculptures <i>Made in U.S.A.</i> from Tajiri and <i>Wombtomb</i> from Ferdi were aquired and are on permanent display in the 20th century collection of the Rijksmuseum. Opening on April 15 of the renovated Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.</p> |
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Giotta, Ryu & their dog Eros, 1964
Photo: Shinkichi Tajiri

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1945 First exhibition in Red Cross Club of Mannheim, Germany
- 1951 Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany
- 1953 *Tajiri: Plastics and gouaches of a Japanese man in Parijs*, 't Venster, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- 1957 Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany
- 1958 Rotterdamse Kunstkring, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Galerie Lucien Durand, Paris, France
- 1960 *Tajiri, sculptures*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 1961 *Tajiri*, Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, The Netherlands
- 1962 Galleria Odyssea, Rome, Italy
Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany
- 1963 Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
- 1964 Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark
Konsthallen, Göteborg, Sweden
Hamiltons Gallery, London, England
André Emmerich Gallery, New York, U.S.A.
- 1965 Dayton's Gallery, St. Paul, U.S.A.
Art Institute of Minneapolis, U.S.A.
André Emmerich Gallery, New York, U.S.A.
- 1967 *Tajiri Beelden 1960-1967*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Galerie Léger, Göteborg and Malmö, Sweden
Hamilton Galleries, London, England
- 1968 Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium
Galerie Krikhaar, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Germany
Court Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 1970 *Tajiri and Ferdi*, retrospective exhibition, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands
- 1971 Galerie Judith Weingarten, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

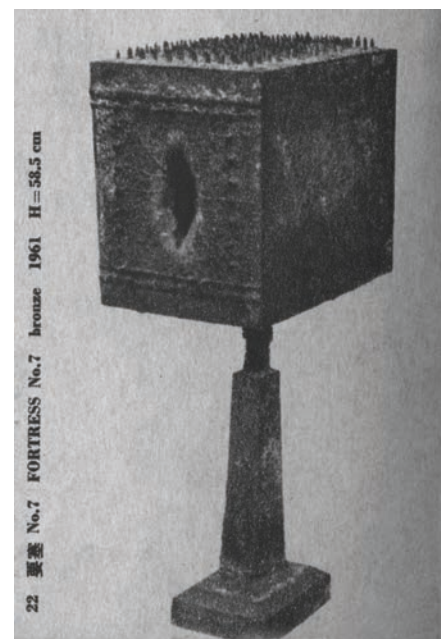
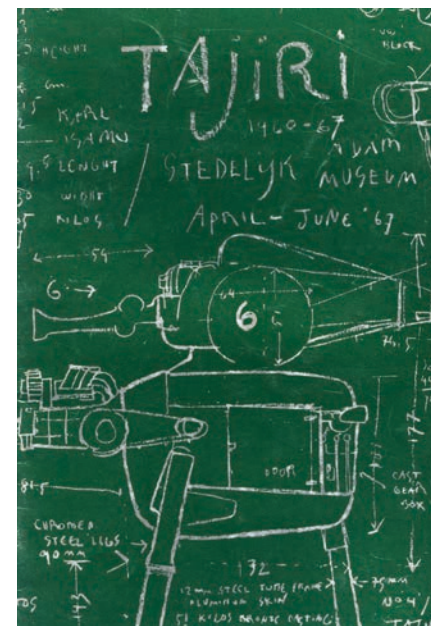


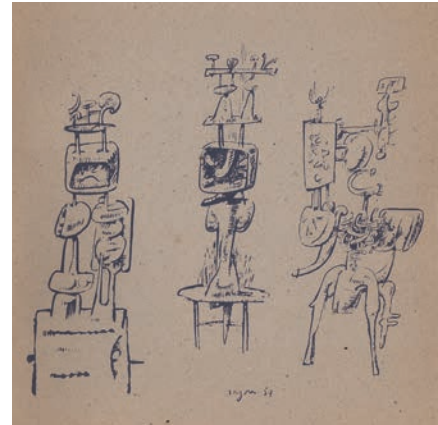
Image from Tokyo Gallery publication, 1963



Stedelijk Museum publication, 1967

- 1971-1972 Solo exhibition of 60 sculptures in eight museums and art centers in Scandinavia
- 1974 *Tajiri: Sculptures, drawings, graphics, books, video tapes, films*, retrospective exhibition, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Tajiri: Sculptures, drawings, graphics, books, video tapes, films, retrospective exhibition, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, The Netherlands
- 1975 *Shinkichi Tajiri: Skulpturen, Collagen, Grafiek*, Galerie Nouvelles Images, The Hague, The Netherlands
- 1976 *Shinkichi Tajiri*, Galerie Collection d'Art, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Travelling (1976-1978) solo exhibition of 101 daguerreotypes made by Tajiri: *Mirrors with Memories*
Spiegels met herinneringen, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Travelling solo exhibition: *Spiegel mit Erinnerungen*, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany / Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn, Germany / Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands / Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, Germany / München Stadtmuseum, Munich, Germany / Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, The Netherlands
- 1979-1980 *Stereoscopic Views by Tajiri*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Double Exposure: Stereoscopic Views by Tajiri, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, The Netherlands
Doppelt belichtet: Stereoscopic Views by Tajiri, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany
- 1983 Shinkichi Tajiri, Galerie Collection d'Art, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Kritzraedthuis, Sittard, The Netherlands
- 1985 Photographic works, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, The Netherlands
- 1987 Solo exhibition, *Paper Knots and String Drawings*, Artline, The Hague, The Netherlands
- 1989 *Tajiri: Sculpturen en papierwerk op het thema knoop* (Tajiri: sculptures and paperwork on the theme knot), Galerie Schuwirth & Van Noorden, Maastricht, The Netherlands
Knots for Meditation, Galerie Horst dietrich, Berlin, Germany
- 1990 *Shinkichi Tajiri: foto's*, Kunstcentrum Simera, Maastricht, The Netherlands

- 1991 *Warriors and other sculptures*, 1952-1958, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, The Netherlands
- 1992 *Photography Reexplored*, Museum for Photography, Antwerp, Belgium
- 1993 *Tajiri*, retrospective exhibition, Museum van Bommel van Dam, Venlo, The Netherlands
- 1995 *Tajiri*, Librije Hedendaagse Kunst, Broerenkerk, Zwolle, The Netherlands
- 1997 *Silent Dynamism and Oneness in Multiformity*, CoBrA Museum of Modern Art, Amstelveen, The Netherlands
- Dialogue: Shinkichi Tajiri*, Museum Carl-Henning Pedersen & Else Alfelt, Herning, Denmark
- 2000 *Ronin*, Museum van Bommel van Dam, Venlo, The Netherlands
- 2001 *Tajiri, Bildhauerei gegen die Langeweile*, retrospective exhibition, Gerard Marcks Haus, Bremen, Germany
- 2002 *Shinkichi Tajiri: De muur (The wall)*, Fotokabinetten Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, The Netherlands
- 2003 *Tajiri-snelheid, erotiek, geweld*, retrospective exhibition, Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
- 2009 *Seed no 4*, retrospective exhibition based on the theme 'Seeds' at the Technical University in Eindhoven, The Netherlands
- Recording The Berlin Wall*, book presentation and exhibition at UdK (University of the Arts), Berlin, Germany
- The Berlin Wall*, book presentation and exhibition at VU (Vrije Universiteit), Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 2011 *100 Photographs of the Berlin Wall*, made in 1971 by Tajiri, at the Falling Walls Conference: The International Conference on Future Breakthroughs in Science and Society, Berlin, Germany.
- 2012 *Tajiri in het land van Peel en Maas*, a show about the life of Tajiri and Baarlo at the Streekmuseum (Local Museum), Panningen, The Netherlands.
- 2013 *My secret Garden*, at CoBrA Buiten (CoBrA in the Open), 2nd edition in the new sculpture garden at Keukenhof Castle in Lisse, The Netherlands.
- Ten Rande Foundation in The Hague (by appointment only). Shida and Peter Bliet bring the work of Tajiri to the attention of the ambassadors in the Corps Diplomatique in the context of 100 years Peace Palace in The Hague, The Netherlands.
- 2014 *The Berlin Wall Panoramas 1981*, at the Falling Walls Conference: The International Conference on Future Breakthroughs in Science and Society, Berlin, Germany
- 2015 *The Wall in Our Heads*, Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, Haverford, PA, U.S.A.
- Shinkichi Tajiri Universal Paradoxes*, Japan Museum SieboldHuis, Leiden, The Netherlands



American Art Gallery publication, 1964

SELECTED WORKS IN MUSEUMS

- Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, The Netherlands
- Museum Beelden aan Zee, Scheveningen, The Netherlands
- Museum van Bommel van Dam, Venlo, The Netherlands
- Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, The Netherlands
- Centraal Museum, Utrecht, The Netherlands
- CoBrA Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Amstelveen, The Netherlands
- Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, The Netherlands
- Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands
- Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
- Niedersächsisches Museum, Hannover, Germany
- Museum of Modern Art, Stockholm, Sweden
- MOMA Aarhus, Denmark
- Carl-Henning Petersen & Else Alfelts Museum, Herning, Denmark
- Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark
- Museum Middelheim, Antwerpen, Belgium
- Museum Fukuoka, Japan
- Metropolitan Museum, New York, NY U.S.A.
- MOMA, New York, NY U.S.A.
- International Museum of Erotic Art, San Francisco, CA U.S.A.
- Smithsonian American Art Museums, Washington, DC U.S.A.
- NSU Art Museum, Fort Lauderdale, FL U.S.A.



Photo from Gallerie20 publication, 1964
Photo: Erhard Wehrmann

SELECTED PUBLIC SPACES

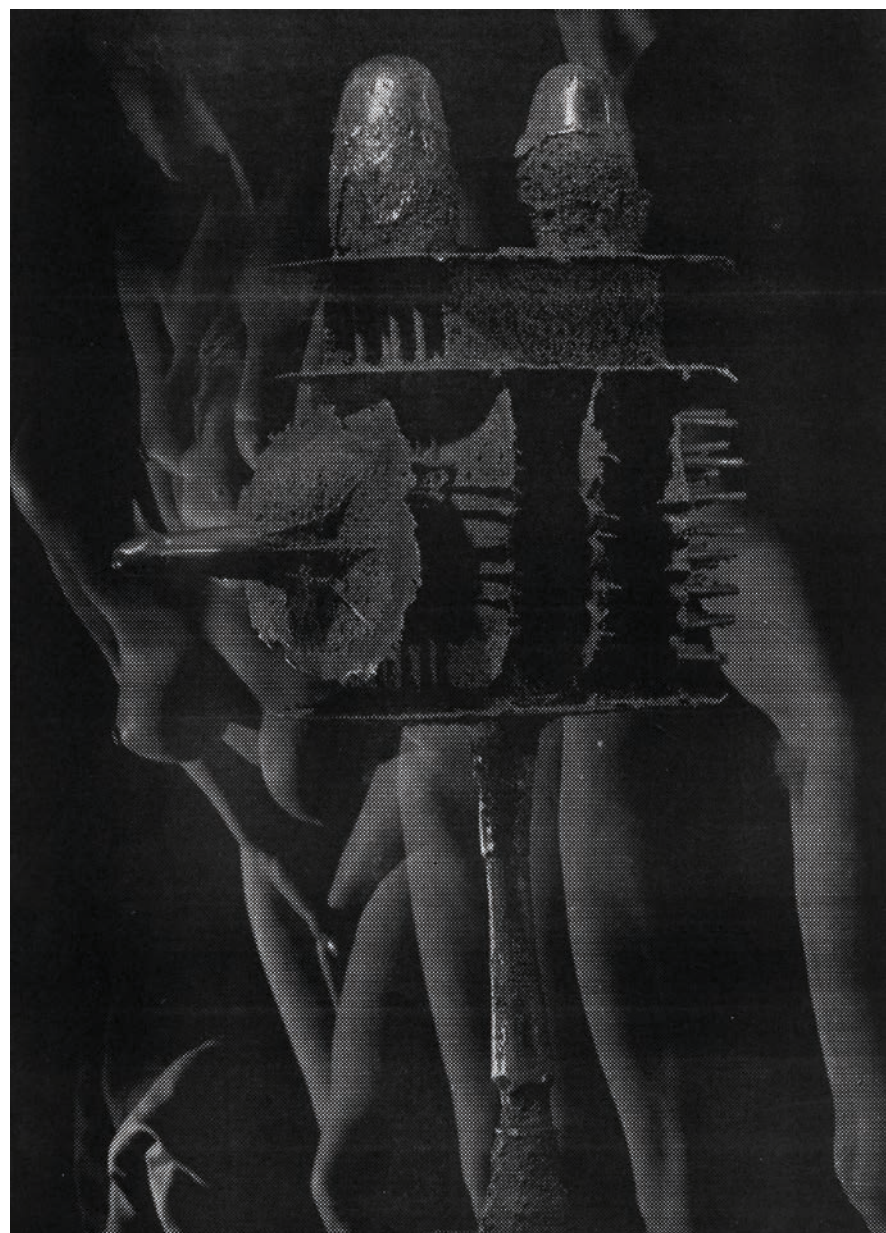
- 1961 *Explosive Forces of Nature*, AKU Fountain, Gele Rijdersplein, Arnhem, The Netherlands
- 1965 *Column for Meditation*, St. Paul, MN U.S.A.
- 1968 *Granny's Knot*, Collection Kykuit, National Trust for Historic Preservation, bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, Tarrytown, NY U.S.A.
- 1975 *Meeting point*, Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 1976 *Forum / Ontmoetingsplaats*, 't Breedveld, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 1976 *Four times Two (Knot)*, City of Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- 1981 *Friendship Knot*, Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, CA U.S.A.
- 1984 *Junction*, NOB (Dutch Broadcasting), Hilversum, The Netherlands
- 1989 *Overhand Knot*, Tax Offices, Maastricht, The Netherlands
- 1991 *Knot for Queen (Overhand Knot)*, Palace Noordeinde garden, The Hague, The Netherlands
- 1992 *Connection (Knot)*, Baarlo, The Netherlands
- 1992-1997 Knot sculpture route, Baarlo, The Netherlands
- 1994 *Friendship Knot*, Bruyères, France
- 1996 *Sentinel (Monument for the end of the Dutch Military Draft)*, Nassauplein, The Hague, The Netherlands
- 2007 Four *Sentinels* on the bridge over the Maas river, Venlo, The Netherlands
- 2007 *Remembrance (knot)*, Gildeschool Technodome, Venlo, The Netherlands



Connection, Baarlo, The Netherlands, 1992
Photo: Shinkichi Tajiri

LIST OF WORKS

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| pg 17 | <i>Interplanetary Station</i> 1953 - 1955 Brass 97 x 15 x 13 cm 38 1/4 x 5 7/8 x 5 1/8 in | pg 29 | <i>Obiit</i> 1962 Bronze 67 x 21.5 x 27 cm 26 3/8 x 8 1/2 x 10 5/8 in | pg 41 | <i>Tower of Babel</i> 1972 Bronze 65 x Ø25 cm 25 5/8 x Ø9 7/8 in | pg 53 | <i>Ronin</i> 1995 Bronze 75 x 29 x 38 cm 29 1/2 x 11 3/8 x 15 in |
| pg 19 | <i>Sentinel</i> 1954 Iron 107 x 48 x 68 cm 42 1/8 x 18 7/8 x 26 3/4 in | pg 31 | <i>Fortress</i> 1961 Bronze 59 x 18 x 33 cm 23 1/4 x 7 1/8 x 13 in | pg 43 | <i>Astronaut</i> 1972 Aluminium 16.5 x 19.5 x 38 cm 6 1/2 x 7 5/8 x 15 in | pg 55 | <i>Ronin</i> 2002 Bronze 124 x 58 x 67 cm 48 3/4 x 22 7/8 x 26 3/8 in |
| pg 21 | <i>Lock</i> 1955 Iron 61 x 45 x 31 cm 24 x 17 3/4 x 12 1/4 in | pg 33 | <i>Seed</i> 1961 Bronze 47 x 23 x 17 cm 18 1/2 x 9 x 6 3/4 in | pg 45 | <i>Square Knot</i> 1993 Cast iron 22.5 x 37 x 10 cm 8 7/8 x 14 1/2 x 4 in | pg 57 | <i>Overhand Knot</i> 2008 Aluminium 95.5 x 27 x 26 cm 37 5/8 x 10 5/8 x 10 1/4 in |
| pg 23 | <i>Sentinel</i> 1957 - 1961 Bronze & brass 132 x 19.5 x 34 cm 52 x 7 5/8 x 13 3/8 in | pg 35 | <i>Untitled</i> 1964 Bronze 43 x 32 x 71 cm 17 x 12 5/8 x 28 in | pg 47 | <i>Square Knot</i> 1994 Cast iron 56 x 35 x 15.5 cm 22 x 13 3/4 x 6 1/8 in | | |
| pg 25 | <i>Fetish</i> 1960 Bronze & brass 135 x 72 x 47 cm 53 1/8 x 28 3/8 x 18 1/2 in | pg 37 | <i>Adam No.4</i> 1964 Bronze 86.5 x 26 x 54 cm 34 x 10 1/4 x 21 1/4 in | pg 49 | <i>Granny's Knot</i> 1995 Cast iron 31.5 x 43.5 x 11 cm 12 3/8 x 17 1/8 x 4 3/8 in | | |



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21 CORK STREET
FIRST FLOOR
LONDON W1S 3LZ
T: +44 (0)20 7734 3558
F: +44 (0)20 7494 1377
info@mayorgallery.com
www.mayorgallery.com

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