

JUN KANEKO

Bio

Jun Kaneko was born in Nagoya, Japan in 1942. He studied painting with Satoshi Ogawa during his adolescence - working in his studio during the day and attending high school in the evening. He came to the United States in 1963 to continue his studies at Chouinard Institute of Art when his introduction to Fred Marer drew him to sculptural ceramics. He proceeded to study with Peter Voulkos, Paul Soldner, and Jerry Rothman in California during the time now defined as The Contemporary Ceramics Movement in America. The following decade, Kaneko taught at some of the nation's leading art schools, including Scripps College, Rhode Island School of Design and Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Based in Omaha since 1986, Jun Kaneko has worked at several experimental studios including European Ceramic Work Center in The Netherlands, Otsuka Omi Ceramic Company in Japan, Fabric Workshop in Philadelphia PA, Bullseye Glass in Portland OR, Acadia Summer Arts Program in Bar Harbor ME, and Aguacate in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Over the course of his career he has partnered with industrial facilities to realize large-scale, hand-built sculptures. The first was his 1982-1983 Omaha Project at Omaha Brickworks. Later sculptures include his Fremont Project, completed in 1992-1994 in California, and most recently his Pittsburg Project completed in 2004-2007 in Kansas. Both of these later series of sculptures were created at Mission Clay Products. This past spring, his exhibition Myths, Legends and Truths opened at Millennium Park in Chicago. The exhibition features thirteen nine-and-a-half foot tall Dangos and twenty-three of his Tanukis. This new body of work by Kaneko draws upon the myths and legends of the tanuki figure.

His artwork appears in numerous international and national solo and group exhibitions annually, and is included in more than seventy museum collections. He has realized over thirty public art commissions in the United States and Japan and is the recipient of national, state and organization fellowships. Kaneko holds honorary doctorates from the University of Nebraska, the Massachusetts College of Art & Design and the Royal College of Art in London.

Kaneko is increasingly drawn to installations that promote civic interaction. He has completed over fifty public art commissions, including his two three hundred and fifty foot long Tile Walls at Aquarium Station in Boston, MA (1993-2000), a 3-story high wall in the Biology library at The University of Connecticut (1997) and at the the Mashima Sports Arena in Osaka Japan (1994); permanent plaza installations in Council Bluffs and Des Moines, IA (2007 and 2013), at Bartle Hall and Convention Center in Kansas City, KS (2006), and at the International Finance Center in Shanghai, China (2012). In 2014 his fifty-six foot tall Glass Tower, Plaza Design, and Tile Wall will be permanently installed in Lincoln, NE.

Jun Kaneko's new design for San Francisco Opera's production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* is currently touring the United States. It opened in San Francisco, Omaha, Kansas City. Its final performance will take place at The Washington National Opera at The John F. Kennedy Center. His production of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, which premiered at Opera Omaha in March 2006, will open in June 2014 at the San Francisco Opera.

In 1998, he and his wife Ree Kaneko formed a non-profit cultural organization in Omaha Nebraska called KANEKO that explores and encourages the process of creativity. KANEKO is headquartered in landmark, turn-of-the-century warehouses in the Old Market District of Omaha, Nebraska. Jun Kaneko continues his dedication to life as an artist and as a cultural catalyst for the region.