

THE SANKEI SHIMBUN /March 2nd, 2022 / Seeing is Believing

(The third of the trilogy)

Nurturing the Next Generation to Protect the Environment

Sculptor Susumu Shingu – 84

The Concept of ATELIER EARTH

(Caption for the photograph)

Susumu Shingu smiles in his studio where scale models that move with the wind and indoor sculptures that move with the current of the air are lined up. (photographed by Mizue Torikoshi).

(Caption for the photograph)

Shingu around 1960-62, who was studying painting at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma. (provided by Shingu).

As the snow stopped, the three-dimensional work "Ripples of Light" installed in the pond beside the studio was fluttering in the wind. Outdoor sculptures powered by natural energies have been installed at the Mobile Oil Research Institute in Dallas in 1982 and the New England Aquarium in Boston. Shingu's solo exhibition held at the PepsiCo headquarters in New York in 1973 received good reputation.

"I was only thinking about outdoor sculpture. One day, Koiso-sensei pushed me to do what he couldn't do himself." In 1984, Ryohei Koiso saw the video of an ultralight airplane powered by rubber. With his word "Why don't you think about it for a moment?" Shingu started to make super-lightweight sculptures that work indoors. The interior sculptures, which capture the slightest current of air and move in a complicated manner, have expanded the range of creation and the stage of activity.

Shingu still remembers being praised by Koiso who saw the works in Shingu's first solo exhibition "Breathing Sculptures" at the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition triggered a call from Germany. In 1987, the exhibition "Windcircus" was held from Bremen, Germany, touring Spain, Italy and Finland. The theme was the encounter between people from all over the world and sculpture.

The following year, Shingu was invited to the International Sculpture Symposium at the Seoul Olympics, toured the United States with Windcircus, and the following year he won the Special Excellence Award at the Henry Moore Grand Prize Exhibition. He also held a solo exhibition in Paris.

It was around this time that Renzo Piano, a world-famous Italian architect, who won the international competition at the Kansai International Airport Terminal Building and came to Japan for the first time,

took contact saying "I want to meet Shingu." Since then they have been collaborating. While exhibiting wind-moving sculptures in Finland, Morocco, Mongolia and other parts of the world, Shingu planned an outdoor stage called "Kippis and his Friends," and created a stage for the show by fashion designer Issey Miyake. Shingu has been active ever since. In 2007, he started a project called "Breathing Earth" to create a village that coexists with nature. He traveled around the world to create efficient windmills and villages, thinking that "the earthlings have a responsibility to pass on the wonderful earth to the next generation without polluting it." "But it didn't go well because of the barriers of reality in various places." If an artist plunged into a costly renewable energy business, it would be a disaster. A British wind expert awakened him.

The idea of ATELIER EARTH is to "nurture future generations to protect the earth." For the younger generation, an art and culture experience-based facilities with an atelier, exhibition facility, a theater and so on will be built in Arimafuji Park in Hyogo Prefecture. It was said that the Prefecture would spend a total construction cost of about 3 billion yen and open it in the spring of 2024. However, the governor was changed, and the plan was shelved due to the new coronavirus. "If you think about it, it's just a problem with the building, isn't it? There are other measures. We'll be working on a new program for ATELIER EARTH over the next year." The wind sculptor is always youthful.

Interviewer: Toshikazu Masaki, Editor-in-Chief