

## MINORU NIIZUMA Biography



Niizuma at his solo show, Umeda Museum of Modern Art, Osaka, 1977.

Minoru Niizuma was born 1930 in Tokyo, Japan. He immigrated to the United States in the postwar period, following his education at Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, and his subsequent local success exhibiting with the Modern Art Association in Tokyo. Settling in New York in 1959, Niizuma joined the Brooklyn Museum Art School in 1964 as a teacher, while simultaneously entering the emerging artistic cluster that came to be affiliated with the term “Minimalism,” although Niizuma’s work defied that classification. In the next year, Niizuma was featured in the 1965-1966 exhibition *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, which traveled from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to five other US institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York. By 1973, Niizuma had shown at two Whitney Annuals, the 1967 Pittsburgh International, and at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, where he showed twice more in the mid 1980s.

Throughout his life, Niizuma worked in series, mostly focusing on refining and iterating a single form over the course of several years. His *Castle of the Eye* series has been widely collected by institutions, the first of the series residing in the Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection, with others in the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Institutional and commercial collections, particularly sculpture gardens, introduced his work to the public.

Following his 6 years at the Brooklyn Museum, Niizuma was named an adjunct professor at Columbia, where he taught from 1972 through 1984 before becoming the director of the Stone Institute of New York in 1983. During the early 1980s, he began traveling to Portugal as part of the Evora Symposium, a pivot that would carry him into the last 20 years of his life and work.

The immense array of marble and stone available in the European nation brought Niizuma back time and time again. Niizuma received five solo exhibitions in Portugal over the span of five years, and exhibited work in the *5th International Biennial of Sculpture*, Caldas de Rainha, Portugal. His deep engagement with Portugal eventually resulted in Niizuma working directly with Portuguese President, Mario Soares to build artistic exchange between Portugal and Japan. Niizuma passed away in 1998.

### **Minoru Niizuma**

Born 1930, Tokyo, Japan

Died 1998, New York, NY

### **Education**

1955            National Tokyo University of the Arts

### **Teaching**

1964-1970      Instructor, Brooklyn Museum Art School, New York

1972-1984      Adjunct Professor, Columbia University School of the Arts, New York

1983-1998      Director, Stone Institute of New York

### **Selected Solo & Two-Person Exhibitions**

1993            Galeria Valentim De Carvalho, Lisbon, Portugal  
                    Centro Cultural São Lourenço, Almancil, Portugal

1992            Park Ryu Sook Art Gallery, Seoul, Korea

1989           Mekler Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
                  Galerie Nichido, Tokyo, Japan  
                  Foundation Verannemen, Belgium

1988-89        The Blue Hill Art and Cultural Center, Pearl River, NY

1988            Galeria Quadrom, Lisbon, Portugal

1986            Art Point Gallery, Tokyo, Japan  
                  Centro Cultural S. Lourenco, Almancil, Portugal  
                  Mekler Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
                  Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon, Portugal

1985            Galleria Glide, Guimaraes, Portugal

1984            Vorpall Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
                  Designer's Emporium, Honolulu, HI

1983            Mekler Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

1982            Elaine Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, NY  
                  Rosenberg Fine Arts Gallery, Toronto, Canada

1979            Gimpel and Weitzenhoffer Gallery, New York, NY  
                  Contemporary Sculpture Center, Tokyo, Japan  
                  Contemporary Sculpture Center, Osaka, Japan

1977            Umeda Museum of Modern Art, Osaka, Japan  
                  Gimpel and Weitzenhoffer Gallery, New York, NY  
                  Guild Hall Museum, East Hampton, NY

1976            Center for International Arts, New York, NY  
                  Seibu Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan

1974            Gimpel and Weitzenhoffer Gallery, New York, NY

1973            Gimpel and Weitzenhoffer Gallery, New York, NY  
                  Gimpel, Hanover and Andre Emmerich Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland

- 1972 Gimpel and Weitzenhoffer Gallery, New York, NY
- 1971 Rockefeller University, New York, NY
- 1968 Howard Wise Gallery, New York, NY
- 1967 Flair Gallery, Cincinnati, OH
- 1966 Howard Wise Gallery, New York, NY

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2021 *The Unseen Professors: Leo Amino (1911-1989), Minoru Niizuma (1930-1998), John Pai (b. 1937)*, Tina Kim Gallery, New York, NY
- 1997 *Asian Traditions – Modern Expressions*, Zimmerli Museum, New Brunswick, NJ
- 1993 *5th International Biennial of Sculpture*, Caldas da Rainha, Portugal
- 1992 Kouros Gallery, New York, NY/ Kouros Open Air Museum, CT
- 1991 Kua Chun Museum, Kua Chun, Korea
- 1989 *Japanese Sculpture*, Fukushima Prefectural Museum of Art, Japan
- 1987-88 The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Art, New York, NY
- 1983-84 The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Art, New York, NY  
The Neuberger Museum, Purchase, NY
- 1982 *World Stone Sculpture*, Kunsthhaus Zug, Switzerland
- 1981 *The 2nd Henry Moore Grand Prize Exhibition*, Hakone Open-Air Museum, Japan
- 1980 *Paintings and Sculptures by Candidates for Art Awards*, American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, New York, NY

- 1977 *The Grand Prize of the Hakone Open-Air Museum, The 3rd Exhibition*, Hakone Open-Air Museum, Japan
- 1975 *13th Biennial, Open-Air Museum of Sculpture*, Middelheim, Antwerp, Belgium
- 1973-74 *Japanese Artists in the Americas*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto and Tokyo, Japan
- 1973 The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY
- 1969 *Second Flint Invitational*, Flint Institute of Arts in the De Waters Art Center, Flint, MI
- 1968 *Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture, Watercolors and Drawings*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY  
*American Painting and Sculpture*, Herron Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN
- 1967 *Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, PA
- 1966 *Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture, Watercolors and Drawings*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
- 1965-66 *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA  
 Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO  
 The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Columbus, OH  
 The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY  
 Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD  
 Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee, WI
- 1965 *Japanese Artists Abroad: Europe and America*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan

### **Institutional Collections**

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY  
 Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon, Portugal  
 City of Dublin, Ireland

City of Evora, Portugal  
City of Hachioji, Japan  
City of Hekinan, Japan  
City of Lisbon, Portugal  
City of Oporto, Portugal  
City of Shizuoka, Japan  
City of Tokyo, Japan  
Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA  
Fort Worth Museum, Fort Worth, TX  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC  
Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Kobe, Japan  
Iwatemachi Sculpture Garden, Iwate, Japan  
Kasama Nichido Museum of Art, Ibaraki, Japan  
Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY  
Museum of Modern Art, Toyama, Japan  
New York University, New York, NY  
Oklahoma Museum, Oklahoma City, OK  
Rockefeller University, New York, NY  
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA  
Seibu Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan  
The Hakone Museum of Modern Art, Kobe, Japan  
The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan  
The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea  
The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan  
The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan  
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY  
University College of Dublin, Dublin, Ireland  
Williams College, Williamstown, MA

### **Private Collections**

The Chase Manhattan Bank Headquarters, New York, NY  
Citibank Headquarters, New York, NY  
General Mills Corporation, Minneapolis, MN  
IBM Zurich, Switzerland  
Sanwa Bank, New York, NY  
Suntory Headquarters, Osaka, JP