

# Questions of Existence: Shigeo Toya and Sculpture of “Emergence”

Masayuki Tanaka

Professor, History of Art and Design, Musashino Art University

029

*The human urge to create most likely originates in a certainty that something exists where there is nothing.*<sup>1</sup>

## Existence

What has Shigeo Toyo sought to achieve through sculpture? This exhibition aims, above all, to explore precisely this question. I believe that Toyo's words quoted above give an important clue to the answer, and that his sculpture captures the state of emerging of things that exist without distinct form, that are known to certainly exist but cannot be seen.

In this sense, Toya's sculptures can be interpreted as explorations of existence. I would like to consider Toya's sculpture in this exhibition from this point of view and to examine how such an issue is structurally expressed in Toya's work.

Toya's following comment sheds more light on his idea of connection between sculpture and existence:

*We feel that something certainly exists and that the form it could take has not yet emerged. To represent it, we produce sculpture and painting, and differentiate between sculpture, as ontological, and painting, as epistemological.*<sup>2</sup>

What Toya is saying is that sculpture and painting give expression to something we know exists but we are unable to see or discern the shape of them. Sculptural expression is based in ontology, while expression in painting is epistemological. The meaning of this is, however, not immediately apparent.

Takaaki Yoshimoto, literary critic and one of Toya's intellectual influences, wrote, in the 'the difficulty of understanding sculpture' chapter of his book on poet and sculptor Kotaro Takamura, about the difference between three-dimensional sculpture and relief form as follows:

In the case of a relief, the world is pre-existing and it is only necessary to carve it out. For sculpture, the world must be created and shaped... For a relief, what is important is not to build a world, but rather to decorate or represent it. To produce a three-dimensional sculpture, however, means the creation of a world.<sup>3</sup>

Yoshimoto explains that producing a flat relief is the act of drawing out an existing world

and, as a result, an attempt to confirm it, whereas making a sculpture is comparable to the act of creating a world. Discussing cave paintings together with relief, Yoshimoto argues that a 'relief' is an expression, somehow primitive, which has been produced in order to accept that human beings, like other animals, exist in a world dominated by the laws of nature. Conversely, the three-dimensional sculpture is an expression of making a world apparent where humans are, apart from other animals, independent of and dominate the rule of nature. Yoshimoto probably thinks that the world is a modern society, and he refers to this act of making the world apparent as 'to create a world.' Humans have to create a world for themselves alone, which has no relationship with nature and animals. According to Yoshimoto, 'the world' is a 'receptacle for mankind,' the place where we exist. The purpose of creating a three-dimensional sculpture is an attempt to understand the world where we exist, although we cannot see its shape clearly. Of course, Yoshimoto's argument in his chapter of 'the difficulty of understanding sculpture' is not always applicable to Toya's works. Actually Toya considers the 'relief', quite differently from Yoshimoto, as something lying between painting and sculpture.<sup>4</sup> But we can connect Yoshimoto and Toya if we accept that both of them share the idea that reliefs and paintings are produced to 'confirm' the pre-existence of the world where humans live, while sculpture is produced to make the world we live in exist. When asked the source of his words quoted at the top of this essay, Toya stated that it was Yoshimoto.<sup>5</sup> Such words are not actually found in Yoshimoto's essay but Toya certainly based his idea of sculpture as 'existence' on Yoshimoto's idea of sculpture 'creating a world.'<sup>6</sup>

In Toya's works, crafting something that cannot be seen but that we know exists is not the simple act of giving shape to the invisible. Even if there is no clearly visible form, something that cannot be seen remains unseen while it is possible at the same time to confirm what 'is,' what exists - in Toya's own words, "forming sculpture of the unseen" or "representing an object without seeing it clearly."<sup>7</sup> For Toya, sculpture questions the dynamic aspect of 'emergence' in terms of the struggle between 'the seen' and the 'unseen.'

This is equivalent to questioning our existence, or our state of being alive. Drawing on Yoshimoto's argument mentioned above, Toya insists that 'because sculpture creates a world in space, it compels us to consider our own existence,' Toya's idea on the production of sculpture carries the meaning of 'considering my own existence together with the existence, position, and distance of things.'<sup>8</sup> This is better viewed as a phenomenological problem of 'emergence' rather than as an issue of mysticism,<sup>9</sup> with an earth-bound rather than a heaven-bound perspective of existence.

Along with Yoshimoto, critic Toshiaki Minemura also was an influence on Toya. Minemura's comment, for example, from the round-table discussion titled 'What is Sculpture':

*For me, sculpture is concerned with 'existence.' This is in both 'conceptual' and 'perceptual' meanings. It is concerned with how I exist, how the world exists. Sculpture is the only art aside from theater that can bring to the forefront the issue of how that which is external to myself, for example a person whom I am facing or a lover, exists in relation to myself.*<sup>10</sup>

stimulated Toya's response:

*We humans exist in the world. When my double, looking at me from somewhere behind*

*me, recognizes my existence in the world, it means that I am considering the world as having a confrontational relationship with me: the world versus myself.' I am watching an object emerging, and my double behind me is watching me, myself, emerging through the emergence of the object. And my double tells me that I am facing the world.*<sup>11</sup>

Describing sculpture as 'the creation of a world,' does not mean that an imaginary place like the Palace of the Dragon King suddenly appears before our eyes. The idea is rather to approach, by confronting headlong, without looking away from that which cannot be seen, the question of the world in which we exist. To Toya, the world where we live 'emerges' through this process.

### The 'Seen' and the 'Unseen'

031

*Bamboo Grove I* and *Bamboo Grove II* [fig.1], produced for an event at Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts in 1975, when Toya was a graduate student there, already point to a direction of production that leaves what cannot be seen as unseen. The works are formed by stretching ropes in the empty spaces between bamboo trees in a bamboo grove.<sup>12</sup> As a result, what was seemingly absent and invisible — the spaces between the bamboo trees — becomes manifest. The works, rather than giving visible shape to the void, allow us to be aware of a void. The void alerts us to the structure of a bamboo grove, consisting of a 'concrete' part and a part that is 'vacant.' If the bamboo is 'figure' and the surrounding space 'ground,' the void in *Bamboo Grove*, though it cannot be seen, clearly has the potential to become 'figure' as does the bamboo to become 'ground.' This is not in the modernist sense of fusion (resolution of binary confrontation) of 'figure' and 'ground', but rather the sense that the two are in an unstable and tense relationship, full of possibility that the position of each, the bamboo and the void, can be reversed at any time. In other words, what we see is the struggle between 'the seen' and 'the unseen.'

Psychologist Edgar Rubin's face-vase drawings [fig.2], often used in explanations of 'figure' and 'ground' in visual psychology, are useful for comprehending this more concretely. The 'ground' changes depending on whether the white part or the black part of a picture is viewed as 'ground.' When a vase is seen, the rest becomes 'ground.' When two faces are seen, the vase dissolves as 'ground.' When one image is visible, the other cannot be seen but does not disappear. Neither can exist without the other. The two never become autonomous and can only exist at the same time without separation. One cannot exist without the other, and the other do not exist without one. The 'seen' and the 'unseen' are tied together closely. Both are without autonomy and each exists only in a state of relationship. In other words, existence is defined by an inherent relationship.

As already mentioned, ropes running in the voids of a bamboo grove do not give shape to the voids. The voids are merely suggested by the ropes; there is no way for us to get a whole picture of the voids. All we can do is just to imagine them as being present through, by imagination, inverting positive and negative space, by reversing the 'figure' and 'ground' of the bamboo grove. According to Toya, the rope serves as a substitute or metaphor for our gaze piercing through the negative space.<sup>13</sup> The gaze must necessarily enter the world of imagination beyond perception to 'see' the voids.

Like *Bamboo Grove*, Toya's *Pompeii · 79 (Part I)* [fig.3], produced in 1974, questions the notion of figure and ground as well as that of void. Human bodies buried in the lava flowing from the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius retained their shape as hollow forms. In terms of Toya's expression, 'the relationship between substance and space' was reversed. <sup>14</sup> The void, or empty space, normally surrounding the bodies was replaced with lava (became 'figure' or 'seen') and that which originally existed as 'figure' in the form of a human body became 'ground' (the void, or the 'unseen'). During excavation, plaster was flushed into the cavities, making molds that again reversed the relationship between 'figure' and 'ground,' the 'seen' and the 'unseen.' From this, Toya perceived two things: 1) the relationship between substance and void can at any time be reversed, and human existence is defined by these two interlocking and struggling states, and 2) the issue of a surface marking the boundary between substance and void is of utmost importance. <sup>15</sup> The surface is a kind of battlefield, where the parts struggle to be the 'figure.'

032

## Borders

Many essays on Toya's works have mentioned the issue of 'surface' as a boundary and Toya himself has repeatedly talked about the concept. <sup>16</sup> Yoko Watanabe's essay on Toya's idea of 'Surface' is straightforwardly titled as "On the 'Surface'" and she pointed out quite importantly that for Toya the 'surface' is synonymous with 'relatedness'. <sup>17</sup> It is best illustrated in *Woods*, his series begun in 1984. Watanabe discusses this in detail so I will not repeat it here, but I would like to cite Toya's comment quoted in Watanabe's essay:

*There is actually a thick layer of leaves forming the surface of a forest floor and the sun shines through and the wind blows there just as in the space outside the forest. That this 'surface' layer in the forest is both 'inside' and 'outside' is an underlying theme in my sculpture. In that sense, forest for me is simply a metaphor for surfaces.* <sup>18</sup>

For Toya, 'surface' is not a flat plane but rather an inherent layer of thickness existing at the boundary between two entities (such as inside and outside) and the relatedness that connects the two, and the quality of duality (being simultaneously inside and outside).

Among various essays examining Toya's idea of 'boundary,' perhaps the most insightful is Haito Masahiko's argument linking to Marcel Duchamp's *infra-mince* concept. <sup>19</sup> *Infra-mince* concerns transformation and transition at the space where two things are in physical contact. Being ultra-thin (French: *infra-mince* = ultra-thin), such a space has no substance. Duchamp explains with the example of 'the space between the front and back of a thin piece of paper,' or 'the transition from two-dimensionality to three-dimensionality.'<sup>20</sup> Duchamp referred to boundary duality and transitional quality in terms of something 'ultra-thin', while Toya speaks of relationality in terms of 'thickness' full of relatedness and duality. Although they used diametrically opposed vocabulary, Duchamp and Toya are concerned with the same issue. <sup>21</sup> For Duchamp, the archetypical example of *infra-mince* would be the relationship between an object and its shadow. For Toya, *infra-mince* would describe the relation of the surrounding lava and the cavities of human bodies at Pompeii, as well as that of the plaster casts of the human forms and their surrounding space — the border delineating a surface between 'substance' and 'void.' The

sculptures of Toya, who has stated, "Sculpture emerges when an image is created from the shadow of a void,"<sup>22</sup> and "When one carves wood, the surrounding space becomes the sculpture,"<sup>23</sup> appear from the operation of this type of border.

In Toya's sculptures beginning with his *Woods* series - for example, works such as *From 'Borders' V* [fig.4] in this exhibition, careful attention is given to the surface of the wood. He burns the wood shavings to ash, mixes them with acrylic material to a tone of gray-white, and then covers the surface with this. According to Toya, the concept of applying the ash has to do with the idea of 'cycle and transformation',<sup>24</sup> Further, ash has the role of being an intermediate, or boundary, entity between wood and glass.<sup>25</sup> The transformational quality applied to the surface in the *Woods* series is not limited to these. Each piece in the *Woods* series [fig.5] has what appears to be a sculptural form at its summit, while the lower section is reduced to an engraved relief-like expression. At the base it is closer to a painting. Looking from below, the process of transformation is reversed.<sup>26</sup> Superimposed on the back and forth between a sculptural (ontological) and painterly (epistemological) entity is the transformative suggestion of the ash, creating a multi-layered drama of transformation repeated on the surface of each of the components of *Woods*.

033

### Interior and Exterior

Before painting with ash, Toya used a chainsaw to make the surfaces jagged. Toya calls the awesome surface created by such brute force 'baroque' or 'forested.' The ropes running across the voids in *Bamboo Grove* could be a prototype or metaphor for this, expressed as complicated lines of sight in the void of *Woods*. Toya explains the assemblage of sight lines as follows:

*When I walk through the woods, I constantly feel I am being somehow watched. It is not a straight on, unobstructed, confrontation but rather seems to come from all directions, and from sources beyond the human. If I gaze back on it from where I stand, I must be open to all kinds of lines of sight from the ground, the treetops, the spaces in between the trees, and the various upward and downward inclines that are in movement but never collide. It is expressed as an assemblage of sight lines, not limited to the horizontal/vertical dual vision. An assemblage of perspective lines is experienced by most people, but the space where this assemblage becomes concentrated and full comes to be a special space where sculpture is generated.*<sup>27</sup>

However, in fact, the aggressive bruising of the wood surface did not originate in the expression of sight lines. It was the *From 'Carving'* series [fig.6], created 1981–83, that brought a new expression of the jagged surface. The sculptures for *From 'Carving'* are formed by an axe cutting into plaster hardened around a steel rod. The method of creating a work by carving into plaster recalled to Toya the highly ambiguous duality of modeling and carving, the two main and different ways of producing sculpture<sup>28</sup>, but the original intention of using the method of cutting the plaster with axe was to consider the issue of the 'internal structure' of sculpture.<sup>29</sup>

Toya's initial view of sculpture was that, whether carving in wood or stone, the act of making a sculpture brings out the core structure residing within the material. He created sculptures

by carving away at plaster in which a steel bar, as a stand-in for internal structure, was embedded. In the process, though, he discovered the reverse - that the internal structure was created, rather than brought forth, in the process of carving the plaster surface. He decided to approach sculpture in terms of the outside surface, rather than the interior core.

Viewing sculpture as derived from the outer surface, and not the inner structure, Toya concentrated on multi-centric surfaces rather than interior core. He created sculptures with surfaces of intersecting multi-directional chainsaw slashes (accumulations of slanted lines). A multi-centric surface replaced the idea of a central internal structure. This type of structure, however, actually already indeed existed in Toya's *Bamboo Grove* series where the ropes running vertically and horizontally are arranged in numerous multi-directional intersections.

How does Toya's multi-faceted surface lead us to consider the nature of our existence? Toya says that a community exists in an individual, and not the other way around.<sup>30</sup> Following the reference of conflict between the individual and the community, the multi-centric surface seems to represent an idea that the individual builds community (society) and not the other way around. Generally, it is thought that the needs of the community (or the society) construct an individual. The meaning of 'needs,' according to Louis Althusser, has to do with 'ideology,' Jacques Lacan uses the expression 'symbolic order.' Toya thought that it was 'internal structure.' Against this thought, the multi-centric surface manifests a will for confrontation, or resistance, providing an alternative means of the individual's being. The entity of the individual is not constructed. In order to achieve that, we need to be responsive to various points of view that confront us and build relationality.

## Michelangelo

It may seem surprising, but Toya's approach to sculpture from the surface was influenced by Michelangelo. According to Toya, Michelangelo was a sculptor who did just that. Once again, Toya believes that traditional Western sculpture is centripetal, focused on the inner core of the material, and that this tendency is based in Western political and national ideals. Central core focused sculpture proceeds by carving the material (whether wood or marble) from all sides, aiming to release the structure within. Michelangelo, however, works from the front — like letting the water out of a bath (the water surface gradually decreasing) — to reveal a figure.<sup>31</sup> In other words, different from other Western sculpture that attempts to reveal an inner structure, Michelangelo's sculpture gradually appears from the front.

Toya's 2004 work, *Projection Body* [fig.7], is an intentional quote from Michelangelo. If this work materializes shadow, it is not only the silhouette reflected on the floor in black that conveys shadow. The space between human figures or objects and their shadows, is also considered as shadows, rendered in carving like a mountain range. The model for the shape of the shadow is Michelangelo's *Dying Slave* [fig.8].<sup>32</sup> The flat section of Toya's sculpture that touches the exhibition wall is shaped as a silhouette of *Dying Slave*.

Jiro Takamatsu's *Shadow Paintings* and Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* sparked Toya's interest in shadows. In the *Allegory of the Cave*, 'ideas' of what can never be seen appear on the cave wall as shadows and are taken as reality. The shadows symbolically reveal the relationship between what is real and what is not real. When we look at our own shadow, we see a reflec-

tion of ourselves but it is only a shadow, not the entity of our being. Not being able to see our being is the same as not being able to see ideas in the cave. Once again referring to Lacan, in the 'mirror image stage' we cannot see the self (oneself as subject); the 'visible' mirror image is constructed by imagination and never becomes a reality that can be seen. *Projection Body* is an artistic expression of the relationality of 'the visible' and 'the invisible', or the real and the imagined, and it suggests the appearance of a sculpture from the relationality, as in Michelangelo's idea of a sculpture appearing like water being drained. The relationship between the real the imagined is worked into the upper and lower structures of Toya's 1990 *From 'Borders' VI* [fig.9], although it has nothing to with Michelangelo's work nor with shadow. The work leads us to understand that the relationship is treated consistently as theme in Toya's works.

It is likely that Toya referred to *Dying Slave*, rather than some other of Michelangelo's sculptures, because of its theme of death. For Toya, "Death is a kind of boundary, a place where inside and outside intersect — where there is a thickness and there is pain," and "Death relies, more than anything else, on life; it is a boundary for reuniting with life."<sup>33</sup> Death is a boundary in the same way as the woods; it is a 'surface' with profound relationality. Life and death is in an interchangeable relationship of 'figure' and 'ground', or of 'negative' and 'positive'. This relationality is expressed also in the works in this exhibition based on the relationship of the front and back of surfaces of a wall, such as the *Cave* series [fig.10] and *Overlapped Layers I* [fig.11]. (The *Cave* series is inspired also by Plato's allegory of the cave.)

### Seeing and Being Seen by "the Invisible"

The above discussion of Michelangelo creating shape like water draining, and the idea of death as a boundary, can be related to Toya's *Pompeii · 79 (Part I)*. A direct extension of that is *Viewing Doors II* [fig.12] themed on 'seeing' and 'being seen.' Being interested in Michel Foucault's exploration of the complexity of the gaze in Velázquez *Las Meninas*, as discussed in the first chapter of *The Order of Things*, and taking up the subject of the complex lines of sight in woods, Toya is very much interested in the issue of the gaze. He deals with the issue of the gaze in the real contemporary world in his *Viewing Doors II* from 1994. It was motivated by an NHK television program on the situation in Sarajevo during the Yugoslavia civil war.<sup>34</sup> The program revealed that the two confronting sides were watching each other across a river. They were at the same time seeing and being seen. However, one could not see the figure of the opposing person. He/She was seen by an invisible person. *Viewing Doors II*, taking apartment doors as a motif, superimposes the Sarajevo situation with life in Japan.

*Viewing Doors II* is an installation of seven doors. A small hole is drilled in each one and a lens is placed in each hole, through which viewers can see to the other side. The doors are surrounded by white plaster walls covered with countless traces of fingerprints. Going around to the back of the installation, we see a cavity in the shape of a human body carved out from each door. This suggests the presence of someone no longer present, who can no longer be seen but who had been looking at us from behind the door in the same way that we could see them through the carved hole. Toya's comment, 'From behind the doors the gaze of Velázquez is directed at me. I am looking at you looking at me looking at you.'<sup>35</sup> This indicates an endless exchange of the gaze. We are seen by the invisible and we also see the invisible.

One of the preparatory drawings for *Viewing Doors II* shows images expressing the exchange of the gaze as overlapping eyes or as composite heads [fig.13]. The drawing tells that the person one is facing at is the other and at the same time is his/her double. It also indicates him/her as 'life' and the other as 'death'. If the door is a surface and a boundary with relational 'thickness' it implies interaction between the 'visible' and the 'invisible,' 'seeing' and 'being seen,' and the space between life and death. The traces of fingerprints may symbolize such exchanges.

## Thickness

Toya was profoundly influenced by Alberto Giacometti, who sculpted the 'invisible' in *Invisible Object* (1934) and who took death as theme in *No More Play* (1932). Masahiko Haito develops his discussion of the influence of Giacometti on Toya's *From 'Borders' V* (1997–98) by comparing the work mainly with Giacometti's post-war, Existentialistic sculptures.<sup>36</sup> Haito builds his argument on Giacometti's word 'sensation,' and Toya's interest in shaping something unseen that gives a sensation of certain presence. Obviously, 'sensation' is a word originating with Cezanne that later became a theme of Henri Matisse (and following, Richard Diebenkorn). It points to the quest to give shape on the canvas, if a painting, to a subject that is unseen, to represent a perception visually. Matisse sought to capture 'sensation' through fields of color placed over the canvas, and Giacometti through modeling a figure.

If we are to go on to discuss the formal resemblance of Toya's *From 'Borders' V* to Giacometti's works, we find obvious similarities with Giacometti's 1947 *Nose* [fig.14] that exceptionally goes back to the Surrealist style that he used in the 1920s and 1930s. Like Giacometti's 1930–31 *Suspended Ball*, it hangs in a cage-like frame, and the nose protrudes straight forward. Other Giacometti sculptures with themes of pointed objects that pre-date *Nose* are, for example, *Man and Woman* (1928–29) where a spoon-shaped woman figure is about to be pierced by a spike-shaped male figure, *Disagreeable Object to be Thrown Away* (1931) [fig.15] with its protruding horn, and *Point to the Eye* (1932). All of these reflect Giacometti's world of violent and erotic relations between men and women.<sup>37</sup> The needles penetrating the plane in Toya's *Linkage I — Existing linkage from the Exposing 'Sculpture' series ('76–'78)* (1995) [fig.16] are reminiscent of these Giacometti sculptures, but devoid of Giacometti's sexual nuances. Toya's interest in penetration has to do with the theme of 'thickness' rather than the violent eroticism expressed in Giacometti's penetrating horns.

Whenever a photograph of Giacometti's *Nose* is included in an exhibition catalog or other publication, it is invariably shown in profile. It may be natural to focus interest on the strangely extended nose, but that neglects the frontal view. When viewing from the front, there is some anxiety relating to possibly being stabbed by the needle, but the perception of the abnormal length of the nose actually disappears. The length of the nose is only imagined from having seen the lateral view, and the actual frontal view is like a drawing by Giacometti [fig.17]. Viewing from the front, we recognize for the first time the asymmetry of the left and right side facial expressions. Whether viewing from the side or from the front, *Nose* concerns 'the seen' and 'the unseen' as replaced, or interchanged, depending on the angle of view. Toya's *From 'Borders' V* also has such a structural duality, and it is dissected by the existence of a wall. Viewing from



the side with spear-like protrusions, what is behind the wall cannot be seen, and when viewing from the side with holes, the protrusions cannot be seen.

In *From 'Borders' V* the duality of 'the seen' and 'the unseen' is linked to the problem of meaning. As Toya has clearly stated, Takaaki Yoshimoto's book *What is beauty in language?* is the source of his concept.<sup>38</sup> This is illustrated in the concept diagram for the work [fig.18] that applies Yoshimoto's diagram [fig.19], placing 'indicative expressiveness' on the horizontal axis and 'self-expressiveness' on the vertical axis, as is.

037

Yoshimoto thought of language as a woven fabric of words of indicative-expression and of self-expression. When indicative-expression dominates, greater importance is given to indicating a specific word for an object, like 'rose.' The use of 'the' or 'a' with 'rose' (particles 'wa' or 'ga' in Japanese) makes a difference in conveying meaning. Saying, "I like roses" (using 'wa' in Japanese) does not eliminate similar preferences for other flowers, while "I like the roses" (using 'ga' in Japanese) emphasizes a particular preference for roses. Yoshimoto argued that such particles/articles conveying emotional differences were self-expressive and that meaning was established by which was selected. 'Indicative expressiveness' means that meaning is explicit, clear, and unambiguous, while 'self-expressiveness' is less about an individual's feelings than about the function of language to express them. Yoshimoto considered 'nouns' the strongest examples of indicative-expressiveness, and interjections (such as 'ah!') to be the most 'self-expressive' words. Figuratively speaking, 'indicative-expressiveness' means that you clearly 'see' the meaning of words, and 'self-expressiveness' means that the meaning of words is 'unseen.' When you hear the words 'Ah, rose' the meaning of 'rose' is explicit (and 'visible'), but the meaning of 'ah' is not (and is 'invisible'). In Toya's concept diagram, following Yoshimoto's argument, the tip of long protruding objects corresponds with 'nouns' and the base of such objects, recognized only from the holes on the other side of the wall, are 'interjections', or *kan-tanshi* (probably as a mistake, he used the word *kandoshi* in his concept diagram).<sup>39</sup>

Toya, however, has added the concept of time to the idea of indicative-expressive and self-expressive that Yoshimoto thought of as simultaneous and interwoven. In other words, Toya adds a temporal layer, or thickness, between the two. In that sense, *From 'Borders' V* goes beyond Yoshimoto and is more closely linked to Lacan. Using Lacanian terms, the side with the protrusions may relate to the 'symbolic,' while the side with holes relates to the 'real.'

I would like to explain with an example. One motivation for *From 'Borders' V* had to do with a case of a child murders in 1997 in Kobe. There were the emotions of the parents of the victims that could only be expressed in interjections (self-expressive) and the rational understanding of the situation (indicative-expressive). The words 'accident,' 'irrational,' and 'healing' used in Toya's diagram show the relationship with this murder case. Although not at all related to Toya's reason for producing his sculpture, it is worthwhile also to mention the event of March 11, 2011. There was an article in the Asahi Shimbun about children playing in an evacuation center after the earthquake and tsunami. Their game was to shout 'tsunami! Run!' and to pretend to flee. The article noted that the children should be encouraged to do that as playing out and revisiting their fear could be healing and help them overcome their trauma. Otherwise, the fearful experience could threaten them forever.

To regain balance after having encountered an unnerving and disrupting reality, it is necessary to impose order. The 'real' is in raw disarray (to be described only with interjections) before it is arranged to order. The 'symbolic' is a function of clear explanation, assurance, and

relief. Time is needed to mediate between the 'real' and the 'symbolic.' Such mechanism of the mind also provides a method in times of confrontation to accept the world we live in. This is the mediation between 'the seen' and 'the unseen' in our world.

## Emergence

Finally, I would like to touch on Heihachi Hashimoto's sculpture *About a Stone* (1928) [fig.20]. When Toya saw this sculpture, he imagined that there could be a stone shaped void hidden in the wooden pedestal like the body shaped hollow in lava at Pompeii. He fantasized that the work consisted of a visible part, a carved wood in the shape of stone, and an invisible part, a void space also in the shape of a stone concealed in the pedestal on which the wooden stone rests. In Toya's *Double Reflected Root I— Kumano* (2005) [fig.21], such a duality of negative and positive is expressed as the left front section is carved in relief and the back is untouched and the right front section surface is untouched while the invisible back is in carved in relief. As we have until now been discussing, the duality of 'the seen' and 'the unseen' is like an axis that runs through the entire body of Toya's sculpture. *About a Stone* seems to clarify the meaning of that duality. Toya commented as follows:

038

*It is not the 'a stone made of wood in the shape of a stone' that needed to be carved out. Rather, it is the 'emergence of a wooden stone from within'. Although the sculptor's action gave birth to it, it seems to have emerged by itself, like an instant 'given.'* <sup>40</sup>

The words precisely can be applied to Toya's own sculptures. That is to say that Toya's works are sculptures of 'emergence'.

---

1 "Horu' koto wo megutte" (explorations in sculpting), in *Shigeo Toya chokoku to kotoba 1974–2013* (works and words of Shigeo Toya 1974–2013) (hereinafter noted as *Works and Words*), edited by Vangi Sculpture Garden Museum, 2014, p. 118.

2 Hajime Masaki, "Toya Shigeo, shisen no chokoku," (Toya Shigeo and sculpture of the gaze), *Bijutsu Techo*, May 1992,

- No.5, p. 156.
- 3 Takaaki Yoshimoto, 'Chokoku no wakananasa' (the difficulty of understanding sculpture), *Takamura Kotaro*, Kodansha, 1991, p. 416.
- 4 " 'Mori no nakade' ten ni yosete" (On the occasion of the 'In the Woods' exhibition), *Works and Words*, p.245.
- 5 July 11, 2017 conversation between the writer and Toya, at Toya's studio. Toya's discussion on Yoshimoto's "The difficulty of understanding sculpture", see *Works and Words*, p.202.
- 6 Yoshimoto's idea was important to Toya as a theory of the structure of human consciousness and the spiritual aspects of sculpture, rather than as a theory of modeling and carving. See *Works and Words*, p.202.
- 7 "'Horu' koto wo megutte" (explorations in sculpting), *Works and Words*, p. 116.
- 8 "Mono no ichi to jiko sonzai no kakunin koi" (the place of things and the act of considering self-existence) in *Works and Words*, p. 141–142.
- 9 Toya firmly denies the view of his wooden sculptures as having a kind of religiosity. He also says that he is not particular about wood, and simply uses it as a rectangular shaped material. He adds that he uses processed wood and he refutes any interpretation of animism. He says that he is not at all interested in the spirituality of trees of any kind of spirit in the material. July 11, 2017 conversation between the writer and Toya, at Toya's studio.
- 10 "Chokoku towa Nanika (What is Sculpture?): A Round Table Discussion between Shigeo Toya, Toshiaki Minemura, and Noriaki Kitazawa", *Works and Words*, p. 314–315.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p.319.
- 12 "Bijutsu, Watashi no baai: gyakuten suru sekaikan wo hyougen" (Art, In My Case: Expressing a Reversed World View) , *Works and Words*, p. 67.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 66.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 66.
- 16 See chapter 5 of *Works and Words*.
- 17 Yoko Watanabe, "Hyomen wo megutte — Shigeo Toya" (On the 'Surface') in *Structure and Memory — Shigeo TOYA, Toshikatsu ENDO, Kazuo KENMOCHI*, exh. cat., Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, 1991, pp. 6–8.
- 18 Shigeo Toya, "Hyomen no metafa toshite no mori" (forest as surface metaphor), *Mainichi Shimbun*, September 19, 1980, evening edition.
- 19 Masahiko Haito, " 'Mirareru Tobira II' no kyokai wo anfuramansu ni keiyu shite — 1900 nen iko no Toya Shigeo" (Boundaries of *Viewing Doors II* seen through infra-mince: Shigeo Toya works after 1990), *Shigeo Toya: Folds, Gazes and Anima of the Woods*, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Nagoya, Japan, exh. cat., 2003, pp. 22–39.
- 20 Michel Sanouillet, *The Writing of Marcel Duchamp*, Japanese translation by Kenji Kitayama, Michitani, 1995, p. 412.
- 21 Toya relates that Duchamp's infra-mince concept, that he learned about only after starting his own of exploration of the concept of 'borders,' did not trigger his interest. Rather, he thought he could apply Duchamp's concept to the problem he was concerned with. On this subject, see "Untitled: Part 3", *Works and Words*, p. 263.
- 22 "Kage to Chokoku (1)" (Shadow and Sculpture), *Works and Words*, p. 91.
- 23 Author's conversation with Toya on March 26, 2016.
- 24 "Chokoku no rinne" (Samsara of Sculpture), *Works and Words*, p. 232.
- 25 Author's conversation with Toya on March 26, 2016.
- 26 " 'Mori no nakade' ten ni yosete" (On the occasion of the 'In the Woods' exhibition), *Works and Words*, p.245.
- 27 "Shisen toshite no mori" (Woods as gaze), *Works and Words*, p. 192.
- 28 "'Horu' koto wo megutte" (explorations in sculpting), *Works and Words*, p. 114.
- 29 Author's conversation at Toya's studio on July 11, 2017.
- 30 Author's conversation at Toya's studio on July 11, 2017.
- 31 Toya gets the idea from Adolf von Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture*, Japanese edition trans. by Tetsuhiro Kato, Chuokoron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1993, pp. 109–110, as follows: "Michelangelo commented as follows on the special character of this innovative process of carving marble. We should think of the human figure as if it were in water. If we gradually remove the water, the body will slowly appear on the surface until it is fully exposed."
- 32 Author's conversation at Toya's studio on July 11, 2017.
- 33 "Toya Shigeo ten — 'Mura' kara" (Shigeo Toya Exhibition — From 'Village'), *Works and Words*, pp.250–251.
- 34 Author's conversation with Toya on March 26, 2016.
- 35 "Toya Shigeo ten — 'Mura' kara" (Shigeo Toya Exhibition — From 'Village'), *Works and Words*, p. 251.
- 36 Haito, *op. cit.*, p. 29–30.
- 37 See, Rosalind Kraus, 'No More Play,' *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (tr. Nobuyuki Konishi, Liburopouto, 1994, pp.45–71).
- 38 "Rinkai jidai no hyougen keishiki towa" (On the form of expression in a critical era), *Works and Words*, p. 260.
- 39 The detailed explanation of the concept diagram is in the above essay 'Rinkai jidai no hyougen keishiki towa' (on the form of expression in a critical era).
- 40 "Hashimoto Heihachi no ima" (The Present Understanding of Heihachi Hashimo), *Works and Words*, p. 171.