

[Press Release]

2025/9/20

Shigeo Toya solo exhibition
Body of the Gaze: Semi-Sculpture

Saturday 18 October – Saturday 22 November 2025



Shigeo Toya, *Body of the Gaze: Semi-Sculpture 1*, 2025, wood, acrylic, 61.5x40.5x33.5cm

ShugoArts is pleased to present *Body of the Gaze: Semi-Sculpture*, a solo exhibition of new works by Shigeo Toya opening on October 18. Toya's work on the *Body of the Gaze* series has been ongoing since 2019.

Shigeo TOYA, *Body of the Gaze*, 2019: <https://shugoarts.com/en/exhibitions/e00445/>

Shigeo TOYA, *Body of the Gaze: from Scatter to Linkage, from Linkage to Accumulation*, 2022:
<https://shugoarts.com/en/exhibitions/e00660/>

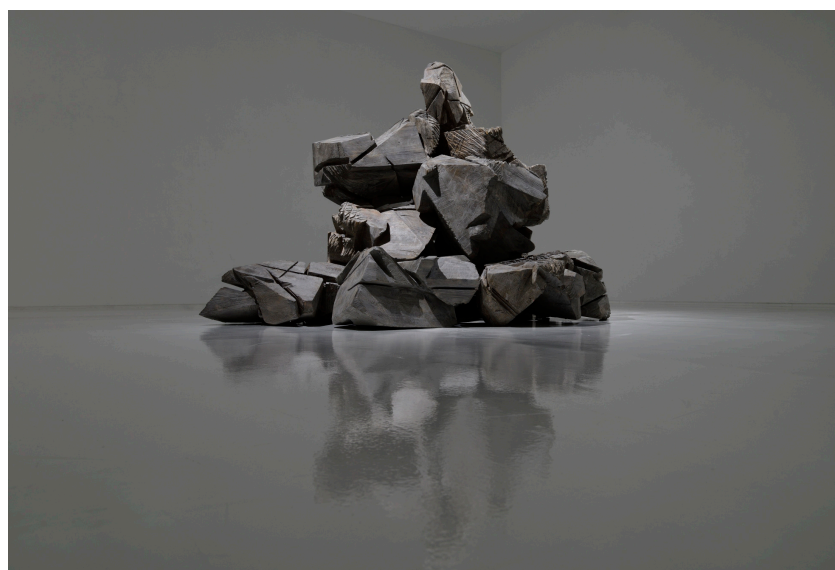


Shigeo TOYA, *Body of the Gaze*, 2019, wood, wood ash, acrylic, variable size, 9 pcs

In *Body of the Gaze: Semi-Sculpture*, unveiled for the first time in this exhibition, Toya applies the prefix “semi-” to sculpture. What is the sculptural conception underpinning this approach?

Relief existed before the golden age of sculpture in ancient Greece, and the standard view in modern Western art history holds that the process was a forward-moving evolution, advancing “from relief to sculpture.”

Toya’s concept of “semi-sculpture” reverses this trajectory, moving instead from sculpture to relief. However, he is not pursuing a return to the primitive relief of the pre-Greek era. What he envisions with semi-sculpture is the possibility of a mode of sculpture that contains unseen dimensions half-hidden from view.



Shigeo TOYA, *Body of the Gaze – Accumulation*, 2021, wood, wood ash, acrylic, 142x171x201cm (a set of 13 pieces)

If we regard sculpture as a form that broke away from a relief-like state, connected to the natural world, and came to emphasize independence through separation, then Toya's semi-sculpture can be seen as a form that turns back toward nature and seeks a renewed coexistence with it.

While primitive relief did not necessarily presuppose an unseen world extending behind it, semi-sculpture differs in that it alludes to an invisible realm and is conceived with its presence in mind.



Shigeo TOYA, *POMPEII · · 79 (Part 1)*, 1974/1987, concrete, 15x60x60cm, 45x45x170cm, 4pcs)

Toya exhibited *POMPEII · · 79* (1974) (<https://shugoarts.com/en/works/15992/>) fifty years ago, at the age of 27. Since then, working from Japan in dialogue with the Western sculptural tradition, he has pursued a sweeping narrative shaped by his own vision. With *Body of the Gaze: Semi-Sculpture*, we present the latest chapter in Toya's sculptural exploration.

Also on view, and offering entry points to the world of *Body of the Gaze: Semi-Sculpture*, are *Falling* (1992), one of Toya's best-known works, and the large-scale drawing *Visions of Woods* (2001). We look forward to welcoming you to this exhibition.

ShugoArts, September 2025



Shigeo TOYA, *Falling*, 1992, wood, ash, acrylic, wire, 17x60(D)cm



Shigeo TOYA, *Visions of Woods*, 2001, Japanese ink on Japanese paper, 305x364cm

Related texts:

-Sawaragi, Noi. "Where do the roots of sculpture lead? Shigeo Toya and forests / water sources." Source: Catalogue

"Shigeo Toya Forest – Lake: Regeneration and Memory," published by Ichihara Lakeside Museum, 2021:

<https://shugoarts.com/en/library/toya-shigeo-8/>

-Shigeo TOYA Interview in his Chichibu Studio, October 2016:

<https://shugoarts.com/en/library/toya-shigeo-2/>

-Toya, Shigeo. "A History of Sculpture Without Rodin: Part 1-3." Geijutsu Shincho, Shinchosha, 2023:

<https://shugoarts.com/en/library/toya-shigeo-7/>

Shigeo Toya solo exhibition

Body of the Gaze: Semi-Sculpture

Dates: Saturday 18 October – Saturday 22 November 2025

Opening reception: 18 October 2pm-5pm

Venue: ShugoArts

Hours: 11am – 6pm, Closed on Sun, Mon and Public Holidays

Shigeo Toya Biography

Shigeo Toya (b. 1947) endeavored to reconstruct sculpture following the deconstruction of the medium by the Minimalists and the Mono-ha movement. And in the 1970s, Toya began to explore sculptural principles and structures through a constant awareness of human existence. He embraced the achievements of both Western sculpture, stretching from cave painting to ancient Greece and Alberto Giacometti, and Japanese sculpture, ranging from the 17th-century Buddhist monk Enku to the early 20th-century artist Heihachi Hashimoto. At the same time, Toya arrived at a unique view of sculpture as an "accumulation of gazes," and while showing astonishing groups of sculptures that transcended Mono-ha, he came to occupy a place as one of Japan's preeminent sculptors.

Toya showed his work in the Japan Pavilion at the 1988 Venice Biennale, participated in the 1993 Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, and received the Asian Award at the 2000 Gwangju Biennale. In 2022 and 2023, a traveling retrospective of Toya's career was held at the Nagano Prefectural Art Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, Saitama.

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