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JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles
Level 2 Gallery
6801 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90028

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CONNECTION -GODAI- Odunpazari Modern Museum (Eskişehir, Turkey 2019)

LIFE CYCLES

A BAMBOO EXPLORATION WITH TANABE CHIKUUNSAI IV

JULY 28, 2022 – JANUARY 15, 2023 *FREE ADMISSION





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A BAMBOO EXPLORATION WITH TANABE CHIKUUNSAI IV

A fourth-generation bamboo artist, Tanabe Chikuunsai IV (b. 1973) dramatically pushes the boundaries of his artform. While continuing his family's tradition of weaving bamboo flower baskets and smaller sculptural works, he is also renowned for using bamboo to create large-scale contemporary artworks and installations at museums and other venues around the world. The exhibition LIFE CYCLES examines the Chikuunsai artistic lineage, Tanabe Chikuunsai IV's creative process, and the life of Japan's bamboo forests.

Born in Sakai in Osaka prefecture, Chikuunsai trained in sculpture at Tokyo University of the Arts. He then studied traditional Japanese basket weaving in Beppu in Oita prefecture and with his father, Tanabe Chikuunsai III. Keenly aware of artistic life cycles, Chikuunsai is passing down to his children the skills and knowledge he inherited from earlier generations. He is also conscious of the life of the bamboo he uses in his work. As he harvests bamboo from the woods of Kochi prefecture in Shikoku, he strives to nurture and preserve the forests. For his site-specific installations, Chikuunsai previously used *torachiku*, or "tiger bamboo," which has now become scarce. For this installation, he employed two other types of bamboo—*madake* ("Japanese timber bamboo") and *kurochiku* ("black bamboo"), which is also disappearing. The exhibition highlights the importance of conserving the bamboo forests, or *chikurin*, for future generations.

As he weaves the bamboo strips, Chikuunsai reflects upon connections, or *tsunagari*, between humans and nature, present and past generations, and the cultures he brings together through his installations. When an exhibition is finished, he dismantles each installation and saves the bamboo strips to use in his next work—creating a generational connection between his works, deliberately avoiding waste, and extending the bamboo's life cycle.

EXHIBITION CREDITS

Presented by JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles

Exhibition Production: Tanabe Chikuunsai IV
Chikuunsai IV Installation Assistants/Apprentices: Nakamura Emika, Hayashi Jumpei, Ichikawa Yona, Hamada Yoshiaki
Exhibition Photography and Video: Minamoto Tadayuki, Hashiguchi Akiko
Exhibition support provided by: Yumekoubou, TAI Modern, Kanasaki Chikuzaiten, Yamagishi Chikuzaiten

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WORMHOLE | Shoukokuji Temple (Toyama, Japan 2021)



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Tanabe Chikuunsai IV was born Tanabe Takeo in 1973. Like his father, Tanabe Chikuunsai III, he attended Osaka Kōgei High School, an art high school, and earned a degree in sculpture from Tokyo University of the Arts. As a young artist, Shōchiku III, he continued the tradition of making bamboo baskets and small-scale sculptures, but he also began collaborating with artists in other media. In 2011, he started creating large-scale dramatic, immersive installations that evoke the bamboo forests from which he sources his materials. In 2017, three years after the death of his father, he was given the name Chikuunsai IV.

Chikuunsai has received many awards in Japan, including the Mayor's Award at the Sakai City Art Exhibition in 2001, the Osaka Craft Exhibition Choice Award at the All Kansai Art Exhibition in 2004, and the Outstanding Artist Award from Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in March 2022. Internationally, he has created installations at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, and the Odunpazari Modern Museum (OMM) in Eskisehir, Turkey, and his work is in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Seattle Art Museum, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He won the first Mingei Bamboo Prize (awarded by the Guimet Museum in Paris and the Mingei Gallery) in 2021.