



Taka Ishii

Gallery

Goro Kakei “Human Issues”

Date: Feb 14 – Mar 14, 2026

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery Kyobashi

Taka Ishii Gallery Kyobashi is pleased to present “Human Issues,” a solo exhibition of works by Goro Kakei, from Saturday, February 14, through Saturday, March 14. Kakei is recognized as a major postwar Japanese sculptor, and while this was his primary medium, he also worked in media and techniques ranging from oil painting and drawing to etching and lithography. This second solo exhibition at the gallery brings together 31 sculptures made from the early 1950s through 2021, the final year of his life, offering a view of how his approach to form evolved over time and the consistent stance underlying his extensive body of work.

Kakei enrolled in the sculpture department of Tokyo University of the Arts at the age of 19 and began to devote himself fully to sculpture. Dissatisfied with academic techniques, he gradually turned toward an approach of his own, working directly with plaster to introduce bold distortions into the human form. He later produced a number of works based on biblical subjects, including “The Annunciation” (1957), “The Virgin Mary” (1958), “Job” (1961), and “Apostle” (1962). These sculptures were not simply vehicles for engaging with biblical themes, but also a means of probing the nature of human existence. Throughout his later career, Kakei continued to focus on the human figure, pursuing a highly personal mode of figurative sculpture.

In the late 1960s, Kakei spent time teaching in Mexico, where the local way of life and culture influenced him in many ways and brought about changes in his approach to form. After returning to Japan, his sculpture featured simplifications of the human body that seemed to represent a liberation from Western ideals of beauty, and he departed from Christian subject matter. Subsequently, in female figures produced in the late 1970s and early 1980s, such as “The South Alps” (1978) and “Azumino” (1980), facial details reappear, and the treatment of bodily mass and volume conveys a powerful sense of physical presence. These figures can also be seen as recalling stately mountain ranges or gently drifting clouds, evoking the richness of the natural landscapes that inspired the artist and the sense of time flowing through them. Meanwhile, the “Man Examining Human Issues” series, produced from 1984 to 1985, is characterized by pared-down masses and forms with elongated limbs. “Sky Bridge” (1985), included in this exhibition, was made as a study for this series. Kakei’s words—“I had a dream. I saw beautiful human figures who had stopped standing on two legs and were crawling on four”—point to one form of beauty as he understood it.

The bricolage works and sculptures made from toilet paper rolls in his final years attest to a creative drive that never waned over the course of his life. This exhibition offers a fascinating look across the full range of Kakei’s prolific output.

A solo exhibition focusing on his two-dimensional works will be held concurrently at Taka Ishii Gallery Roppongi from Saturday, February 14 to Saturday, March 28.

Born in Shizuoka in 1930 and passed away in 2021. He studied under Yoshi Kinouchi and aimed to become a sculptor at 19 years old, and graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts with a major in sculpture in 1953. He received the New Artist Award at the 21st Exhibition of the Shinseisaku Art Society and worked with the society until 2001. He taught as a professor at the Department of Art at Aoyama Gakuin Women's Junior College from 1962 and as a visiting professor at the University of Veracruz (Mexico) from 1968.

His major solo exhibitions include "The Works of Goro Kakei," Verkehr Shimizu Port Terminal Museum, Shizuoka (2024); "Goro Kakei" Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo (2023); "Lamentations," Tokyo Art Museum (2024); "Goro Kakei: Natsu no Mori," Okawa Museum of Art, Gunma (2011); "Kita Ni, Higashi Ni," Asahikawa Museum of Sculpture in Honor of Teiji Nakahara, Hokkaido (1999); "The World of Goro Kakei's Sculpture," Contemporary Sculpture Center, Tokyo & Osaka (1984). He participated in group exhibitions such as "STORIES," Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art Shizuoka, (2021); "Contemporary Japanese Sculptor Artist Exhibition," Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (2008); "History of Modern Sculpture of Japan," The Museum of Modern Art, Ibaraki (1991) which traveled to the Tokushima Modern Art Museum (1991); "New Generation of Japanese Sculptors," National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (1963). Kakei received the Excellence Award at the 7th Teiji Nakahara Sculpture Prize in 1976 and the Kobe Suma Rikyu Park Award at the 7th Exhibition of Contemporary Japanese Sculpture in 1977. In 1981 he received the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo Award and the Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama Award at the 9th Exhibition of Contemporary Japanese Sculpture, as well as the Excellence Award at the 2nd Exhibition of Kotaro Takamura Prize in 1981. Kakei was also the recipient of the 23rd Nakahara Teiji Award in 1992.

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Goro Kakei

“Azumino”, 1980

Bronze

138.5 x 144 x 42 cm

© Goro Kakei Foundation

Photo: Kenji Takahashi



Goro Kakei

“Sky Bridge”, 1985

Bronze

29.3 x 25.5 x 16.5 cm

Edition of 5

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