

ABOUT WORK

The *Red Series* and *Sick in Japan* paintings from 1997-2004 were created while Junichiro was residing in Tokyo. The works portray Japan in a state of transition, with regards to cultural, social, and political change in the aftermath of the bubble economy and Second World War. When asked to explain further, the artist simply says, the characters in his paintings are *'breaking out of their shell'* and growing a *'new kind of skin.'*

In the years preceding 9-11, the use of eggshells in his work becomes a central motif in foregrounding the notion of vulnerability, fragility, and uniqueness to all living things. The artist is also interested in the duality of spaces, inside and outside, its *'breaking point,'* and how this relates to life in contemporary society. The fragility of the material suggests a temporality to existence and reminds us of what matters most in our lives.

Junichiro's current work explores the concept of *'Mu'* in Japanese Zen. Often collaborating with his twin sister, they offer the following statement: *'in the contemporary era of divisive politics and fake news, going beyond binary positions is a necessity for survival. 'Mu' recognizes that there is no definitive right or wrong, true or false, or good or bad. These are positions of polarity dependent on both time and space; history and contexts.'* The sculptures in the current *'Level'* and *'Frame'* series are conceptual tools for meditation, serving as reminders to attain what Zen practitioners call *'nothingness'* – a point of transcendence and appreciation for life in the present.

SHORT BIO

Born in Tokyo (1971), Junichiro Iwase moved to Canada with family in 1972. After high school, he enrolls in the Fine Arts Program at Vancouver Community College but later drops out to become an apprentice at the Johnson Atelier Technical Institute of Sculpture where he meets and works on the castings of George Segal, Marisol Escobar, Joel Shapiro, Claes Oldenburg and Lucas Samaras. Since then his work has taken him abroad, actively participating in exhibitions, biennials, residencies, and workshops across four continents (Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America.) Junichiro has received recognition from The Canada Council for the Arts, British Columbia Arts Council, and The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, for his work in the visual arts. His current work centers on themes of *'fragility'* and *'balance'* in the 21st century.

CV

http://www.junichiroiwase.com/media/./JUNICHIRO_IWASE_CV_DOWNLOAD_update.pdf

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