

Tsuyoshi Maekawa

Born in Osaka in 1936, Tsuyoshi Maekawa studied design at Osaka City Kogei High School. He took Jiro Yoshihara, a leader of Gutai Art Association, as his mentor and he first presented his work in the eighth Gutai exhibition. He became a member of the Gutai group in 1962 till the group's demolition in 1972.

The first generation of Gutai made works that have been described as similar to action painting or performance art. As second generation of Gutai member, Maekawa's early work is similarly reminiscent of Abstract Expressionism but his real preoccupation is with the material nature of the works, their object-ness. Rather than an investigation of action or emotion, he was focused on discovering new structural and material possibilities within imagery.

In the beginning of the 1960's, Maekawa made several works using burlap, a woven cloth created from hemp fibers with a coarse large weave that was usually used for bags of grain. Using burlap's rough and organic surface, Maekawa applied a glue and oil paint to create works that have raw materiality, yet maintaining the elements of a painting. The relief-like surface's gracefully meandering lines repeat organically, reminiscent of the rhythm of the natural world, geological structures of the earth, that go beyond the realm of the abstract and touch the viewer's heart. Toward the 90s and 2000, Maekawa started to use more colors with acrylic paintings, adding colorful visual images while keeping the rough materiality of burlap, and intriguing the sense of touch and colorfulness.