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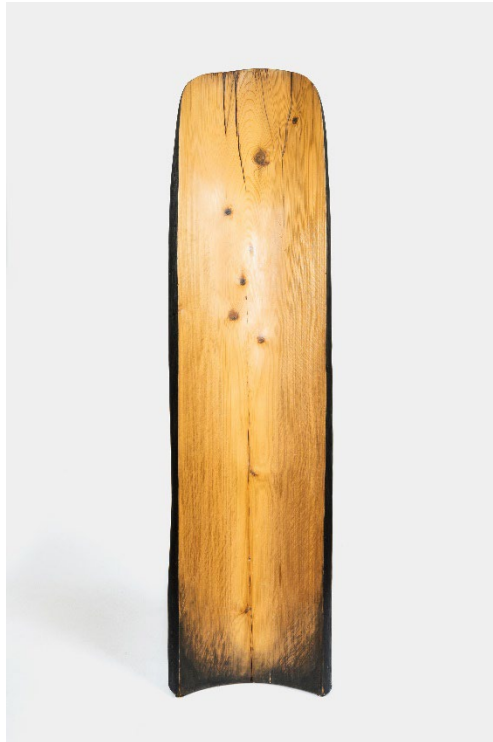
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Kenzi Shiokava, *Primal Totem X*, 1999. Douglas fir post wood; 84 1/2 × 22 1/2 × 13 in. (214.6 × 57.1 × 33 cm). Courtesy the Estate of Kenzi Shiokava and Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles & Kyoto. Photographer: Taka Nonaka-Hill.

Multimedia material:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/r5iq2c2mjln3h8wigk0n7/AKR2O8geaKyfEnNpa4-bbGI?rlkey=pid9aofxts0ofauz64ynp19t3&st=wb9f8trr&dl=0>

MCA Chicago announces *Kenzi Shiokava*, first museum solo exhibition dedicated to the artist, opening in June 2026

CHICAGO—The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is delighted to announce *Kenzi Shiokava*, the first museum solo exhibition dedicated to sculptor Kenzi Shiokava (b. 1938, Santa Cruz do Rio Pardo, Brazil; d. 2021, Los Angeles, CA). A second-generation Japanese Brazilian, the artist departed São Paulo in 1964—narrowly evading the military coup d'état—and relocated to Los Angeles just months prior to the 1965 Watts Riots. After earning a BFA from the Chouinard Art Institute (now California Institute of the Arts) and an MFA from the Otis Art Institute (now Otis College of Art and Design), Shiokava spent the next five decades working

with found objects in Los Angeles while serving as a longtime artist-in-residence at the storied Watts Towers Arts Center, where his peers included John Outerbridge, Noah Purifoy, and Betye Saar. Surveying nearly fifty years of sculpture, this expansive exhibition reflects Shiokava's career-long embrace of wood carving and assemblage.

Comparing his practice to archeology, Shiokava excavated the spiritual potential and, in his words, "inner movement" of found materials, drawing inspiration from Japanese woodcarving, Afro-Brazilian religious rituals, and concepts of embodied rhythm. The show is anchored by a wide selection of large totems—described by the artist as "urban totems" and "shaman staffs"—which were meticulously carved from discarded pieces of wood. The exhibition also features Shiokava's box installations, in which miniature vignettes unfold featuring toy figurines, plastic fruits, and natural materials such as stones and leaves. The show will provide broader context for Shiokava's practice through dynamic displays of his wood carving tools, archival footage of him working in his studio in Compton, and ephemera that document his exhibitions throughout California and Japan. *Kenzi Shiokava* will trace the artist's diasporic experience and artistic practice, examining his unique capacity to imbue the most mundane materials with poetry and life, while also considering the ways in which his story complicates the categories of Asian American, Black, and Latino art histories.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue, which will be the first publication dedicated to Shiokava's practice. The catalogue will feature an introduction by organizing curator Nolan Jimbo and essays by Naima J. Keith, Senior Vice President of Education, Public Programs, and Regional Partnerships at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA); Aram Moshayedi, independent curator and former Robert Soros Senior Curator at the Hammer Museum; and Michiko Okano, Associate Professor of Asian Art History at the Federal University of São Paulo.

Kenzi Shiokava is organized by Nolan Jimbo, MCA Assistant Curator.

SUPPORT

Lead support for *Kenzi Shiokava* is provided by the Harris Family Foundation in memory of Bette and Neison Harris, the Zell Family Foundation, and Cari and Michael Sacks.

Generous support is provided by Gay-Young Cho and Christopher Chiu.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The MCA interweaves exhibitions, performances, collections, and educational programs while providing a place for audiences to contemplate and discuss contemporary art in pursuit of a creative and diverse future. The MCA believes in the values of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) as a platform to enact structural change. The museum is generously supported by its Board of Trustees; individual and corporate members; private and corporate foundations, including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; and government agencies. The MCA is a proud member of Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.

The [MCA is located at 220 E. Chicago Avenue](#) and is open from 10 am to 5 pm, Wednesday to Sunday, and Tuesdays from 10 am to 9 pm. Tuesday evenings (5–9 pm) are free for Illinois residents. The museum is closed on Mondays. Admission is free for all youth 18 and under, members of the military and veterans, and MCA Members. Free admission for anyone 18 and under is generously provided by Liz and Eric Lefkowsky and Northern Trust. Find more information about MCA's exhibitions, programs, and special events at mcachicago.org or at 312.280.2660.



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