



6422      Kenzō Ochi (1929–1981)

Untitled flower vessel

Uchidashi (forged) iron

Sealed Ken

Japan 20th century

Dimensions: H. 35.5cm x W. 47.5cm (14" x 18¾")

Tomobako (original wood box):

Signed Kenzō saku (made by Kenzo)

Kenzō Ochi was born in Ehime prefecture and went on to study metalwork at Tokyo University of Fine Arts, graduating in 1953. Ochi chose to sculpt his pieces in iron using the uchidashi (forging) technique and soon gained recognition from the Japanese art world with his iconic creations. The following year he exhibited at the 10th Nitten (Japan Fine Arts Exhibition). This affiliation continued for many years and Ochi received numerous prizes for his exhibits throughout his short yet illustrious career.

Ochi was also keen to share his skills and in 1956 he returned to the Tokyo University of Fine Arts first as a part-time teaching assistant and from 1959 gained a full-time position. His teaching career

continued to develop and in 1965 he joined Tokyo Gakugei University as a full-time lecturer and was then promoted to Assistant Professor in 1969 before finally becoming Professor of metalwork in 1976. Whilst dedicated to teaching Ochi remained active as an artist exhibiting regularly and winning many prizes which included The Yomiuri Newspaper award in 1964 for his exhibit at the annual Japan Modern Crafts Exhibition and the Award of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1965. In the following years, as he matured as an artist, he was invited to become a judge for both the Nitten and Japan Association of Modern Craft Artists Exhibitions respectively.

The iron sculptures of Kenzō Ochi are fine and light, their rounded organic forms, jutting spires and tubular sections appear to defy gravity irrespective of their material. Ochi was one of the most influential metalwork artists of his time. Due to his relatively short life and the extremely labour-intensive process of uchidashi he only produced a small body of work, much of which is now held in the collections of major Japanese museums and institutions.

Works by the artist can be found in the collections of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto; Tokyo University of Fine Arts.

Selected Exhibitions and Awards:

1954 Nitten (Japan Fine Arts Exhibition) , Tokyo. Received his first award

1964 Nihon Gendai Kōgei Bijitsuka-ten (Japan Association of Modern Craft Artists Exhibition) - Yomiuri Newspaper Award

1965 Nitten, Tokyo - Tokusen Award and Hokuto Award

Nihon Gendai Kōgei Bijitsuka-ten - Minister of Foreign Affairs Award

1966 Nihon Gendai Kōgei Bijitsuka-ten - Members' award and Foreign Minister Award

1967 Nitten, Tokyo

1969 Nitten, Tokyo, Kikka Award

1972 Nitten, Tokyo. Continues to exhibit annually.

For a similar example from 1970 entitled Tree Thoughts in the collection the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo see: Ochi Kenzo 1929 – 1981, pl.16, p17

