



Jun Kaneko (pictured left) was born in Nagoya, Japan in 1942. He studied painting with Satoshi Ogawa during his adolescence - working in his studio during the day and attending high school in the evening.

He came to the United States in 1963 to continue his studies at Chouinard Institute of Art when his introduction to Fred Marer drew him to sculptural ceramics. He proceeded to study with Peter Voukos, Paul Soldner, and Jerry Rothman in California during the time now defined as The Contemporary Ceramics Movement in America.

The following decade, Kaneko taught at some of the nation's leading art schools, including Scripps College, Rhode Island School of Design and Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Based in Omaha since 1986, Kaneko has worked at several experimental studios including European Ceramic Work Center in The Netherlands, Otsuka Omi Ceramic Company in Japan, Fabric Workshop in Philadelphia, Bullseye Glass in Portland, Ore., Acadia Summer Arts Program in Bar Harbor, Maine, and Aguacate in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Over the course of his career he has partnered with industrial facilities to realize large-scale, hand-built sculptures. The first was his 1982-1983 Omaha Project at Omaha Brickworks. Later series of sculptures were created at Mission Clay Products at his Fremont Project, completed in 1992-1994 in California, and his Pittsburg Project completed in 2004-2007 in Kansas.

In 2013, his exhibition *Myths, Legends and Truths* opened at Millennium Park in Chicago featuring 13, 9½-foot-tall *Dangos* from the Pittsburg Project series and 23 of his *Tanuki*, a new body of work by Kaneko drawing upon Japanese folklore.

His artwork appears in numerous international and national solo and group exhibitions annually and is included in more than 70 museum collections. Kaneko holds honorary doctorates from the University of Nebraska, the Massachusetts College of Art & Design and the Royal College of Art in London and is the recipient of national, state and organization honors and fellowships.

Kaneko is increasingly drawn to installations that promote civic interaction. He has completed more than 50 public art commissions, including:

- *Current*, his two 350-foot long murals at Aquarium Station in Boston (1993-2000);
- *Shift*, a 5-story mural in the Biology and Physics Building at The University of Connecticut (1997);
- Mashima Sports Arena Mural in Osaka, Japan (1994);
- Permanent plaza installations, *Rhythm*, in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and *Water Plaza*, at the Bartle Hall Convention Center in Kansas City, Kan. (2006);
- *Five Dangos* (2007) with glass mural, *Expansion* (2013) in Des Moines, Iowa;
- *Conversation* at the International Finance Center in Shanghai, China (2012);
- *Ascent* at Tower Square, featuring a 56-foot tall Glass Tower, Plaza Design, and Tile Wall in Lincoln, Neb. (2014); and

- *Garden of Tanuki*, a dozen Tanuki sculptures, at the Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo (2014).

Kaneko designed the sets and costumes for three operas: Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* (2006), Beethoven's *Fidelio* (2008), and Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (2012). All three are currently touring in the United States. Opera Omaha recently staged *Fidelio* in April 2015. The San Francisco Opera will present *Madame Butterfly* for the second time in November 2016, and the Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. will present *Madame Butterfly* in May 2017.

Kaneko and his wife, Ree, formed KANEKO, a public non-profit cultural organization exploring and encouraging the process of creativity and headquartered in three turn-of-the-century warehouses in the Old Market District of Omaha, Neb.

KANEKO is an institution with a vision to celebrate creativity and is committed to fostering it as the overriding mission with four major programming themes: Design, Ideas, Performance, and Innovation.