

29 August 2019

Japanese artist returns to Noosa to repeat career-defining public art collaboration

Acclaimed Japanese artist Masao Okabe will return to Noosa for *Floating Land: point to point* – more than 30 years after his first fateful visit to the shire.

In 1988 Okabe worked with Noosa residents, shopkeepers and passers-by to produce a 150-metre artwork of iconic Hastings Street.

“That was a pivotal moment in Okabe’s career. He went on to create similarly inspired works with communities around the World. In fact, since 1988 community engagement has become central to his practice,” Noosa Regional Gallery Director Michael Brennan said.

“I’m thrilled that we have been able to invite an artist of Masao Okabe’s stature back to Noosa to participate in *Floating Land*.”

Again working with local artists and the broader community, Okabe will return to some of the sites from his earlier visit to create new works that document how Noosa has changed.

“Art in my opinion is about how to interact with community. That is art’s most important purpose,” Okabe says.

Curator Chihiro Minato will join the Japanese artist. Together, they’ll develop a series of works, again using the arts practice of ‘frottage’ or rubbing, which Okabe used in 1988 and ultimately built his career on.

Developed by German artist and leading Surrealist Max Ernst in 1925, the frottage artistic process involves rubbing a drawing tool over a textured surface to record random markings.

Mr Brennan said Okabe was keen to apply this technique to tree surfaces around Noosa.

“It will be an extension of a body of work from around the world, including Hiroshima, where Okabe traced the surface of a cluster of trees that survived the 1945 atomic blast.

“This visit continues Noosa Regional Gallery’s effort to bring the best of creative practitioners from around the country – and this case, around the world – to Noosa for locals to work with and learn from.”

Floating Land: point to point will run from 12 to 27 October 2019. Entry to the event is free. For more information, visit www.floatingland.org.au

Image: Masao Okabe, *Frottage Collaboration Project*, 150 metre long rubbing of Hastings Street, Noosa, 1988.

Image: Masao Okabe. Courtesy the artist.

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