

Inaugural Statement

HARU

Sculpture for the Nihonbashi Mitsui Tower, Tokyo

While working on this project over the past five years, I reflected upon and was increasingly impressed by the evolution of the Japanese people from the Edo period, through the Meiji Restoration and the building of the Mitsui Honkan, to the post-war world and the present day. I had a sense of the wealth of tradition based on a boundless *élan vital* that is constantly adjusting to new situations and creating new values; of how, paradoxically, freedom and change are aspects of tradition. And I wanted to create sculpture that would evoke something of that surging and yet controlled vitality, a piece that might attract people to a public space charged with energy, but also a quiet space, a place to breathe and relax and sense the timeless flow of life from ancient Edo to their own immediate world beyond the building itself.

I hope something of this feeling is expressed in *Haru*.

The sculpture constitutes a stone pair, simple yet dynamic, the space between becoming a kind of third sculpture, making the whole suggestive if not ambiguous. It has solidity and a sense of endurance, yet is lively and versatile, changing with each new angle of perception. It is a bit like calligraphy, or dance. Would one be surprised to see a stone dancing a minuet? To find that experience and the weight of tradition may ground the most impromptu ideogram or the most impetuous step?

This sculpture, *Haru*, shows strength and stability combined with openness and originality. It achieves this in the manner, both subtle and obvious, in which the surface ripples or the planes twist or the stone arches, tears, and soars. This sculpture is my *agalma* for the new Nihonbashi Mitsui Tower.

Satoshi Saito

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