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KELLY AKASHI



BIOGRAPHY

Executed with deft manual skill and astute material knowledge, Kelly Akashi's visual language emphasizes the impermanence of the natural world, recording and indexing fragmented moments in time. Her singular practice is characterized by a rigorous conceptual approach, yet the work is distinguished by a deep reverence for process. Always a student, Akashi is perpetually studying new practices and physical techniques such as glass-blowing, casting, candle-making and stone carving. The repeated use of the hand as motif serves as a symbol for Akashi's ongoing investigation into the temporality of the human experience. Often cast in bronze or crystal, her hands bear the mark of time on her body, her growing fingernails, and aging flesh. Towering sculpted weeds, delicately glass-blown flowers, a to-scale depiction of her body in polished travertine, enlarged casts of extinct species of shells; Akashi poetically and objectively encapsulates the notion of mortality in a ritualistic gathering of objects. However, her take on her own practice is not a morbid one. Akashi references the phrase *mono no aware*. "It refers to a wistful awareness of impermanence—the 'pathos of things.' It's central to hanami, the Japanese custom of venturing out to enjoy the brief season of cherry blossoms."

Kelly Akashi was born in 1983 in Los Angeles. She received a BFA from Otis College of Art & Design in 2006 and an MFA from the University of Southern California in 2014. She also studied at the prestigious Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste (Städelschule) in Frankfurt am Main, Germany in 2010. Akashi has been commissioned to create a monumental sculpture for John F. Kennedy International Airport's New Terminal One (NTO), opening in 2026. She has also been selected by

Hyundai Motor Company and the Whitney Museum of American Art for the *Hyundai Terrace Commission: Kelly Akashi* for the Whitney Biennial 2026. In 2025, Akashi has been chosen as an Artist in Residence at Pilchuck Glass School. Recent solo exhibitions include 'Kelly Akashi' at Lisson Gallery in Los Angeles, USA (20 February - 29 March, 2025), 'Kelly Akashi – Converging Figures' Fondazione Furla Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan, Italy (13 September – December 8 2024) and 'Kelly Akashi: Encounters' at the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, USA (September 30, 2023 – June 15, 2024) and her 10-year survey, 'Formations', which began at the San José Museum of Art in 2022, travelled to the Frye Art Museum in Seattle and then to the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, through 2024. Recent group exhibitions include 'Roppongi Crossing 2025: What Passes Is Time. We Are Eternal.' Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (3 December 2025 - 29 March 2026), 'A Garden of Promise and Dissent', Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT, USA (17 November 2024 – November 2025); 'Spirit House', Cantor Arts Center, Stanford, CA, USA (September 4 2024 – 26 January 2025); 'Ecstatic: Selections from the Hammer Contemporary Collection', Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2023); 'Ground/work' at Clark Institute, Williamston, MA, USA (2020); 'Possessed', MO.CO Panacée, Montpellier, France; 'Take Me (I'm Yours)', The Jewish Museum, New York, NY, USA (2016); and 'Made in LA: a, the, though, only', Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2016). Akashi's work can be found in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY, USA; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA, USA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA, USA; Sifang Museum, Nanjing, China, The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; and X Museum, Beijing, China, among others.