

Kosen Ohtsubo

Born in 1939, Ashio, Tochigi prefecture, Japan

Based in Saitama, Japan

Biography

Kosen Ohtsubo is a Japanese ikebana artist active in Japan and internationally for more than six decades. Over many years in the education department of Ikebana Ryuseiha, he pursued the technical and formal traditions of ikebana while teaching generations of students.

At the same time, his practice has encompassed a wide range of avant-garde ikebana works, from small compositions to spatial installations. He frequently uses vegetables, wild plants, and discarded objects, often working with deliberately simple methods. A lifelong jazz enthusiast, he values improvisation and responsiveness, often allowing materials and circumstances to shape the final form of a work.

Kosen Ohtsubo began studying ikebana under Kasen Yoshimura, the third head of the Ryuseiha school, in the 1960s. Around 1970 he started presenting works in magazines and exhibitions and also began teaching. During a trip to India in 1975, he was deeply struck by Shiva linga and the ritual scattering of flower petals as offerings. From 2005 to 2013, he lived in Beijing, China.

His work has been presented internationally, including recent exhibitions at Kunstverein München and the Shanghai Biennale. He lives and works at *Flower Planet*, his studio in Saitama, Japan.

Selected Exhibitions & Projects

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| 2026 | <i>Mitate</i> , Helsinki Contemporary, Helsinki, Finland (photographic works created in collaboration with Tuomas A. Laitinen)
Tuomas A. Laitinen: <i>Siphon</i> , Pioneer Works, New York, USA (feature) |
| 2025 | 15th Shanghai Biennale, Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China
<i>Flower Planet</i> , Kunstverein München, Munich, Germany (two-person exhibition with Christian Koun Alborz Oldham) |
| 2005 | <i>From Contemporary Art? to ! 4, Potatoes in Heat</i> , Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse, Yokohama, Japan (solo exhibition) |
| 2003 | <i>Perfection / Impermanence: Contemporary Ikebana</i> , Wave Hill, New York, USA |
| 1999 | <i>Flash Solo Exhibition: My Funeral at Sixty</i> , BUTTU TRICK-BAR Tokyo, Japan |
| 1997 | <i>Organic Matters</i> , Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis, USA (artist-in-residence) |
| 1994 | <i>Ikebana as an Expression</i> , Nagoya Citizens' Gallery, Nagoya, Japan |
| 1985 | <i>Hara Annual</i> , Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan
<i>Japanese Autumn 1985</i> , Nordjyllands Kunstmuseum, Aalborg, Denmark |
| 1982–85 | Solo exhibitions at Gallery Te, Lunami Gallery, Maki Gallery and other venues in Tokyo, Japan |

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| 1977 | <i>Ikebana Open Call Exhibition</i> , Tokyo, Japan (co-founder and participating artist) |
| 1974–77 | <i>Ikebana Group of Eight</i> , Matsuya Ginza, Tokyo, Japan (co-founder and participating artist) |
| 1973 | <i>Ikebana Independent</i> , Toshimaen, Tokyo, Japan (co-founder and participating artist) |

Publications

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| 1995 | Contemporary Flower Artist 4: Kosen Ohtsubo |
| 1981 | Plant & Man |

International Cultural Exchange

Invitations through cultural and governmental initiatives in eg. Hong Kong, Utrecht, New Orleans, London, Portland, Mendocino, Florida, Seoul, Damascus, Beirut, Amman, Ulaanbaatar, Wellington and Singapore.

In 2006, while based in Beijing, China, Ohtsubo was appointed as a Japan Cultural Envoy by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan. Invitations during his years in China also took him to projects in Shanghai, Dalian, Shenyang, Qingdao, Tianjin, Chongqing, Nanjing and locations in Inner Mongolia.