

## Introduction

Playfulness and humor form an important part in the historical ebb and flow of pictorial story telling in Japan. Though over time its form has changed - appearing in ever-changing forms and characters across the centuries - from the famous 12th century and 13th century *Choju-giga* scroll to the more contemporary and extremely popular pictorial story telling form “manga”, it is still a special feature in Japanese art.

As a graphic artist from Japan, Akinori has created a distinctly engaging and playful world through his art. Drawing as he does faces using no more than a few dots and dashes he arranges his characters into vast sprawling life systems that can take over entire buildings. Applying his typographic design to everything from interactive sculptures, animation and interior design to the facade of a skyscrapers he is a self-confessed 'drawaholic', one who creates landscaped playgrounds where hierarchies disappear.

Best known for his typographic language that seems to have no beginning or end, Akinori's sketchbooks of intricate drawings are the cornerstone of his practice and show an admirable commitment to hand-drawn work. He has developed his drawings into interactive artworks based on his characters, and as he has himself said “when he draws his characters, they are always alive in his mind”.

Influenced by European and American graphic styles as well as the work of French filmmaker Jacques Tati, Akinori's creations are built around a subtle, yet complex visual language, and as with Tati's films, they are elaborate, tightly-choreographed, clever, complex, humorous and happy works of art. His distinct form of ‘narration’, built through his own system of signs, can be interpreted and understood both in terms of semiotics or communication theory, or just as valid, in terms of the instantaneous and emotional bond created between each work and its audience.

A kind of modern day Alchemist working with the most basic of tools - pen (or marker) to draw on paper or walls, Akinori's magical and immensely time-consuming hand-drawn creations bring diverse

worlds together and offer a universal language of playful expression and liberation beyond geographical and cultural borders.

The qualities in Akinori's art have seen him exhibit his work at numerous prestigious galleries across the globe as well as offering him the opportunity of working both within his home country and abroad. During today's presentation Akinori will introduce a number of his projects highlighting his career as a graphic and digital media artist to date, whilst touching upon the philosophy and approach behind his work.

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