

## Two sculptors in Dordrechts Museum

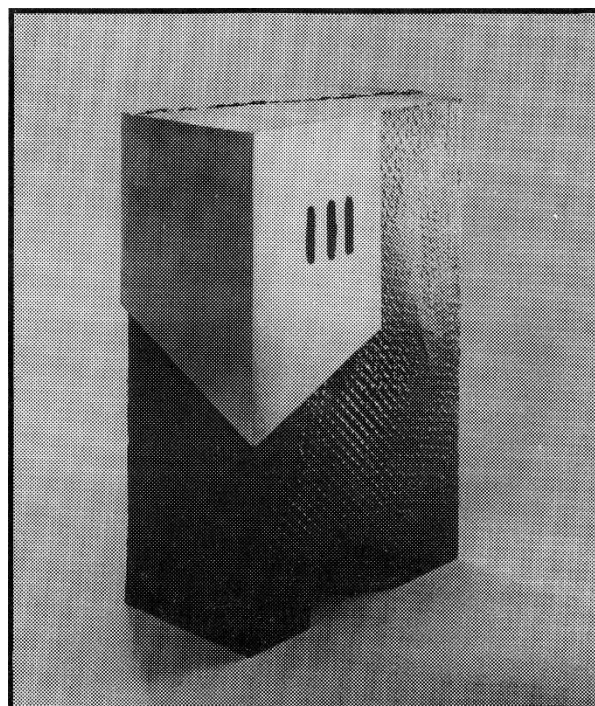
### Dimensions in bronze; revelation in wood

Dordrechts Museum takes up the East West Forum with an exhibition of two Japanese sculptors: Kengiro Azuma and Kazuo Kadonga. The first has lived and worked in Europe since 1956, the second has almost never left Japan.

In the catalog accompanying the exhibition, museum director J.M. de Groot: 'However different the character and material of the work of both artists and however great the distance may be, the link with their own cultural tradition is visible in both Kengiro Azuma and Kazuo Kadonga.'

Azuma was born in 1926 in Yamagata, 500 kilometers north of Tokyo. He grew up in a bronze founding family that had practiced this profession for many generations, making religious objects for temples. The family was also a member of the Zen Buddhist sect. It later emerged that Zen influenced the artist's work. From 1950 to 1956, Azuma took sculpture classes at the new three-dimensional conception. There are two-sided reliefs that gradually begin to acquire volume and a little later can become as an irregular block shape around warps. He also begins to bend his reliefs, creating a cone shape. The flat blocks have an irregular contour, which gives the side views a dynamic effect. The front is a maze of patterns that overlap, which has a calming effect on the sides. But restless as he is, always looking for the beneficial tension, Azuma changes course again around 1966. From now on, the images no longer have a

front and back, no beginning and no end, but consist of consecutive equal planes, where different structures alternate. The forms arise in a dialogue between artist and material, from his interpretation of and respect for that material. This probing, investigative way of working takes a lot of time. Then Azuma quite suddenly introduces polished edges and surfaces, intensifying the horizon language, vertically and diagonally grouped folds, bulges and incisions. The effect of light and shadow accentuates these contrasts even more, without the images losing their modesty. The images that were created between 1966 and 1969 are characterized by space the silence and the time they radiate. a great deal of freedom becomes visible. With this, Azuma may make it more difficult for the spectator to grab essential elements. Only by slowly and concentratedly following the successive movements that the artist has allowed to express is it possible to experience the



richness of these contrasting images. The more recent work looks deceptively simpler. The planes are moved between the basic shape and the upper boundary, but because the top and bottom are neither equal in dimensions nor in direction, tensions arise between the two extremes. Kengiro Azuma, who still lives in Milan, is currently a teacher of sculpture at the Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti. His work has previously been shown in the Nouvelles Images gallery in The Hague in 1972, 1975, 1978 and 1980.

### Kadonaga

Kazuo Kadonaga lives and works in Japan and only speaks Japanese. He was born in 1946 in Ishikawaken, a village formerly famous for its samurai. He grew up in a family whose father owned a cedar forest and a sawmill. Cedar is a type of wood used in temple construction and for altars, giving this wood an almost sacred status. From his earliest childhood, Kazuo is very familiar with this material and its processing. When he settles in Tsurugi, he explores his design language further. In 1971 he approaches his material as a sculptor who makes objects from rectangular blocks, with an emphasis on volume. Two years later, the first split logs were created and from 1974 he worked with rough pieces of tree trunk instead of the pre-processed logs of before. He will continue with the different forms of cleaving. His intention, he says in an interview, is to reveal nature. He does that in two ways: by the enclosed forms and by respecting the natural process. He expresses these ideas in different ways in numbered and lettered series that he calls 'Wood' for short. Some pieces of trunk are systematically carved along with a blade, forged from a sword, to a depth of about four inches, other pieces across. Sometimes he unravels a trunk into paper-thin slices, after which they are returned to their original shape. Kadonaga emphatically shows that every piece of wood is a living material that splits and warps according to the environment in which it is located. In 1981 his work was shown in

Nouvelles Images in The Hague. The Kröller-Müller Museum has work by him in its collection.

### Museum

On the occasion of the East West Forum, Dordrecht Museum will soon be publishing a lesson plan for the fifth and six grades of primary education and the first grades. The lesson letter will consist of three "lessons", all of which are related in one way or another with, how could it be otherwise, the East West Forum. In the first lesson the EMF site is central, the vacant space. land with the ruin of the Victoria factory on the outskirts of the old town What can be done with the site, what function can it have, what is possible and, above all, what is not possible In short, what kind of solutions do the children find and how do they represent them? The second lesson is based on the six Japanese and six Dutch sculptors who work on the site and will discuss sculpture in general. The third lesson consists of a visit the site (under expert guidance) at the end of June or beginning of July, at which time you can already see a few things about the sculpture projects on which the twelve artists are working together or not. Teachers interested in the lesson letter can contact Ineke Voors teegh.

