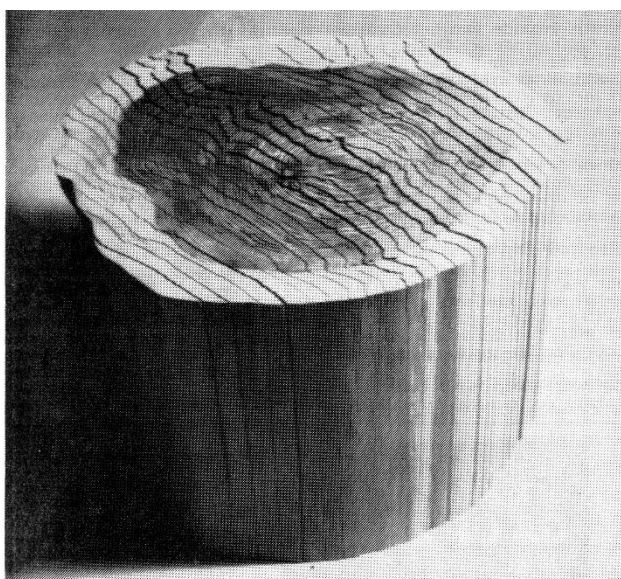


## East-West Forum in Dordrecht: fill in the space with Japanese

By  
Walter Barten

Just before the train breaks up the bridge, the old city of Dordrecht on the other side of the river comes into view, as if you were turning a page in a picture book. The houses seem to float away on the water, but the robust church with a blunt tower cannot be moved. Then a bare industrial complex passes by, as if the clock is turned back to the view of the bombed-out suburbs just after the liberation and with a shock the train comes to a stop at the station. The purpose of the trip is the said industrial area, where the East-West Forum should take place, but apart from the flags, flapping in the strong wind, there is no field or road that resembles it. "On a vacant lot on the edge of the old city center of Dordrecht, six Japanese and six Dutch sculptors will collaborate between 1 June and 15 July as part of the Holland Festival under the name East-West Forum. This collaboration should lead to a visual concept for the site that used to house a machine and a biscuit factory. The participating artists are: Jiro Sugawara, Horonori Katagiri, Masayuki Nagase, Takeshi Tanabe, Okamoto and Hiroshi Mikami from Japan and Heppe de Moor, Lex Wechgelaar, Robert O'Brien / Irene Drooglever Fortuyn, Ewerdt Hilgemann, Dick Postema and Marinus Boezem from the Netherlands So much for the information stencil of the Dordrecht Cultural Council.

A sculptors' forum or symposium is organized by



KAZUO KADONAGA: Wood no 11 K (1980)

the artists themselves, in this case by the Dutch Circle of Sculptors, with the intention of arriving at a collaboration that should yield results in a short space of time. Five years ago such a meeting took place in Gorinchem and thanks to the help of the local industry, which supplied materials, technology and manpower, it has become an exciting event. Private companies and Public Works



will also assist the artists in Dordrecht.

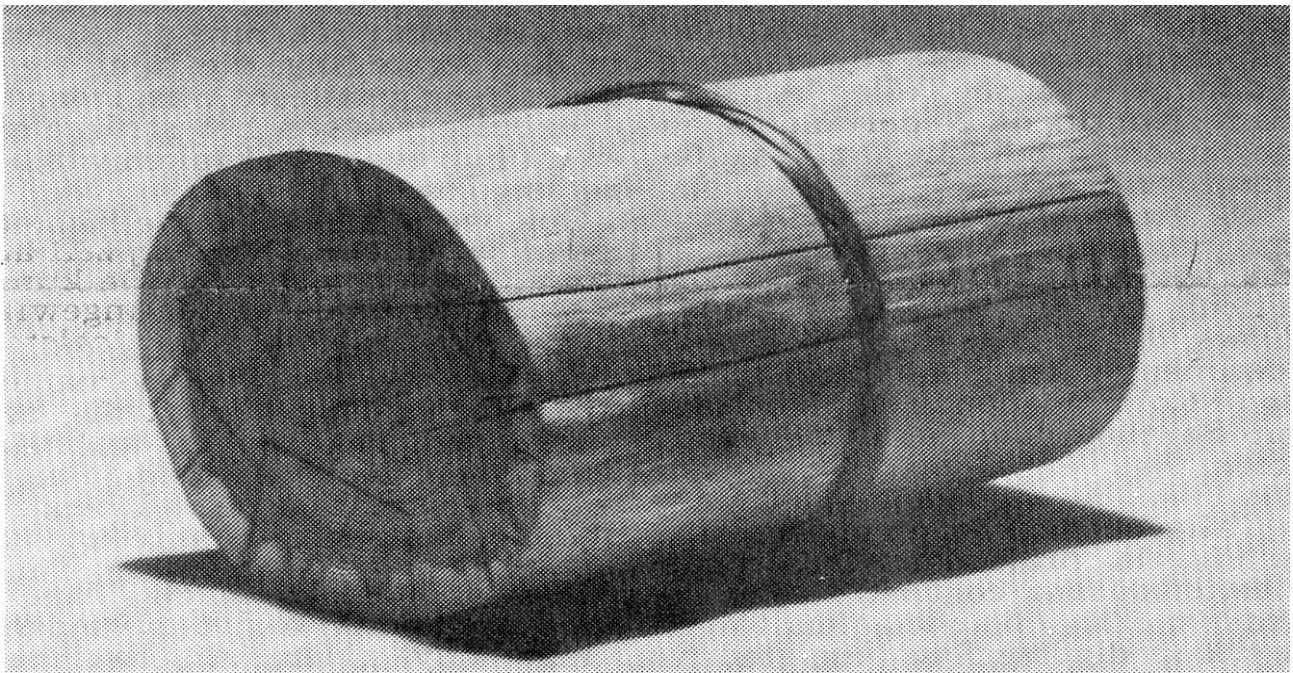
Most of the Japanese have lived in Europe for years and participated in various symposia. Masayuki Nagase (b. 1949) works in stone and by means of a rudimentary formal language he makes energy and conflict in nature visible. The work by Jiro Sugawara (b. 1941), which is shown in the (provisional) catalog, suggests a relationship with Carl André and minimal art. Atsuo Okamoto (b. 1938) explains that he is looking for a new world order on the basis of a relative relationship between space, time and object. Hiroshi Mikami (b. 1944) designs simple signs with "poor" materials on the basis of a concept in which human action and local environment influence each other. Horonori Katagiri's sculpture (b. 1956) can be described as a primitive constructivism. Takeshi Tanabe uses "objects trouvés" to symbolize elemental forces in nature. Marinus Boezem (born 1934) and Lex Wechgelaar (born 1936) are characteristic representatives of the innovative development of the late 1960s, in which unconventional materials and conceptual principles play an important role. Ewerdt Hilgemann (born 1938) is engaged in systematic structural research. Heppe de Moor (b. 1938) and Dick Postema (b. 1952) work with materials found on site and are influenced by movements such as arte povera and land art. The duo Robert M.

O'Brien (1951) and Irene Drooglever Fortuyn (born 1959) explains: „ The real meanings of form, material and technology are thus obscured by the interpretations applied to them and the real forms of materials and technology can be not be seen again ". The collaboration has reached a stage where the common starting points have more or less been formulated and the individual designs are now being developed.

The Dordrechts Museum, Museumstraat 40 in Dordrecht, crochets lieu. For generations, his family, who belonged to a Zen Buddhist sect, made religious objects for temples. Azuma has lived and worked in Miliaan since 1959. The exhibited images were created over the past ten years. They

West Forum with an exhibition of two Japanese sculptors: Kengiro Azuma and Kazuo Kadonaga (until July 18). At the beginning of this century, Japanese artists went to Paris to learn sculpture from the founders of modern art. Back in their own country, they became involved in art education and the Japanese academies have produced epigones of Rodin, Maillol, Bourdelle and Despiou for generations.

After the Second World War, Japanese sculptors soon joined international movements with their own input, including in the case of the Gutai group, which was part of the Žero movement. Despite internationalization, its own culture continues to leave its mark on Japanese sculpture, as shown in



**KAZUO KADONAGA: Wood no 11 M (1981)**

are abstract objects, simple in shape, but with an irregularity, that one intuitive development process. Rectangular surfaces are counterbalanced by soft curves. A smooth surface has holes as if it had been exposed to the effects of acids. Tables, temple shapes, cones, cylinders and recurring signs, such as oval-shaped holes, two or three next to each other, suggest ritual customs. Even for those who are foreign to Zen Buddhism, this art exudes an introverted tension that extends beyond its aesthetic quality.

Kazuo Kadonaga still lives in Japan and is familiar with woodworking for temple building and altars by heart. Wood has retained a sacred value for him. He exhibits wooden blocks and pieces of tree trunk that have been split and put back together. Splitting and warping reveal that wood is a living material. By respecting the natural process, each art object is given a reli serious significance.

Dordrecht is completely captivated by the East-

the exhibition in the Dordrechts Museum.

Kengiro Azuma (born 1926) comes from a bronze foundry from Japan. Galerie 56-58, Nieuw Straat 58, exhibits a further five Japanese artists and a program of Japanese installations and performances has been set up in the halls of the Pic tura Drawing Society, Voorstraat 190-192. .

On the way back to the station, we walked past the East-West Forum. An arrow pointed the way up at the ruins of the Victoria biscuit and biscuit factory. On the first floor, the façade of which has been broken away, a group of people stood bent over a table. Their focus was on a muddy landscape in which a Japanese boy modeled strange structures, while a fellow countryman in a hushed tone provided text and explanations in broken English. The sheets of paper with sketches, behind them on the wall, rattled like sails in the wind. Anyone who wants to closely follow the development of the East West Forum can visit the biscuit factory every day.