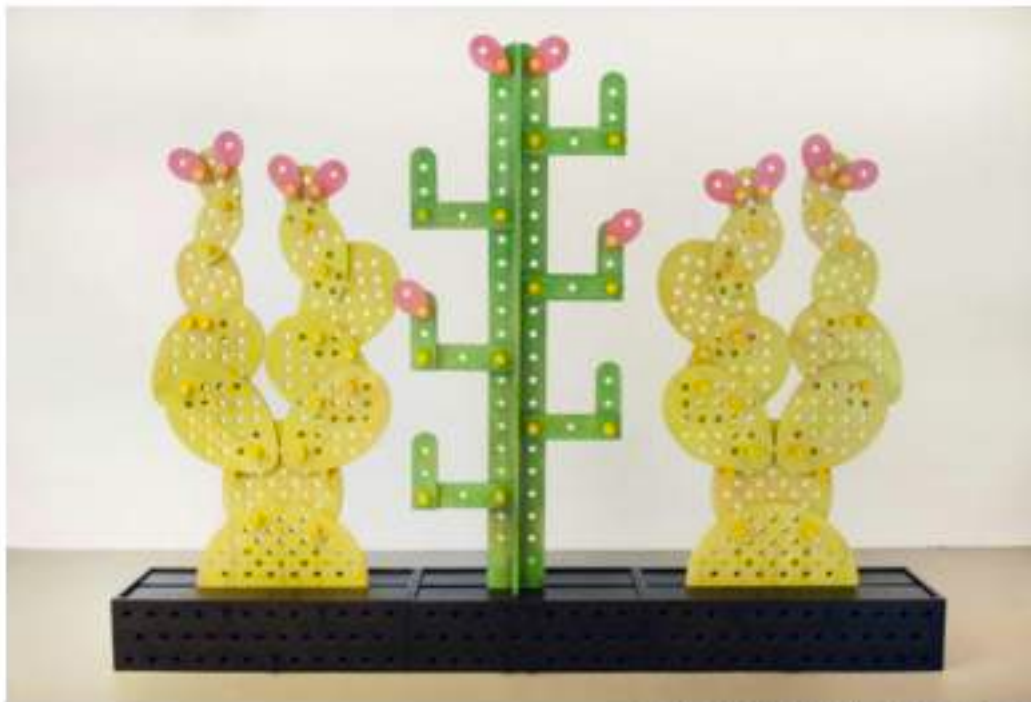


# Art & Object

## Art Talk: Shigeki Yamamoto



COURTESY SHIGEKI YAMAMOTO

Chalk Cactus Room Divider, 2016

Berlin-based designer Shigeki Yamamoto makes furniture for adults who don't want to be too far removed from the joys of childhood. Using components reminiscent of tinker toys, Yamamoto's furnishings are meant to remind us of our youthful creativity. He recently took the time to speak with Art & Object about his inspirations and design process.



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Shigeki Yamamoto in his Berlin studio.

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Chandra Noyes: When did you start making furniture and why?

Shigeki Yamamoto: After I graduated college, I started to work as an assistant to a Japanese artist who makes sculpture with metal. I learned to use and treat the material with him. And at the same time, I started to make my furniture. It was around 1999-2000. I studied interior design in my college in Osaka, though my furniture when I was a student was not typical furniture to use in daily life, they were more like art objects. When I traveled in Holland I encountered Dutch design which made furniture more like art. I realized that furniture like mine could straddle art and design. Since then I have made contemporary furniture and still make it now.



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

*Play Cabinet, 2017*

CN: What led you to make this line?

SY: My memory and reminiscences. I believe that memory can make people feel good and happy.

CN: How do you think design influences our lives and what impact do you hope your works have on the people who live with them?

SY: I think that design, even small ideas, can enrich people and their lives. I hope that it can help people recover their own memories, and that my furniture can and bring up some feelings, and ideas for the people who live with them. And I hope they can find some positive things from there by recovering their own memories, and that my furniture could make people happier in this way.

CN: Your works are reminiscent of childhood toys. Did you have any playthings that you think influenced you or continue to impact your work?

SY: Yes, there is some influence from childhood. But it's not the playthings, but how I played in my childhood that influenced me. When I was playing with some toys, I had an idea in mind at first, and then I tried to make the form from my imagination. I enjoyed this process very much. This method is still very important in my production for me. I still make my furniture in the same way, I just draw the sketch from my imagination before, and then I start to make a small mock-up of the form. There is no final drawing for my work. I make the forms one by one and it always changes from the original plan which I sketched before.





COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

*Light Tree, 2015*

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COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

*Play Cabinet, 2018*

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CN: Your works are comprised of many intricate pieces, can they be reconfigured into new forms?

SY: People often ask me if it is possible to rearrange the pieces into another form. Practically, yes, but I would not like them to do that, because they are my toys. I would not feel comfortable if I had to change the form of my toys for someone else, because they belong to me. This feeling is like children who are crying when someone breaks or changes their building toys. I would like to keep the forms as I made them.

### FIND OUT MORE

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Read more stories from Chandra Noyes*

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