

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION

Approved by the Regents
May 15, 2008

The University of Michigan School of Art and Design

Satoru Takahashi, assistant professor of art, School of Art and Design, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of art and design, with tenure, School of Art and Design.

Academic Degrees:

- M.F.A. 1988 School of Art, Yale University, Sculpture, New Haven, CT
B.F.A. 1983 Kyoto City University of Arts, Conceptual Planning of Arts, Kyoto, Japan

Professional Record:

- 2003 – present Assistant Professor of Art, without tenure, School of Art and Design,
University of Michigan
2001 – 2003 Roman J. Witt Visiting Assistant Professor, School of Art and Design,
University of Michigan
1997 – 2001 Visiting Assistant Professor, School of Arts, Carnegie Mellon University,
Pittsburgh, PA

Evaluation Summary:

Teaching – Satoru Takahashi is an energetic and dynamic teacher who brings a wide range of studio skills to the classroom. As an artist who works in a variety of media, Professor Takahashi is able to introduce students to expert techniques in working with large sculptural forms and room sized installations as well smaller, intimate scale works such as hand made books and ceramics. He engenders a warm, creative environment in the classroom and encourages students to explore new methods of expression. Of particular note are Professor Takahashi's community outreach courses, where students work with retired seniors to find ways of expressing their memories. The results of these interactions have produced uniquely memorable artworks and exhibitions.

Creative Work / Research – Satoru Takahashi is a productive studio artist with a significant international and national exhibition record. Recently, he mounted an ambitious sculptural and video installation in Chile, which received international critical acclaim. Professor Takahashi's work has also been presented in notable exhibitions in Japan, the Netherlands and Germany. In all his exhibitions, his work is marked by revealing new meaning to familiar objects and experiences. His major installations force the viewer to re-examine his sense of scale and material. His creations of giant pool tables or libraries in forests present compelling questions about the mundane. Professor Takahashi's work is characterized by the highest level of craftsmanship, from welding steel to projecting remote video signals.

Significant Recent Works and Activities:

- 2007 *Arts & The Brain*, Presentation/Event Faculty, Arts & Minds: Exploring the Interactions of Art and Mind, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
2006 *NoWhere: Vale of Paradise*, Solo Exhibition, Centro Cultural MATUCANA100, Santiago, Chile
2006 *Trans-Acting: Reminiscence of Future*, Group Exhibition, Kyoto Art Center, Kyoto, Japan

- 2006 *Devices of Memory*, Solo Exhibition, The Urban Institute of Contemporary Arts, Grand Rapids, MI
- 2005 *Where the Book Falls Open*, Group Exhibition/Performance, Bryan Arts & Education Center, Bryan, OH
- 2003 *The Formal Issue: The State of Sculpture*, Midland Center for the Arts, Midland, MI
- 2000 *Voice from Japan*, Group Exhibition, Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden, Netherlands
- 2000 *Trading Views*, Group Exhibition, Stadtgalerie, Saarbrücken, Germany

Service – Satoru Takahashi’s service engagements range across the University. His interests in international and cross-disciplinary education make him an active collaborator on campus. Most notable is his recent participation in the “Arts and Minds” learning studio at the University of Michigan, where he served as presenter and as event faculty. He has a community-minded approach to service work and has participated in numerous committees at the School of Art and Design. He currently chairs the Visitor’s Committee, which oversees all visiting artists and speakers, including those in the Penny W. Stamps Distinguished Lecture Series. Professor Takahashi seeks out interaction with and the development of long-term relationships with organizations such as the Turner Senior Center where he and his students work with Alzheimer’s patients. In 2005, he served as a fellow in the Faculty Scholars Program in the University’s Center for Integrative Healthcare, furthering his research in the intersection of art and healthcare through partnerships with healthcare professionals and researchers.

External Reviewers

Reviewer A: “The breadth in his work and its connection to a set of core values are quite engaging. As an artist and teacher, Takahashi’s artistic production reflects commitment to ideas informed by holistic design, love of craft, social consciousness.”

Reviewer B: “Most universities around the country are endorsing cross-disciplinary curriculum and foster an expectation of community involvement. This is perhaps his biggest strength and I believe he personifies a sincere commitment to this recently emphasized philosophy in academic relevance.”

Reviewer C: “The strongest is the two chairs/train/video camera/projection piece. It is simply poetic and allows the viewer in.”

Reviewer D: “The installations function by ‘thinking about’ the place for which they are made, giving it mass, gravity, permanence and ultimately presence. It is a beautiful conjunction. I find Satoru’s work extraordinary, it evokes the processes of memory, the sense of discovery when traveling, and the strangeness of other worlds. Always with delicacy and great passion.”

Reviewer E: “The application documents a very positive and strong involvement regarding teaching and service to the university.”

Reviewer F: “Satoru’s thorough understanding of his chosen media allows him to incorporate their inherent characteristics to create pieces that appeal viscerally to the viewer, while suggesting deeper social and psychological meanings...I believe that Professor Takahashi’s strong talent and drive will continue to produce meaningful work that will significantly contribute to the contemporary discourse in art.”

Reviewer G: “In its inquiries, sensitivity to location and materials, language and visitor interaction, Mr. Takahashi’s work is consonant with that being made by notable artists, such as Ann Hamilton. He brings to students and colleagues at the University of Michigan an important international point of view – one that incorporates both his personal experience as a Japanese-born person in the United States, as well as his encounters with citizens in Germany, Chile and elsewhere.”

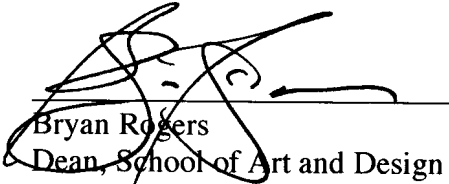
Reviewer H: “It is rare to find artists willing to combine the messiness of concrete experience, such as working with Alzheimer’s patients, with abstract forms and technical wizardry. I appreciate the range of sensory vocabulary, scales and spaces that Takahashi makes use of in ‘Trans Acting’ and see this kind of practice connected to contemporary understandings of art and audience.”

Reviewer I: “His thoughtful installations bring together an unexpected blend of sound video, light and materials, making the viewer more aware of the space that one is in and one’s own relationship to that space. In many instances, the installations trigger a recall which causes the viewer to reflect on his/her own experiences.”

Reviewer J: “I also appreciated his ability to collaborate with specialists in medial research that resulted in a convincing form of artistic expression. Needless to say, Professor Takahashi proved his high level of craftsmanship to manipulate various materials and media to the level of artistic expert in his installations.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Satoru Takahashi is a widely recognized artist and an influential teacher, one who possesses exemplary professional skills and a strong international exhibition record as well as excellent interactions with the local community. I strongly recommend Satoru Takahashi for promotion to associate professor of art and design, with tenure, School of Art and Design.


Bryan Rogers
Dean, School of Art and Design

May 2008