



## Okurimono The Gift

The Gift was designed to illustrate the relationship of the city of Fort Wayne and the city of Takaoka. The placement of the three elements of the trip-tic is significant. The sun is used as a unifying element. The sun, which brings life to the world, is setting in Fort Wayne as it is rising in Takaoka.

The images from Fort Wayne include; the old Fort, the city skyline, and a Great Blue Heron. The images from Takaoka include; two Cranes, a cherry tree, a bonsai tree, the large Buda, and the Zuiryu-ji Temple.

I chose the images for Fort Wayne in an effort to show our city from an historical perspective bridging the Old Fort to the modern skyline. The Heron

was chosen not just because herons just happen to be my favorite bird to watch, but because it represents the transition that Fort Wayne has gone through in the 27 years I have lived here. The heron population was decimated by uncontrolled use of pesticides, destruction of it's habitat and uncontrolled hunting, throughout the mid-west. With the enactment of environmental laws, work to restore and improve wetlands, and changes in attitudes, the heron is making a come back. When I first moved to the fort in 1981, the city was in the midst of a recession, many of the buildings and stores in the downtown area were boarded up, closed, or just abandoned. The city appeared to be dieing. We are now in the midst of a renaissance. The downtown growth is moving in a positive direction and Fort Wayne is re-emerging as a vibrant cultural center.

The images from Takaoka were chosen from discussions with a number of members of the Sister City Committee and many searches on the internet. The cranes are significant in Japanese culture as is the cherry blossom. Takaoka has the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest Buda in the world and the 541 year old Zuiryu-ji Temple is a national treasure.

The technique of combing sculpture and painting is something I have been developing since college. I have been greatly influenced by Asian Art, Chinese and Japanese paintings, Aboriginal Dreamtime paintings, and European Pointillism. In this work you will see a fusion of these techniques and others, that demonstrates my unique style.

It has been a true honor for me to have been chosen to create this piece celebrating Takaoka's 400<sup>th</sup> birthday. The name "The Gift" was chosen as a means to express our cities gift to the city of Takaoka as well as the gift it has been to me personally in creating it.