



Fumio Yoshimura / BICYCLES

I started to use wood because I wanted to make things very light so that they could be suspended in air. I think that wood is lighter than papier mâché, because that material has lots of glue in it. So that is the first reason that prompted me to use wood, but later on I realized that, particularly when I lived in Japan, I was surrounded by wood and even now, although I live in New York, I still am. When you take a train there's woods around you; when you open a box you smell the cedar. People are still using lots of wood in Japan, but the trouble is they have to import it from Canada. . . .

I used to make kites, so perhaps that's why my works must fly. And when I was making the kites, I used to pick up hoops from the street. And soon I was thinking, why not make wheels? I extended the wheel into the notion of a bicycle. So I made one bicycle, more bicycles until I had a group of them for my first exhibition. Marcel Duchamp bought one and encouraged me and I'm pretty sure that Mrs. Duchamp still has one of my kites. I once made a motorbike, but it has nothing to do with my bicycles — it's a floorpiece that weighs about twenty-five pounds. It took me four months to make it, which I consider very fast.

With my helper in New York, I can make one bicycle a month. Here because of the assistants, I've made five bicycles in six weeks and that's really incredible.

I am interested in the concept of fragility and strength. Something like a piece of field grass — delicate but very very strong. I am also concerned with craftsmanship and yet I can't even hammer my shelves straight at home. Everything I do comes from improvisation. I have an idea. I somehow manage it. That's all my secret is.

— FUMIO YOSHIMURA

