PAN
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VAN PRUISSEN ASIAN ART

Two fold screen 'Fudo Myo-o' by Tsuji Shiro (1932-2003)

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Japan, Showa period 56 ; 1981
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Tsuji Shiro (1932–2003) occupies a distinctive position within postwar Japanese art, forging a practice that united the centuries-old traditions of Inami woodcarving with the expressive ambitions of modern sculpture. Renowned for his monumental public commissions and his long association with the Japan Fine Arts Exhibition (Nitten), Tsuji developed a visual language grounded in the physicality of carving yet marked by an enduring fascination with the human spirit, the natural world, and Buddhist thought.

Born in Kanaya, Toyama Prefecture (now Tonami City), he trained under the Inami master woodcarver Ichiyama Gyokkō before studying with the influential sculptors Katō Kensei and Sawada Seikō. His rapid rise within Nitten established him among the leading sculptors of his generation, while his public works throughout Toyama Prefecture demonstrated an exceptional ability to reconcile traditional craftsmanship with a contemporary sculptural vocabulary.

The present two-fold screen depicting Fudō Myōō offers a rare insight into a less familiar aspect of Tsuji's artistic practice. Here, the sculptor's understanding of mass and presence is translated into an arresting pictorial language, where decisive brushwork and emphatic contour are animated by an unexpectedly luminous palette of saturated blues, vivid pinks, brilliant yellows, and velvety black. Rather than adhering to conventional iconography, Tsuji reimagines the Wisdom King through colour as much as form, endowing the deity with an immediacy and psychological intensity that transcend devotional representation. The screen reveals an artist equally attuned to the expressive possibilities of painting, demonstrating how the principles that informed his sculpture—volume, rhythm, and spiritual force—could find compelling expression on paper.

Measurements: 176 cm x 170 cm

Provenance: private Japanese collection