

Totem Pole by Fujito Yukio

A 6.6-meter-tall totem pole was carved by Fujito Yukio (b. 1949) in 2023.

It recreates the design of an earlier totem pole carved in 1979 by Ainu artist Sunazawa Bikky (1931–1989) to commemorate the former museum director Kawamura Kaneto (1893–1977).

The original totem pole was 10 meters tall and stood outside the museum until it was toppled by a typhoon in 2004. Sunazawa Bikky designed the pole but asked other Ainu woodcarvers to help create the work so that it would be a collaborative project.

The carved motifs on both the original and the new totem poles reflect Ainu spirituality. At the top is an owl, the *kamuy* (spirit-deity) that protects the Ainu village. Below it is the symbol of the Kawamura family: a stylized orca's dorsal fin. A dugout canoe frames two key figures—a bear's head, representing the *kamuy* of the mountains, and an orca, the *kamuy* of the

seas. Photographs of the original totem pole are displayed alongside

Fujito's replacement.