



CRITICS' PICKS TOKYO

## Manabu Ikeda

Mizuma Art Gallery

Mizuma Art Gallery | 3-13 Ichigayatamachi Shinjuku-ku 2F Kagura Bldg.

July 26, 2017 - September 9, 2017

By Emily Wakeling ☞



Manabu Ikeda, *Rebirth*, 2013–16, pen, acrylic, and watercolor on paper mounted on board, 10 x 13'.

Produced during a residency at the Chazen Museum of Art in Madison, Wisconsin, Manabu Ikeda's *Rebirth*, 2013–16, is the artist's largest drawing to date. It took Ikeda a little more than three excruciating years to complete this work depicting volatile waves crashing into a precariously perched cherry blossom tree. *Rebirth* is being exhibited here after traveling to the Saga Prefectural Art Museum in the artist's hometown—where it drew a record number of visitors—and the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa. One of the attractions of the piece is its visual acrobatics: Where you expect to see blooming flowers, for example, there are bunches of tents wrapped along a gigantic tree branch.

The tents, and many other small details, are a reference to the March 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami that destroyed Japan's northeastern coastal regions. In the disasters' aftermath, many survivors moved into temporary housing, and even more were left shocked and psychologically vulnerable. The drawing evokes their emotional and physical experiences, such as impending violence, destruction, escape, and, as the title optimistically suggests, renewal. At nearly ten by thirteen feet, Ikeda's work is large enough, and so enriched with detail, to leave viewers in awe. They're impressed not only by the artist's talents and his labor, but also by the insignificance of humans compared to the grand scale of nature.