

Press Release

Washi Transformed: New Expressions in Japanese Paper Opens at Mingei International Museum on October 14, 2023

Exhibition Dates: October 14, 2023 - January 7, 2024

Download exhibition images [HERE](#).

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August 28, 2023 – San Diego, CA – Mingei International Museum is thrilled to announce [***Washi Transformed: New Expressions in Japanese Paper***](#), which will be on view from October 14, 2023, through January 7, 2024. For over 1,000 years, Japan has produced some of the world’s finest paper, using strong natural fibers and exceptional production techniques passed down through the generations. Japanese handmade paper, known as washi (和紙) is still made in some areas of Japan and used in painting, calligraphy, origami and other traditional art forms. This exhibition features work by nine contemporary Japanese artists: Hina Aoyama, Eriko Horiki, Kyoko Ibe, Yoshio Ikezaki, Kakuko Ishii, Yuko Kimura, Yuko Nishimura, Takaaki Tanaka and Ayomi Yoshida.

Washi Transformed presents over 30 highly textured two-dimensional works, expressive sculptures and dramatic installations that explore the astonishing potential of this traditional medium. In this exhibition, nine Japanese artists embrace the seemingly infinite possibilities of washi, underscoring the unique stature this ancient art form has earned in the realm of international contemporary art. The breathtaking creativity of these artistic visionaries deepens our understanding of how the past informs the present, and how it can build lasting cultural bridges out of something as seemingly simple and ephemeral as paper.

“These nine contemporary Japanese artists are revisiting their nation’s traditional material and elevating it into a medium for expressive and often spectacular works of art,” says Meher McArthur.

Recently, contemporary Japanese artists have been turning to this supple yet sturdy material, using it as a medium for creating highly textured two-dimensional works, complex sculptures and dramatic installations. Employing techniques ranging from layering, weaving and dying, to twisting, folding and cutting, these artists demonstrate the endless contemporary applications of this ancient material.

Like many of the works made by known and unknown makers in Mingei International Museum’s permanent collection, the artists in ***Washi Transformed*** take an everyday material and make it extraordinary. The notion of creating beauty from an everyday object is at the heart of the Museum and this exhibition expands the understanding of what paper is and can be.

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Washi Transformed: New Expressions in Japanese Paper was organized by Meher McArthur and is toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C.



ABOUT MINGEI INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM

Located in San Diego's Balboa Park, Mingei International Museum collects, preserves and exhibits folk art, craft and design from all eras and cultures of the world. Within a newly reopened facility that includes an education center, theater, shop, restaurant and plenty of free, accessible public space, the Museum offers inspiring exhibitions and diverse community and educational programs to more than 100,000 visitors a year. As the presenter of [San Diego Design Week](#) and a partner to over 50 local artists and art and cultural organizations, Mingei puts celebrating creativity at the core of its mission through workshops, film festivals, lectures and more. Mingei is a nonprofit institution funded by admission, individuals, and institutional support.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Meher McArthur is the Art & Cultural Director of Japan House, Los Angeles, and a curator and historian of Japanese art. She curated the IA&A traveling exhibitions *Folding Paper: The Infinite Possibilities of Origami* (2012-2016) and *Above the Fold: New Expressions in Contemporary Origami* (2015 -2020) and co-curated *Nature, Tradition and Innovation: Japanese Ceramics from the Gordon Brodfuehrer Collection* (2016-2019). McArthur received an MA in Japanese Studies from Cambridge University; a postgraduate diploma in Asian Art from Sotheby's School of Oriental Studies (SOAS), London University; and an MA in Art and Archaeology from SOAS, London University.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ARTS & ARTISTS

International Arts & Artists in Washington, DC, is a non-profit arts service organization dedicated to increasing cross-cultural understanding and exposure to the arts internationally, through exhibitions, programs and services to artists, arts institutions and the public.

IA&A is proud to collaborate for a fourth time with Meher McArthur, curator of successful IA&A traveling exhibitions *Folding Paper: The Infinite Possibilities of Origami* (2012-2016) and *Above the Fold: New Expressions in Contemporary Origami Art* (2015-2020); and co-curator of *Nature, Tradition and Innovation: Japanese Ceramics from the Gordon Brodfuehrer Collection* (2016-2019).