

The Adachi Foundation for the Preserving of Woodcut Printing

As of December, 2025

Annual Commemorative Prints 2025-2026

1. Hanae Nakajima, “*Blue Beneath the Surface*”

Prize Winner, The Adachi Contemporary Ukiyo-e Award 2023

Produced in 2025 / Exclusively Released for Supporting Members

<Words from the Artist>

Bound to life on land, I have always felt a sense of longing for fish that swim freely in the mysterious world beneath the water. As they glide through the water, reflecting light off their scales and moving their frill-like fins, they appear almost like figures dressed in exotic garments. For this reason, I create original human figures by combining costumes with motifs that evoke the underwater world and fish—such as whirlpools, waves, and scales.

For me, my works represent both a form of “longing” and a “mirror” that reflects my own inner conflicts. By surrendering myself to emotional shifts like the movement of waves, I hope to continue creating my work.

<About Hanae Nakajima>

Born in Tokyo in 1997. Began producing artwork in earnest in 2016. Drawing on images of the underwater world, she depicts figures wearing enigmatic costumes that seem to belong to no specific era or country. After graduating from university in 2019, she participated in Art Fair Tokyo (at the Kiyoshi Art Space booth) and held her first solo exhibition at Ittōan Gallery in Ginza. Her work was featured in *Bijinga-zukushi Vol. 3* (Geijutsu Shinbunsha) in 2021, and in 2024 she appeared on the BS Fuji television program *Break Zenya: Next-Generation Artists*.

*Instagram https://www.instagram.com/hanae_nakajima/

2. Carmen Ng, “*Neighborhood*”

Prize Winner, The Adachi Contemporary Ukiyo-e Award 2024

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<Words from the Artist>

After visiting an ukiyo-e exhibition in Japan, I became captivated by its beauty and developed a strong interest in this medium. This technique, achieved through the layering of colors, possesses a transparency quite similar to watercolor painting, which sparked my curiosity about the potential effects of combining different techniques. My artwork is inspired by the environment in which I once lived. The regular lines convey a sense of rational beauty, while subtle details reveal individuality. Although human figures are not directly depicted, their presence is suggested through window frame designs, hanging laundry, and potted plants. While residents may not interact often, these small details convey a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere.

<About Carmen Ng>

Carmen Ng is a painter based in Hong Kong whose works have been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including Art Central and Fine Art Asia. She specializes in watercolor painting and illustration. Her works can be found in local communities, galleries, published illustrated books, and through collaborations with various brands. She is also actively involved in public art education, participating in community art activities that encourage public engagement.

Ng works primarily with watercolor on paper, embracing repeated fine lines and balanced compositions. During her university studies in Visual Art, she was exposed to both Eastern meticulous painting and Western watercolor techniques. Noticing similarities between the two, she combines these approaches to explore new possibilities within traditional painting styles while also experimenting with diverse textural effects.

*Website <https://www.carmen-ng.com/>

*Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/carmenng.art/>

3. Ikko Tanaka, "*Rope: Forest*"

Ikko Tanaka, one of Japan's leading designers, created numerous works characterized by their concise expression, leaving a lasting impact on contemporary Japanese design. This piece is part of the woodcut print series "The Rope," produced in 1979. The rope design, inspired by traditional Japanese knotting (musubi), is an iconic motif that Tanaka repeatedly explored, particularly in the 1970s. His refined sense of color and precise, minimalist compositions evoke the elegance of ukiyo-e, embodying the beauty of simplicity through omission.

<About Ikko Tanaka>

Born in 1930 in Nara City, he graduated from the Kyoto Municipal College of Art (now Kyoto City University of Arts). After working for Kanebō Spinning and the Sankei Shimbun, he joined Light Publicity. In 1960, he participated in the founding of the Nippon Design Center, and in 1963, he established the Ikko Tanaka Design Studio. Tanaka achieved international acclaim through a wide range of projects, including the exhibition design for the Government Pavilion at Expo '70 in Osaka, planning and designing for the Sapporo Winter Olympics, and the "Japan Style" exhibition in London. He passed away in 2002.

4. Kitagawa Utamaro, "*The Passionate Type - Ten Physiognomic Aspects of Women -*"

This print is one design from *Ten Physiognomic Aspects of Women*, a landmark series by Kitagawa Utamaro, who rose to prominence as the leading master of bijinga during the golden age of ukiyo-e. Published under the direction of the renowned Edo-period publisher Tsutaya Juzaburo, the series represents Utamaro's ambitious attempt to depict subtle variations in female physiognomy.

Here, a woman fresh from her bath turns back gently, one hand resting on the towel draped over her shoulder. This seemingly casual gesture, paired with her tender and charming expression, is rendered with sensual elegance, fully demonstrating Utamaro's extraordinary powers of observation. The background is printed with white mica, lending a soft radiance that further enhances the beauty of the figure.

5. Toshusai Sharaku, *“The Actor Ichikawa Komazo III as Shiga Daishichi”*

This work is based on Katakuchi Noriai Banashi (A Tale of a Shared Vendetta), a kabuki play performed at the Kiri-za Theater in May 1794 (Kansei 6). It depicts Shiga Daishichi, a role played by the celebrated villain specialist Ichikawa Komazo III. The drama centers on the sisters Miyagino and Shinobu, who seek revenge for the murder of their father, Matsushita Mikinoshin; Daishichi appears as their adversary.

This print is believed to portray the moment of confrontation between Mikinoshin and Daishichi. The fingers gripping the hilt of the sword subtly convey Daishichi’s cold and ruthless nature. Rendered in the okubi-e (large-head portrait) format, showing only the upper body against a background printed with black mica, the work stands out as one of the finest examples among the 28 celebrated okubi-e portraits by Toshusai Sharaku.

6. Utagawa Hiroshige, *“The Noted Tea house at Mariko - Fifty-three stations of the Tokaido road - Later state”*

Among the many series by Utagawa Hiroshige, The Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido—depicting the post stations along the route from Nihonbashi in Edo to Kyoto—enjoys particular popularity. The Hoeido edition published in 1833 (Tenpo 4) is especially renowned for its richly evocative seasonal imagery, comprising a total of 55 designs.

This print depicts a teahouse at Mariko, a post station famous for its tororo-jiru (grated yam soup). Reminiscent of a haiku by Basho, plum blossoms begin to open at the shopfront, while a pale pink sky conveys the gentle atmosphere of early spring. Within this series, seven designs are known in later states; this print is one of them.

The place name, originally written as “Mariko,” was later revised to “Mariko (鞠子).”

7. Katsushika Hokusai, *“Senju in the Musashi Province - Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji - ”*

This print is one design from Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji, the celebrated series by Katsushika Hokusai, and depicts a view from Senju, which prospered as the first post station on both the Nikko Kaido and the Oshu Kaido highways. Located upstream along the Sumida River, Senju was said to offer a view of Mount Fuji from the point where the Arakawa and Ayase Rivers converge.

In this work, Hokusai vividly portrays a packhorse driver (mago) pausing from his labor to gaze at Mount Fuji. The water gate placed in the foreground forms a striking geometric composition, guiding the viewer’s eye through its openings toward the distant peak. This compositional device heightens the visual impact of Mount Fuji, further emphasizing its quiet yet commanding presence.

8. Utagawa Hiroshige, *“Camellias and Sparrows in Snow”*

In the early Tenpo era (c. 1830–1832), Utagawa Hiroshige produced many refined bird-and-flower prints in the elongated ō-tanzaku vertical format, often accompanied by poetic inscriptions. This work depicts two sparrows at play among camellia blossoms softly covered with snow. The contrast between the pure white snow—expressed through the natural tone of the washi paper—and the vivid red of the camellia flowers is strikingly

beautiful. The feathers of the sparrows are further enhanced with Karazuri Embossing Printing, in which the block is printed without pigment to create subtle relief on the paper.

The accompanying inscription reads:

烏鳶争食雀争窠 独立池边风雪多

Crows and kites contend for scraps;

sparrows quarrel over their nests.

Standing alone by the pond,

I face a world of wind and falling snow.

Written in classical Chinese, the poem contrasts scenes of restless struggle with an image of quiet solitude. This interplay between agitation and stillness deepens the poetic resonance of the composition, echoing the gentle yet resilient presence of the sparrows amid the snow-laden camellia blossoms.

The Sixty-Nine Stations of the Kisokaidō was originally initiated by Keisai Eisen but was later taken over and completed by Hiroshige. This particular piece is regarded as one of the series' masterpieces, showcasing Hiroshige's meticulous work in the depiction of snow, the delicate branches of pines, and the gradation of the mountains. His unique sense of lyricism is vividly expressed throughout the composition.

The falling snow against the night sky is skillfully rendered using the natural white of the washi paper and white pigment (gofun). Both people and horses silently endure the cold as they traverse the snow-covered path. This work, capturing a serene and silent world, stands as a quintessential example of Hiroshige's mature period.