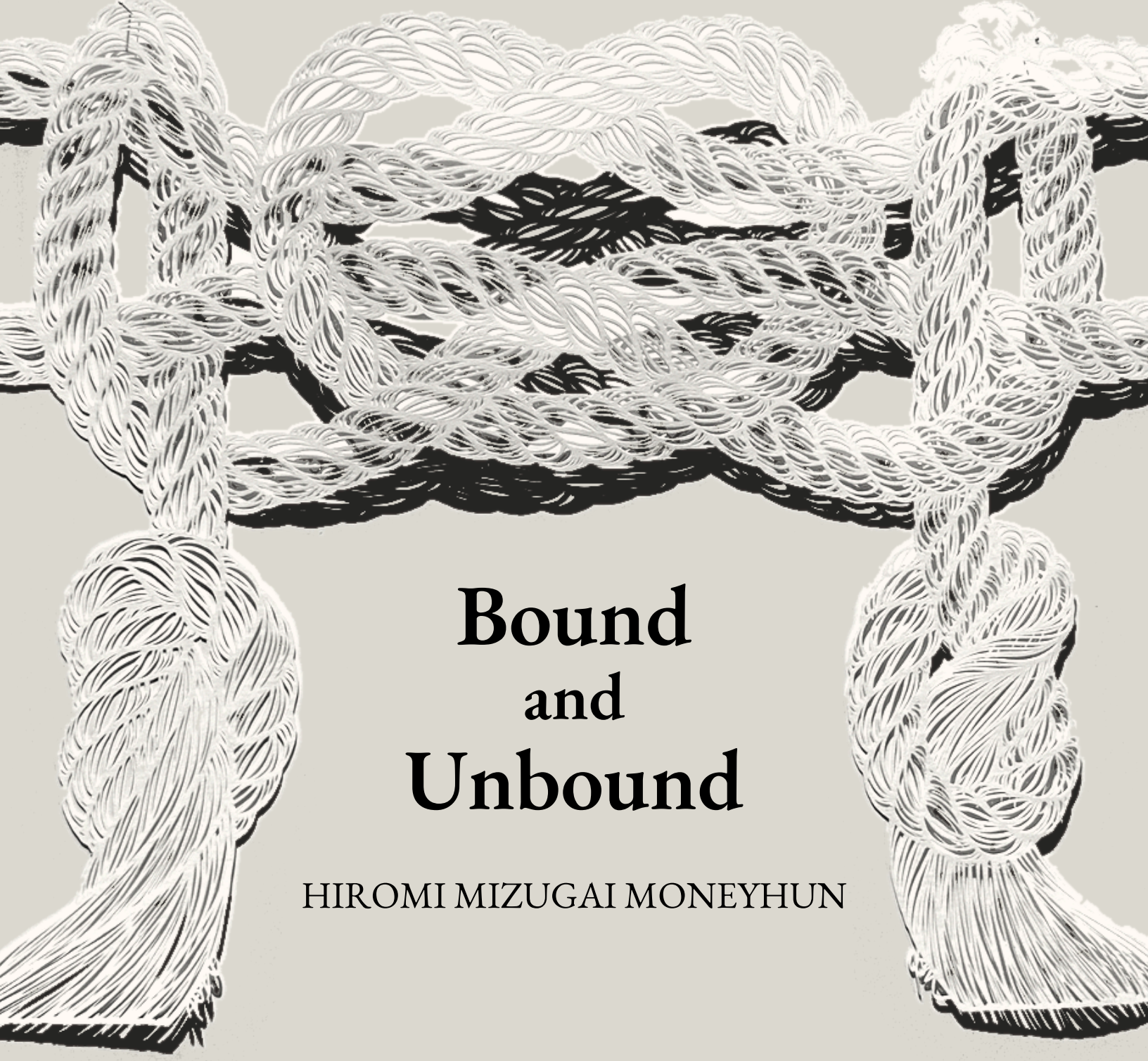


Bound and Unbound

HIROMI MIZUGAI MONEYHUN

Eli Klein Gallery
398 West Street
New York, NY 10014

November 14, 2026 – January 23, 2027

In the Beginning, Woman Was Truly the Sun

By Aaron Levi Garvey – Director of the Art Museum of West Virginia University

In the early decades of the 20th century, Japan found itself in a pivotal moment of transition with the end of the Meiji Era and the start of the Taishō period. Rapid industrialization, changes in the political landscape and with the growth of Western influence the country began to establish itself as an international presence. Simultaneously it negotiated the relationship between its traditional cultural heritage and the demands of an ever-evolving modern life. During the Taishō period new forms of expression through arts and culture began to take shape as urbanization and industrialization grew. Artists, designers, writers, and intellectuals began exploring the intersection of Japanese traditions and international modernity through experimentation in painting, architecture, fashion, decorative arts and literature. While experimentation grew in other artforms, artists working in traditional Japanese art making methodologies such as printmaking, kirigami and origami pushed the boundaries of visual expression.

Parallel to the dynamic growth and experimentation in artforms, traditional societal norms were also growing and morphing. Attitudes toward gender roles and women's participation in public life began to challenge traditional conventions. This led to the founding of the Seitō (Bluestocking) movement and magazine of the same name. Seitō magazine was first published in September 1911, during the closing years of the Meiji era, before the Taishō period began in July 1912 and challenged the traditional roles that women held within Japanese society and provided a platform for discussions of women's autonomy, identity, and place within Japanese society. The questions raised by these early movements from over a century ago remain relevant today and broader conversations about gender, cultural expectations, and the structures that shape women's lives have equally grown and evolved to our current times. The title of this essay echoes Hiratsuka Raichō's opening declaration in the inaugural issue of Seitō.

This historical and cultural context provides an important backdrop for considering the work of artist Hiromi Mizugai Moneyhun. Born and raised in Kyoto, Japan, Moneyhun's relationship to the country's cultural traditions and social expectations is deeply personal, informing her exploration of the complex position of women within Japanese society. Self-taught in the tradition of kirie papercutting, with early guidance from her grandparents, Moneyhun's recent works create a visual language that references traditional Shibari binding techniques alongside her own experiences of cultural displacement and personal transformation. Moneyhun creates intricate paper-cut compositions that consider the relationship between constraint and freedom, vulnerability and strength, and tradition and self-determination.

At the heart of Moneyhun's practice is an ongoing examination of how a woman's persona, labor, body and overall has been something that has historically been shaped, controlled, and manipulated by external forces. Moneyhun draws an interesting comparison between this restraint and the traditional practice of bonsai cultivation by recalling the contorting and maneuvering of a living form's natural growth to achieve a desired aesthetic. The parallel between the restriction of natural growth and the ways in which women have been shaped by traditional societal expectations builds an articulate comparison through Moneyhun's work. Moneyhun posits that Japanese women have been contorted into traditional ideals of domestic responsibility, modesty, obedience, and the preservation of social harmony and counterbalances them through a contemporary lens of her own visual vernacular. Of course, while this has evolved immensely over time, the influence of these expectations often remains enmeshed within cultural attitudes toward femininity and women's roles within the family and society, and it wasn't until Moneyhun had moved to the United States that she was able to reflect with an outside perspective on the traditional roles that were imposed upon women in Japan.

Moneyhun's broader body of work can be considered alongside the historical context of Japanese feminist thought and the continuing conversations surrounding women's representation, autonomy, and the preservation and/or the reinvention of cultural traditions. Moneyhun does not seek to illustrate a particular historical movement within her work but rather she engages with questions that have occupied generations of women navigating the relationship between individual identity and societal expectations. Early on in her studio practice, Moneyhun would frequently create works that depicted women entangled within male-dominated structures or systems, while her more recent compositions suggest a movement toward an unraveling of the old guard. The figures within her works often appear to rise and float, as though moving through water or sky, finding new possibilities beyond the structures that once confined them. These gestures of elevation and release suggest not simply departure, but the reclamation of one's own identity and the freedom to forge one's own path without reservation.

The artist’s relationship to paper is also deeply personal, as she grew up with her grandparents who worked as tailors and taught her the value of working with her hands and attention to fine detail. They taught her origami and kirie at a very young age, but it was kirie that would have the most profound impact on her. Coupled with an early encounter with the work of Jirō Takidaira in the children's book Mochi-Mochi no Ki (also known in English as The Tree of Courage) Moneyhun immediately saw the potential of kirie as a means of visual storytelling.

Despite being historically related, origami and kirigami offer distinct and often intricate approaches to the transformation of paper. Origami primarily uses only folding to create forms while Kirigami utilizes a subtractive practice with the use of cutting and the removal of material as an essential element of the process. Within Kirigami, what is removed is nearly as important as what remains and allows the artist to establish intricate relationships between positive and negative space. In Moneyhun's kirie practice, this distinction takes on a conceptual significance as form emerges not only through what is preserved or shaped, but also through what is removed. She creates unfathomably detailed and intricate compositions that push the boundaries of one’s own understanding of what is possible with a single sheet of paper. The resulting compositions suggest the possibility of breaking away from inherited structures while maintaining a sense of tradition to create a world of new spaces, identities and cultural progress.

In her earliest kirie works, Moneyhun frequently depicted images of her daughter, establishing an intimate connection between the medium, motherhood, the female body and the visual representation of concepts behind mother nature and that the natural world is that of one that creates. In her earliest pieces one can find an interest in the natural world as a source of creation, growth and evolution. Moneyhun often sees visual representations of human forms within the landscape around her and draws inspiration from trees, waterways, and other organic structures, and within her work seeks to highlight that they not only create life but also sustain it as does a mother. Through her observations within nature, she has identified a relationship between the female body and the natural world that suggests a concept of femininity that exists beyond prescribed cultural identities and is instead rooted in intersections and growth of all living things. These personal histories and musings within nature, alongside the loss of her mother at a young age provide an additional emotional dimension to her engagement with memory and the passage of lineal traditions. As she dives deeper into the histories of her past, she has also introduced new bodies of work that offer new metaphors for reflection within her own visual vocabulary.

While Moneyhun still creates works with her family and friends as subjects, her recent works delve into the Japanese binding traditions of shibari and kinbaku, the practices of rope tying that developed from older Japanese systems of restraint or decorative binding and evolved over time into a distinct form of visual expression during the twentieth century. Moneyhun's new body of works invites viewers to consider the historic associations rope and knotting have carried in relation to authority, control, and restraint, and suggests an alternative understanding of binding as something that can be transformed and ultimately overcome. Further inspiration is drawn from shimenawa, sacred ceremonial ropes used in Shinto practices, a distinct tradition from shibari and kinbaku, to mark hallowed spaces and signify purification to establish boundaries between the ordinary and the sacred. Moneyhun masterfully creates her own sets of knots and bindings through cut paper, noting that her knotting can have the dual roles as a release of the past and a spiritually sacred purifier for the future. Moneyhun channels sentiments of renewal, protection, and good fortune within her creation of a visual representation and introduces a different understanding of rope, rather than an instrument of confinement, she guides it to become a symbol of protection, continuity, and the possibility of beginning anew.

Ultimately, Moneyhun's recent work considers what it means to inherit cultural traditions without being bound by their expectations as one settles into their life. Through her delicate and precise mastery of kirie, Moneyhun has created a broad symbolic vernacular based upon the female body, architecture, rope and the organic forms of the natural world. She has transformed the simplest of materials associated with structure and restraint into expressions of movement and liberation. Her oeuvre acknowledges both historical and cultural forces that have shaped the lives of women, while simultaneously refusing to accept those traditional structures as permanent. What emerges from her sheets of paper–slice by slice and cut by cut–are a group of images that underscore and define femininity not by conformity or external control but by resilience and the enduring journey of self-determination. In this way, Moneyhun's work occupies a space between tradition and reinvention, between the weight of inherited expectations and the possibilities of the future. Her paper-cut figures do not simply escape the structures that surround them but find ways to grow beyond them. Like the moth emerging through metamorphosis, her works suggest that profound transformation often begins and takes place in the areas that remain unseen.



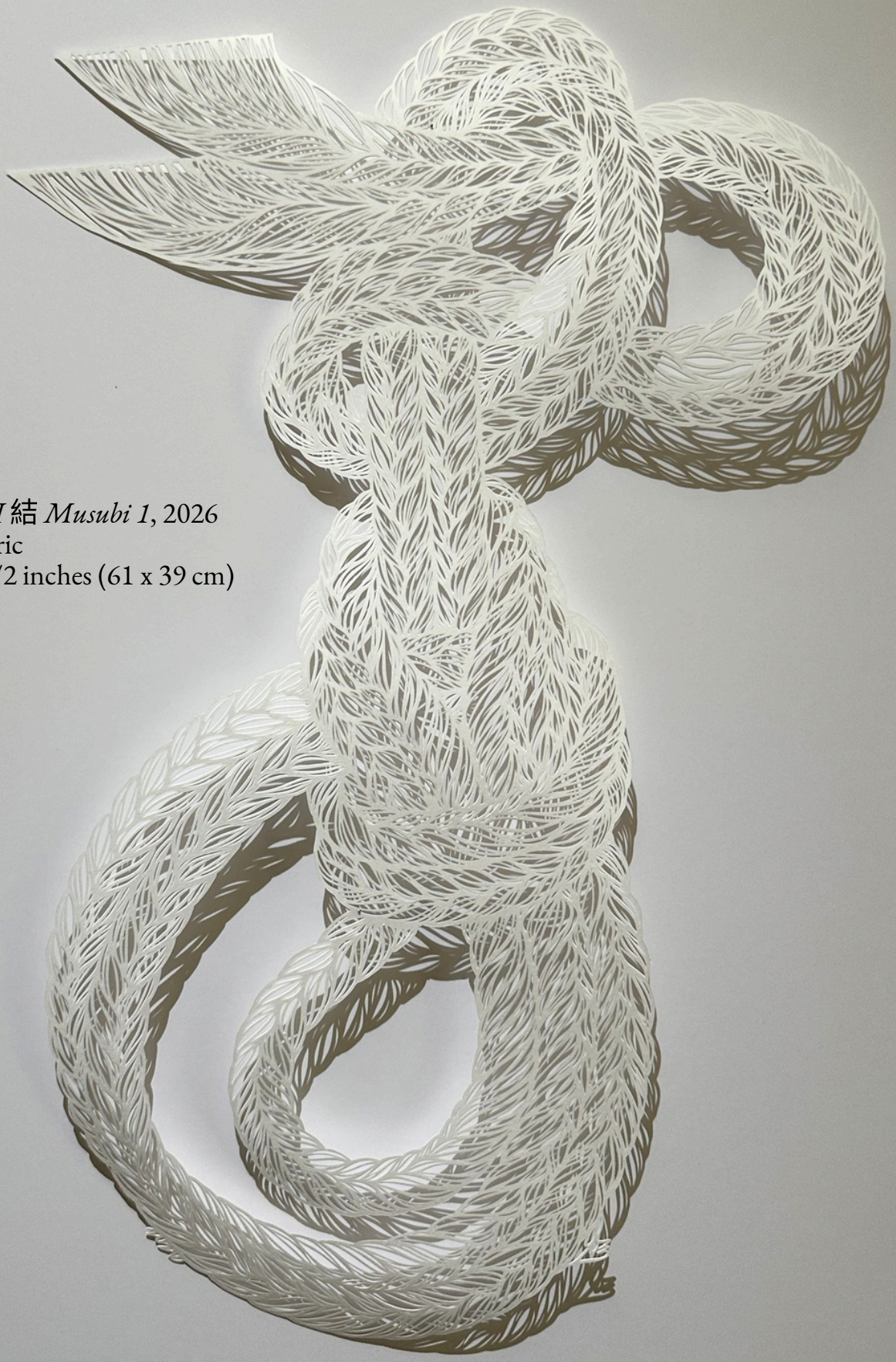
Born in 1977 in Kyoto, Japan, **Hiromi Mizugai Moneyhun** is a self-taught artist whose work centers around the creation of Kirie (Japanese for hand-cut paper). Beginning with freehand drawings, Hiromi cuts Kirie by hand, through a process that often takes weeks or even months to complete. Her style seamlessly merges traditional Japanese art forms with the contemporary sensibilities found in Japan's bustling metropolises, and is renowned for its intricacy and unwavering commitment to exacting standards.

Moneyhun's solo exhibitions include *Paper Cosmologies: Hiromi Mizugai Moneyhun's Floating*, The Frank Museum of Art, Otterbein University, Westerville, Ohio (2026); *Hiromi Mizugai Moneyhun: Floating Worlds*, the Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami (2025); *Project Atrium: Yūrei (Ghosts),* Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville, Florida (2023); *Paper Thin & Shadow Deep: Hiromi Mizugai Moneyhun's Cut Paper Art,* Appleton Museum of Art, Ocala, Florida (2022); *Inside Out*, Cathedral Arts Project, Jacksonville, Florida (2019); *Shadows of the Floating World: Paper Cuts by Hiromi,* Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, Delray Beach, Florida (2016); Under the Rose at Florida Mining Gallery, Jacksonville, Florida (2014); and *UKIYO: The Floating World*, Kent Gallery, Florida State College, Jacksonville, Florida (2013).

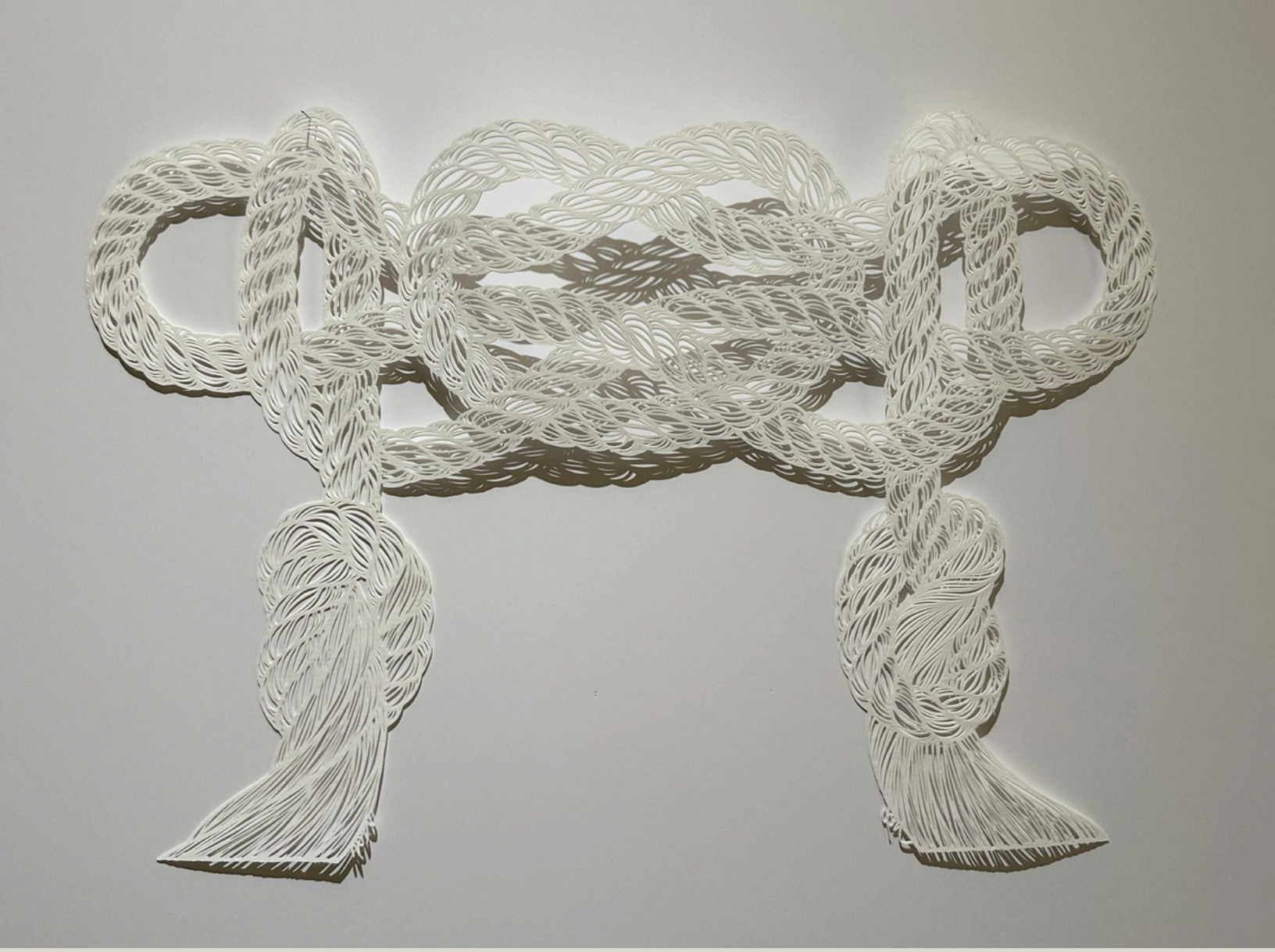
Her selected institutional group exhibitions include *2025 Award Finalists*: *Jax Contemporary: MOCA Jacksonville Arts Triennial,* Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville, Florida (2025); *Material World: Transcending the Object in Collage & Assemblage Works from the Permanent Collection*, Orlando Museum of Art, Florida (2025); *Beyond the Wall: Visions of the Asian Experience in America*, Morikami Museum, Delray Beach, Florida (2022); *The Florida Prize in Contemporary Art*, Orlando Museum of Art, Florida (2022); *Art Ventures 30th Anniversary Exhibition*, Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, Jacksonville, Florida (2021); *Nameless Now,* Crisp-Ellert Art Museum, Flagler College, St. Augustine, Florida (2020); *Pierce, Mark, Morph*, Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami (2016); and *State of the Art: Discovering A*merican Art Now, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas (2014).

Moneyhun has been the recipient of multiple grants and awards, including the Honorable Mention, Society 1858 Prize for Contemporary Southern Art at the Gibbes Museum of Art (2023), the People's Choice Award of The Florida Prize in Contemporary Art at the Orlando Museum of Art (2022) and an Art Ventures Grant from The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida (2015). She participated in the Long Road Projects + Erie Arts & Culture residency in Erie, Pennsylvania (2020). Her work has been collected by public institutions including Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Orlando Museum of Art.

Hiromi Mizugai Moneyhun currently lives and works in Jacksonville Beach, Florida.



SHIBARI 結 *Musubi 1*, 2026
Paper fabric
24 x 15 1/2 inches (61 x 39 cm)



SHIBARI 結 *Musubi 2*, 2026
Paper fabric
14 1/2 x 21 1/2 inches (37 x 55 cm)

SHIBARI 結 *Musubi 3*, 2026
Paper fabric
21 x 15 inches (53 x 38 cm)





SHIBARI 7, 2026
Synthetic paper on wood
22 x 16 inches (56 x 41 cm)

SHIBARI 8, 2026
Synthetic paper on wood
22 x 13 inches (56 x 33 cm)





SHIBARI 9, 2026
Synthetic paper on wood
21 x 18 inches (53 x 46 cm)

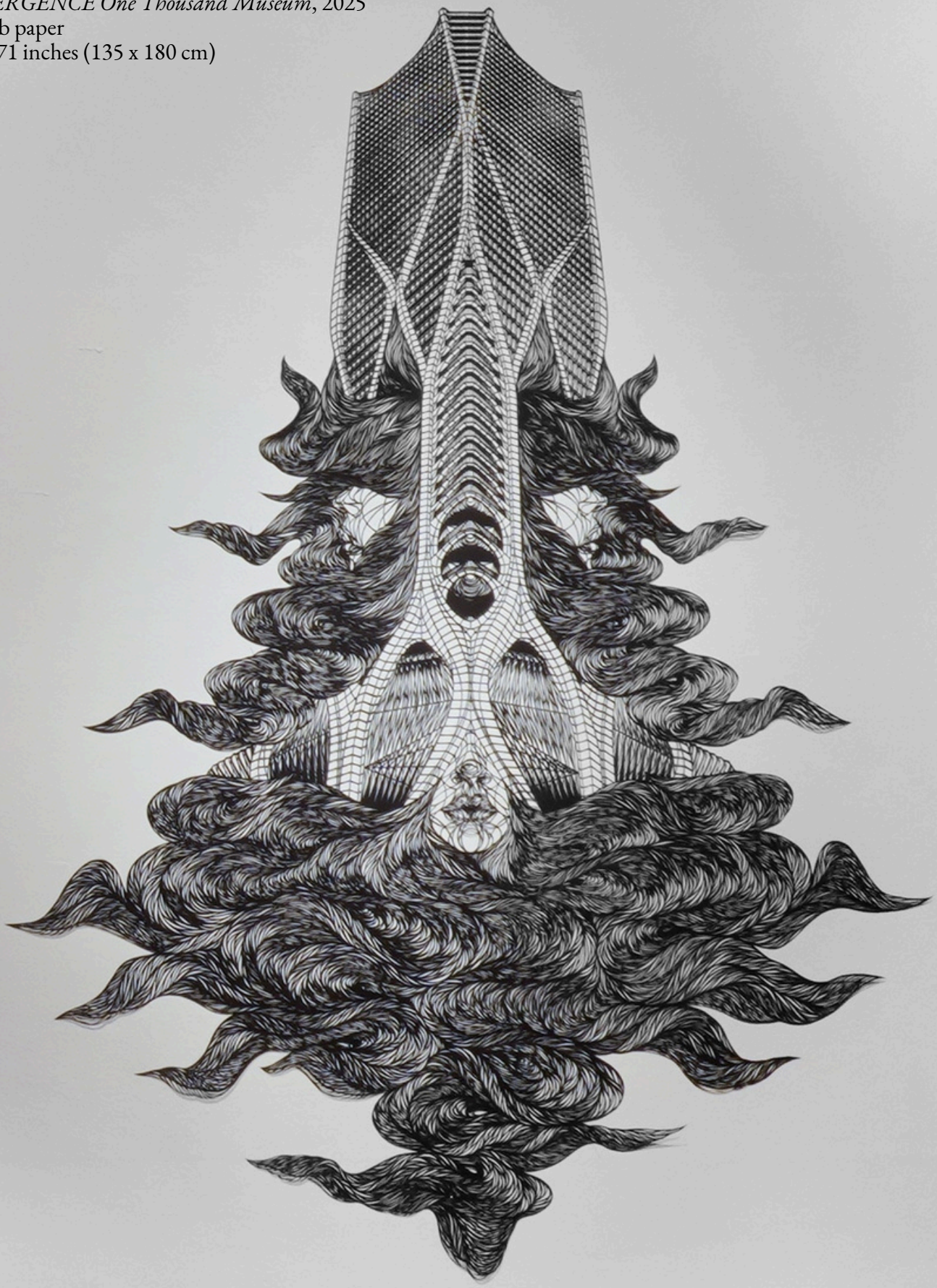


YUREI #3, 2025
Synthetic paper, wire
50 x 70 x 4 inches (127 x 178 x 10 cm)



SHIBARI Threshold 3, 2025
Synthetic paper, wood
68 x 33 inches (173 x 84 cm)

EMERGENCE One Thousand Museum, 2025
100 lb paper
53 x 71 inches (135 x 180 cm)





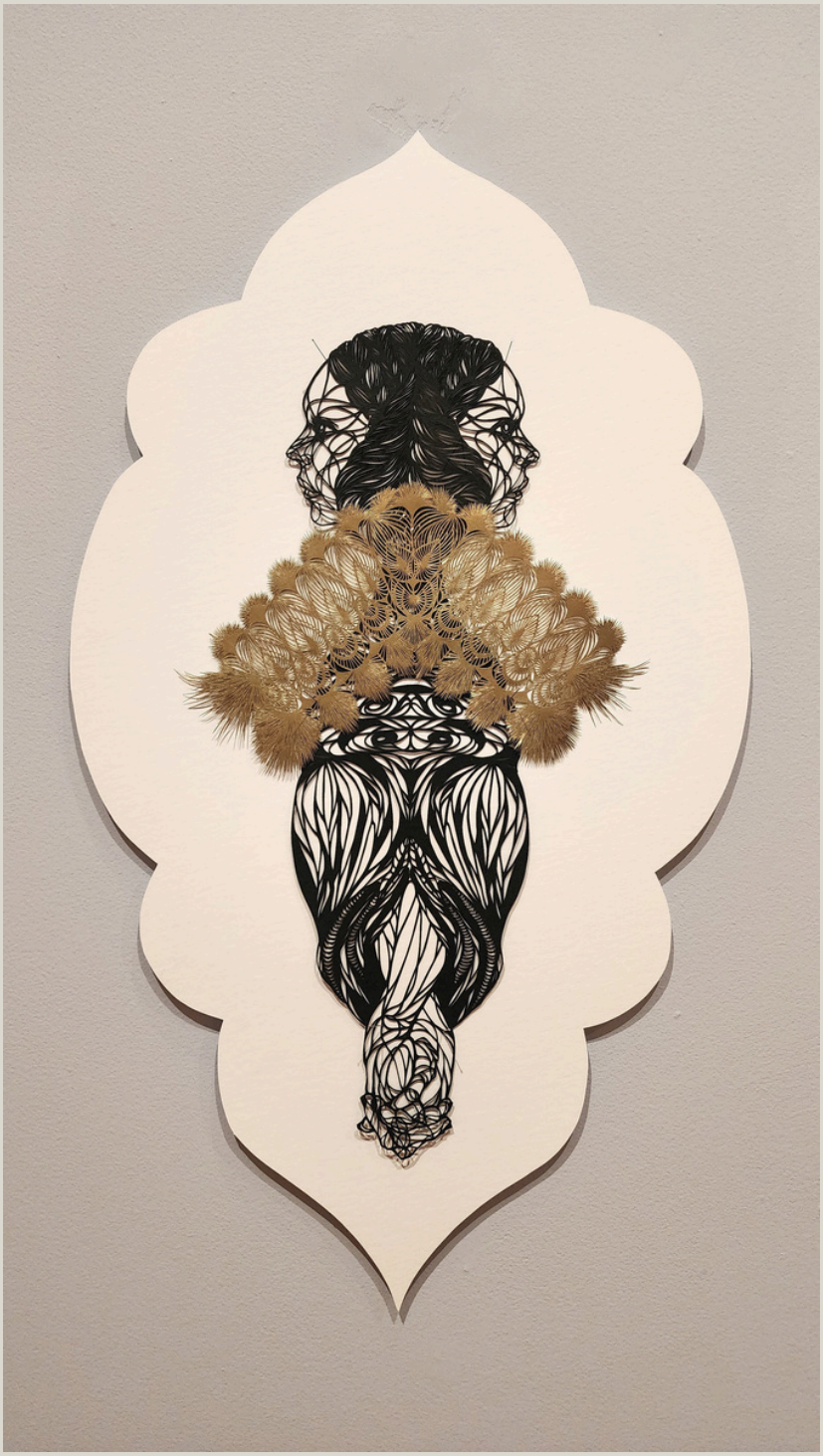
Garden Variety, 2026
98 lb paper, synthetic paper, acrylic paint
42 x 24 inches (107 x 61 cm)



EMERGENCE Suwa Taisha, 2022
100 lb paper, wood, acrylic paint
86 x 64 inches (218 x 163 cm)



Untitled 1, 2025
98 lb paper, synthetic paper, acrylic paint
33 x 18 inches (84 x 46 cm)



Untitled 2, 2025
98 lb paper, synthetic paper, acrylic paint
26 x 16 inches (66 x 41 cm)

CURRICULUM VITAE

Hiromi Mizugai Moneyhun

Born 1977 in Kyoto, Japan. Lives and works in Jacksonville Beach, Florida.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2026

Paper Cosmologies: Hiromi Mizugai Moneyhun's Floating Worlds, The Frank Museum of Art, OH

2025

Hiromi Mizugai Moneyhun: Floating Worlds, Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, FL

2023

Project Atrium: 幽霊 *Yūrei (Ghosts)*, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Jacksonville, FL
SHIBARI, The Corner Gallery, FL

2022

Paper Thin & Shadow Deep: Hiromi Mizugai Moneyhun's Cut Paper Art, FL

2019

Inside Out, Heather Moore Gallery, FL

2016

Shadows of the Floating World: Paper Cuts by Hiromi Moneyhun, Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, FL

Hiromi Mizugai Moneyhun, Beaches Museum & History Park, FL

2014

Under the Rose, Florida Mining Gallery, FL

2013

UKIYO: The Floating World, Kent Gallery, FL

2012

Hiromi Mizugai Moneyhun, Jacksonville International Airport, FL

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2027

Becoming, Harn Museum of Art, FL

2026

Art in Bloom, Cummer Museum of Art, FL

2025

2025 Award Finalists: Jax Contemporary, MOCA Jacksonville, FL
Project Atrium: Muralists in Action (contributing artist), MOCA Jacksonville, FL

Material World: Transcending the Object in Collage & Assemblage Works from the Permanent Collection, Orlando Museum of Art, FL

Jax Contemporary: MOCA Jacksonville Arts Triennial, MOCA Jacksonville, FL

2024

Coined in the South: 2024, Mint Museum Uptown, NC

ArtFields, Lake City, SC

2022

Beyond the Wall: Visions of the Asian Experience in America, Morikami Museum, FL

The Florida Prize in Contemporary Art, Orlando Museum of Art, FL

We Build This City, Dunedin Fine Art Center, FL

2021

Art Ventures 30th Anniversary Exhibition, Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, FL

FLORIDARAMA, Fairgrounds St. Pete, FL

2020

Nameless Now, Crisp-Ellert Art Museum, FL

Into the Blue, Blue Spiral 1, Asheville, NC

2018

Sum+Substance, Space Gallery, FL

2017

Discovering American Art Now, The Mint Museum, NC

Discovering American Art Now, Dixon Gallery and Gardens, TN

2016

Pierce, Mark, Morph, Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, FL

Lift Every Voice and Sing: Contemporary Expressions of the African American, Experience, Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, FL

2015

2015 Art Ventures Grant Awards Artists, MOCA Jacksonville, FL

Face Forward, Haskell Gallery, Jacksonville International Airport, FL

Story Line: Wiley, Howard & Moneyhun, Westobou Gallery, GA

Obelisk Art 450, FL

The REFLECTIONS: Artful Perspectives of the St. Johns River, Cummer Museum, FL

Three Wishes, Gallery 180, Stanley Beaman & Sears, GA

2014

State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, AR

Paper Reveries, Shirley Fiterman Art Center, Borough of Manhattan Community College (CUNY), New York

From Ordinary to Extraordinary: Paper as Art, Cornell Museum of Art and American Culture, FL

2013

North of Modern, Florida Mining Gallery, Art Basel Miami, Miami

Cut Paint Draw, CoRK Art District, FL

2012

Grune Family Gallery, Players by the Sea, FL

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

2023

Moving the Margins Artist-in-Residence Program, FL

2020

Long Road Projects + Erie Arts & Culture, PA

SELECTED AWARDS

2023

Honorable Mention, Society 1858 Prize for Contemporary Southern Art, Gibbes Museum of Art, SC

2022

People's Choice Award, The Florida Prize in Contemporary Art, Orlando Museum of Art, FL

2015 Art Ventures Grant, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, Jacksonville, FL

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR

Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, FL

Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, Delray Beach, FL

Frank Museum of Art, Otterbein University, Westerville, OH

TEACHING/ VISITING ARTIST

2016

Peyton Endowed Visiting Artist Program, visiting-artist appointment, The Bolles School, Jacksonville, FL.

SELECTED LECTURES, PANELS & WORKSHOPS

2026

The Frank Museum of Art, Otterbein University, *Paper Cosmologies*, Artist Remarks, Westerville, OH

2025

Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, Teaching Artist, Jacksonville, FL

2024

University of North Florida / MOCA Jacksonville, Studio Practice: Papercutting, Instructor, Jacksonville, FL

Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, Teaching Artist, Two Workshops, Jacksonville, FL

2023

MOCA Jacksonville, Project Atrium Brunch & Learn, Artist Presentation, Jacksonville, FL

Appleton Museum of Art, Florida-Style Kyo Uchiwa Fan Workshop, Instructor, Ocala, FL

Appleton Museum of Art, Artist-Led Gallery Tours, Ocala, FL

2022

Orlando Museum of Art, Florida Prize, Artist Panel, Orlando, FL

Morikami Museum, *Beyond the Wall*, Artist Symposium, Delray Beach, FL

2020

Morikami Museum, Workshop Instructor, Delray Beach, FL