

A watercolor illustration featuring three foxes in shades of brown and tan against a yellowish-tan background. One fox is in the upper left, another in the middle left, and a third in the lower right. A large, textured red circle, resembling a sun or moon, is positioned in the upper right. The text 'Inspired by Edo' is overlaid on the red circle.

Inspired by Edo

National Student Art Competition
Finalists Exhibit Catalogue

About the Project

INSPIRED BY EDO

Inspired by Edo is the national student art competition launched in March 2024 that invited U.S. students in grades 1 ~ 12 to create and submit original art inspired by Investigating Japan’s Edo Avant Garde, the art curriculum hosted by the Smithsonian. In just 3 months, the competition received 230 submissions from students in 27 states, inspired by Edo art depicting nature. The students also wrote artistic statements about the impact of Edo art and techniques on their creative process.

Two judges, Hollis Goodall, Curator, Japanese Art, LACMA (Retired) and E. Roon Kang, Chair, Graphic Design at California College of the Arts, selected 50 finalists based on Creativity, Thoughtfulness and Effort. The finalists exhibit catalogue features the finalists’ art and artistic statements, organized by nine themes in the Edo curriculum that inspired their art. We are grateful to all the students who participated in the competition and the teachers and families who encouraged them.

WHAT IS EDO?

Edo was the period of Japanese history from 1603 to 1868 when artists innovated techniques to bring all of nature to striking life. Because artists saw themselves as belonging to nature, not above it, they opened their eyes and their hearts to all living creatures, bringing birds and fish, even trees and clouds to enchanting life in their art.

WHAT IS THE EDO CURRICULUM?

Investigating Japan’s Edo Avant Garde is the K-12 art curriculum hosted by the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Asian Art that introduces the basics of art through Edo era art. The image-driven lesson plans and resources reveal how Edo artists experimented with stylization, abstraction, asymmetry and empty space to express their openhearted experience of the natural world. The curriculum deliberately showcases refined, world-class art to inspire students of all ages with fresh ideas about nature and how to depict it in art.



Use the QR code to access the free curriculum and featured artworks.

Project Director's Statement

During Japan’s Edo era (1603~1868), audacious artists experimented with abstraction, stylization, minimalism, and empty space to animate their depictions of the natural world, while paving the way for Modern Art that emerged much later in the West.

I made my fifth film *Edo Avant Garde*, to reveal the mystery of their elegant innovations. After researching 30,000 Edo artworks in museums and private collections in the U.S. and Japan, I filmed 200 outstanding folding screens and scrolls that I consider avant-garde — art that defies conventions to pioneer the future. I also interviewed curators, art historians, and priests who traced a major source of their ingenuity to their openhearted engagement with nature. Because Edo artists perceived their environment through the prism of Buddhism and Shinto animism, they saw themselves as among nature’s creatures and painted them brimming with inner life.

Not long after I completed *Edo Avant Garde* the pandemic cancelled all public screenings, but to share my discoveries, I envisioned a curriculum that introduces the basic principles of art through Edo art. The Smithsonian’s National Museum of Asian Art approved my proposal and commissioned me and my team to develop *Investigating Japan’s Edo Avant Garde*, the digital curriculum now available free of charge to everyone.

To promote the curriculum, I established *Inspired by Edo*, a national student art competition calling for submissions of original art inspired by any of its 10 themes.

When we launched Inspired by Edo in March 2024 we had no idea how many submissions we would receive but were hopeful that Edo artists’ openhearted portrayals of nature would resonate with both teachers and students. Our hopes were richly rewarded by the originality, dynamism and sophistication of the art created by so many students across the U.S.

Bravo and thank you!

I remain grateful to Angela Miesle, the award-winning art teacher who wrote so many of the Edo curriculum lesson plans and served as the invaluable advisor to Inspired by Edo.

-Linda Hoaglund

For inquiries about *Edo Avant Garde* and *Inspired by Edo*:
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Linda Hoaglund Bio
Linda Hoaglund is an award-winning, bilingual filmmaker born and raised in Japan who attended Japanese public schools and graduated from Yale University. She has made five films about art and the relationship between Japan and the U.S. that have been broadcast on PBS and NHK, screened at major museums including MoMA and Guggenheim NY, and at over 50 U.S. colleges and universities.

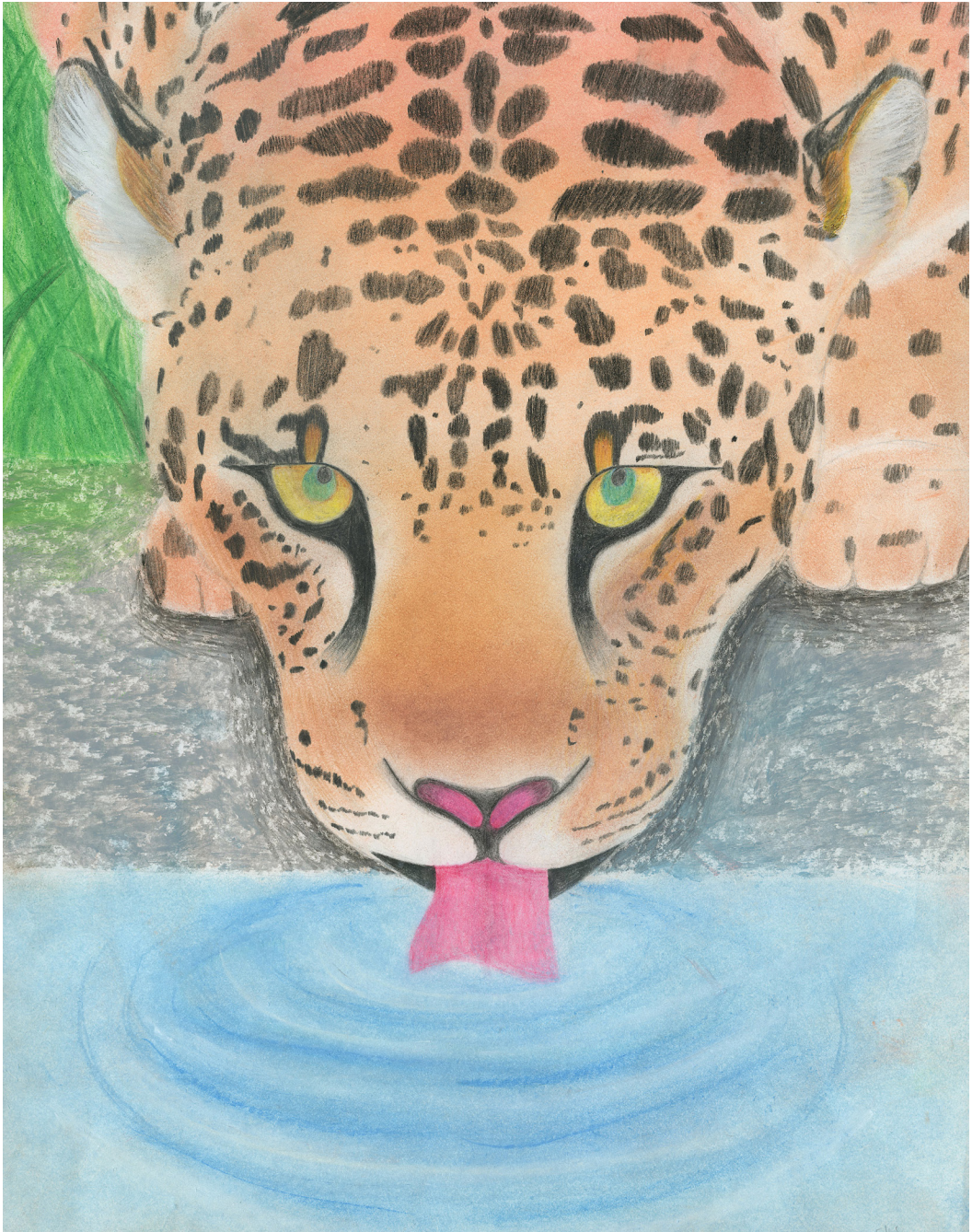
The *Inspired by Edo* national student art competition and finalists exhibit catalogue are made possible by a generous grant from the U.S.-Japan Foundation.



Our Environment
Depicting the Power of Nature



Waves of Matsushima (17th century) Tawaraya Sotatsu
National Museum of Asian Art



Ellie Yang
Grade 4 California

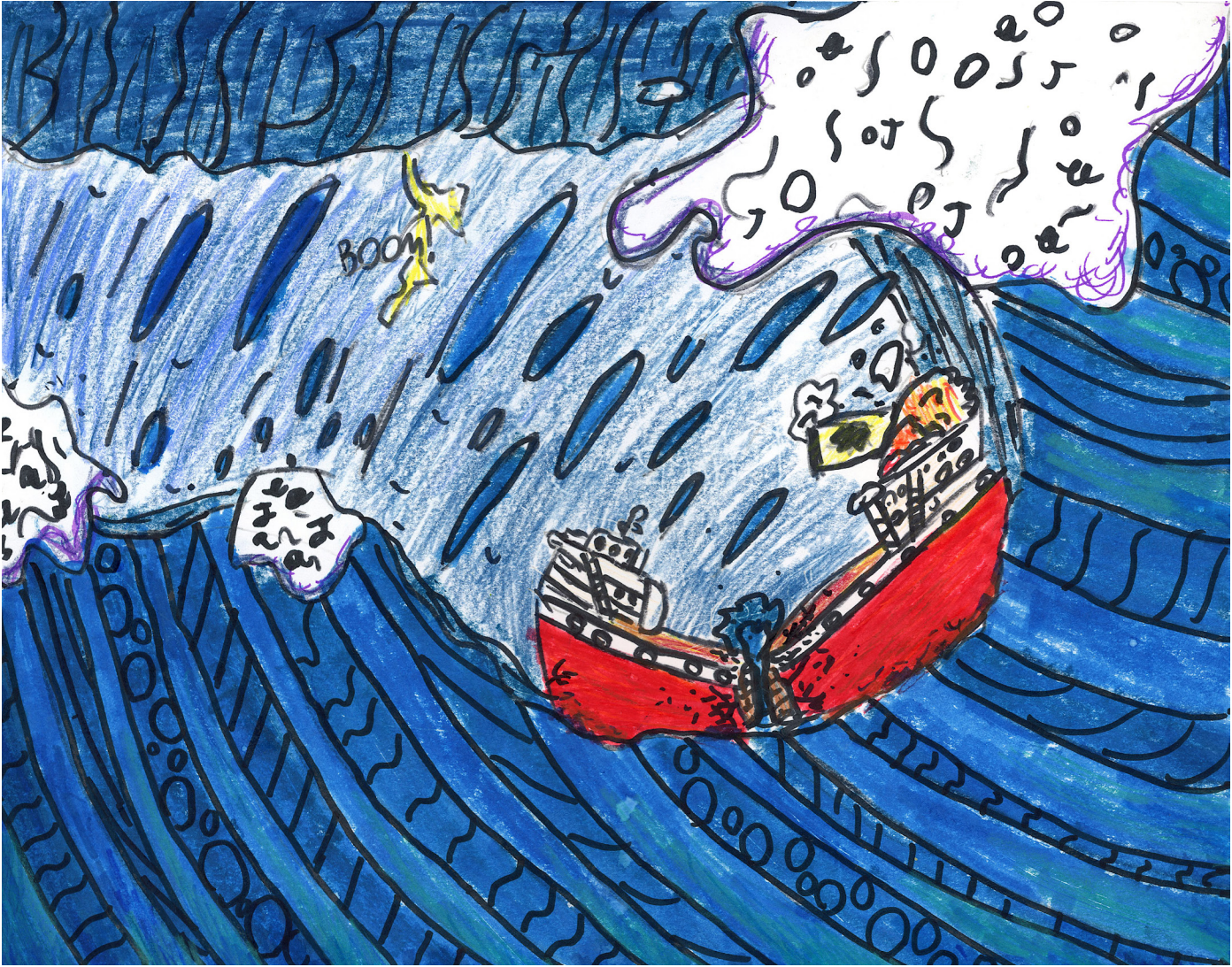
I was inspired by edo art style animals because the color is simple, line is feel freely and their look is so cuter than other style to me.



Paajdaub Dawn Xiong

Grade 10 California

I fell in love and was inspired by the flow and look of “Waves at Matsushima” by Tawaraya Sotatsu. The way the shape of the mountains and the flowing water fit together perfectly inspired me to want to create a similar style.



Jacob Condon

Grade 5 Michigan

Looking at the screens and video with water was moving smoothly with wavy lines. I wanted to depict the waves but add fun patterns along with a boat to show the strength of the water.



Paloma Galloway

Grade 10 California

I drew inspiration from Japanese painter Maruyama Okyo, specifically his piece “Peacock and Peonies.” Similar to Okyo, I incorporated elements of movement in many aspects of the piece.



Cecily Shipman

Grade 12 Minnesota

I was inspired by many of the lessons but feel that my piece mostly depicts nature. I wanted to portray the magic of nature with the moody willow tree and whimsical cherry blossom tree. I also wanted to portray the blue herons as majestic, with cherry blossoms swirling around them.



Madeleine Jane Perry

Grade 12 Colorado

After visiting the Denver art museum with my AP art class, I was inspired by the traditional Chinese and Japanese works on display. I used that inspiration in our silk painting lesson to create a similar landscape.

Our Environment Depicting the *Kami*/Spirits in the Natural World



Crows (early 17th century) Artist Unknown
Seattle Art Museum



Shreeya Raju

Grade 4 Michigan

I saw so many beautiful trees in the paintings on the screens so I wanted to make a black night composition that represents how I feel. My spirit is in my painting.



Zoey Atnip

Grade 10 Missouri

I was inspired to create an image of my dog, Siku after viewing Edo images of animals, specifically dogs. Like artworks of Kami, I centered my content and made him a focal point. I tried using Sumi ink and gold paint to replicate techniques used in Edo Art.



Alyssa Chiyono Pace

Grade 3 Rhode Island

In the early spring, we begin to see many animals come into our backyard. My little sister and I become most excited when we see the rabbits because we believe they are visiting us. With this painting, I imagined the cherry blossom tree calling the rabbits from the moon into our backyard.



Brock Knowles

Grade 8 Ohio

My art piece was inspired by crows standing together to make art. In mine, I used a singular flamingo to show how something as small as one bird can say so much. It touches on feeling lonely while the flamingo is happy being alone.

Painting Nature
Shasei and Painting the Subjective Experience



Emma Kinslie
Rain Sumner

Grade 11 Arkansas

Researching Shinto beliefs, I found inspiration in the idea that each creature encapsulates a “kami” that radiates the spirit of life. I then read up on the “Kitsune” folklore and discovered how the physical vessel of a fox is interconnected with immense wisdom or immortality. This project really opened my mind to the culture and art of the Edo era, and showed me that each artwork tells a different story.



Puppies (1781) Maruyama Okyo
Minneapolis Institute of Art



Daniel Perez

Grade 11 California

This piece was inspired by the Edo Era in Tokyo, Japan. The lesson I was most inspired by was “Painting Nature.” I wanted to incorporate the element of negative space since a lot of art from the era has open space. I also included nature with the bamboo and the sheep upon the hill and gave it a golden frame to elevate the image.



Sakura Martin

Grade 11 New Jersey

My impression of Edo art is based on the lesson that Edo art placed value in seeing nature as a reflection of humanity. Artists in one way or another would familiarize themselves with their subjects, whether bird, fish, or mammal, and place human qualities and emotions onto them whilst attempting to maintain respect to the vessel these emotions would be felt in. In my piece, I wanted to focus on my impression of what Shasei was and painted an osprey but omitted detailing its eyes and altered the pattern on its wings to resemble eyes staring at the viewer to reflect the idea that at its core, Shasei is achieved through empathy and projection.



Bennett Milbert

Grade 2 Virginia

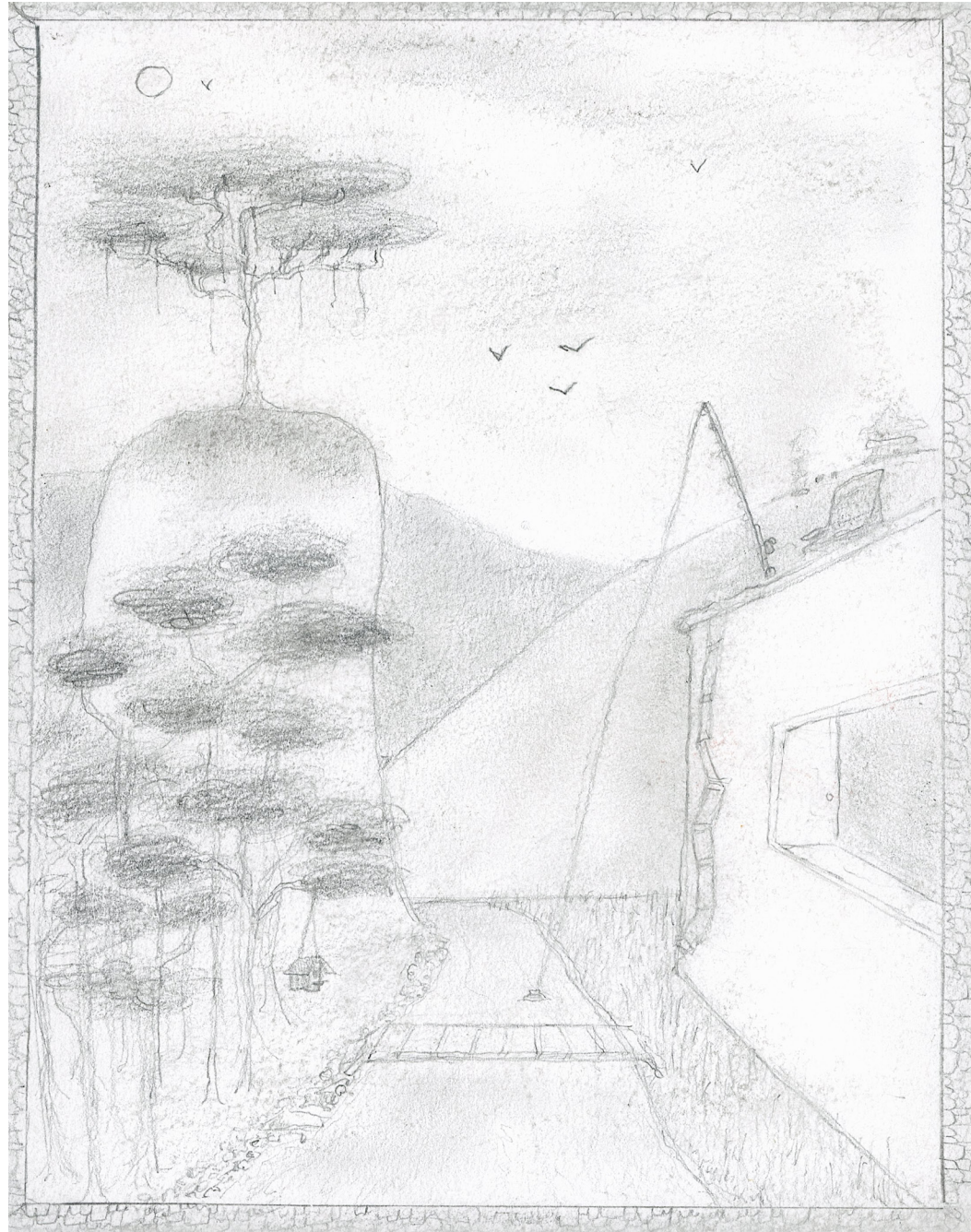
The Shasei and Painting the Subjective Experience lesson inspired my art because I have two puppies who are sometimes sleepy and love each other and I was trying to capture that feeling in my art. I did that by painting them with a yawning face and with closed eyes. One of the puppies is also looking at the other affectionately with a little smile because they love each other.



Annika Stowell

Grade 3 Oregon

We learned about the Shasei. We looked at Okyo's puppies and talked about how he used texture. We drew and painted our puppies.



Malachi Lawrence

Grade 9 Missouri

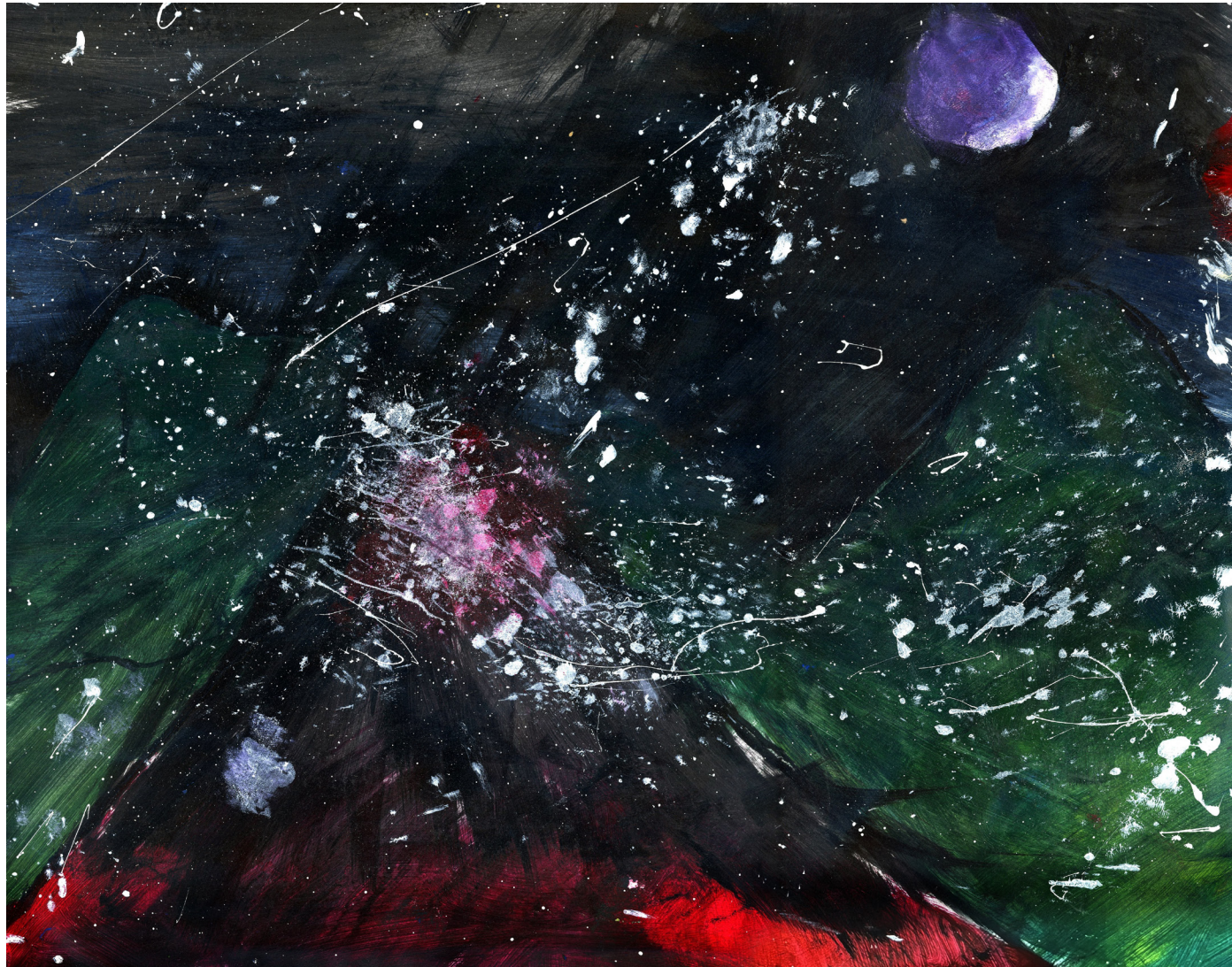
I've learned that many Edo art pieces have to do with stories about nature and wildlife. In this image I show a mountain, stream, birds and fishing pole. I wanted to depict a story in one scene.



Anisha Ghosh

Grade 3 Michigan

I looked at the puppies cuteness and decided to draw a bird. The bird has a lot of character like the puppies.



Erryn Lovejoy

Grade 6 Michigan

Based off of the Edo period. I did the mountains, volcano, Smokey sky, red moon and the water.



Brooklyn Dekok

Grade 11 California

I was inspired by Shasei, a technique from Japan which involves painting directly from nature. This technique creates a lively effect on the subject. I chose to use oil pastel because it reminds me of crayons, a medium associated with childhood. Childhood is one of the most lively and youthful times of a person's life, which I believe reflects the painting technique of Shasei.



Alexcia White

Grade 7 Michigan

I love art and I was inspired on the new approach to Asian art that I wasn't exposed to before the lesson. I am happy to have learned it and plan to implement it in my own style. Being aware of this style makes me most grateful.

Painting Nature Depictions of Close Botanical Observations



Trees (1600-1630) Master of the I-nen Seal
National Museum of Asian Art



Alicia Zhang

Grade 4 California

The yellowish background makes the object I draw more obvious and it matched so well with my white leopards. The stripes and spots on leopards and tigers are very different from the real ones.



Reese Furukawa

Grade 3 Hawaii

I like the flowers and the gold background. I learned how to watercolor and blend the colors. I learned that the branches get skinnier when they get higher.



Hannah Dunbar

Grade 10 California

I was inspired by the detailed depictions of nature characteristic of Edo art. I also was inspired by the unique compositions in many of the pieces.



Bridget MacMillan

Grade 7 Massachusetts

The Edo art form inspired me to look at different ways to present my ideas. It encouraged me to have more awareness of artistic ways to show nature and the world around me.



Matilda McKinzie

Grade 11 California

I was inspired by the floral designs of Edo Era art, some of which included gold backgrounds, like this one. I was most inspired by the lesson titled "Painting Nature: Depictions of Close Botanical Observations," and specifically took aspects of the design from the paintings *Chrysanthemums* and *Moon and Autumn Plants*. I designed a composition of morning glories that would complement the moon and mimic the climbing flowers of the Edo paintings.

Depicting Birds and Animals Birds



Heron and Willow (late 17th century) Hanabusa Itcho
National Museum of Asian Art



Kate Elizabeth Miesle

Grade 2 Indiana

I liked the feathers and the face of the bird. I liked it because it looked cool to me.



Race Hao Avenell

Grade 10 California

I was inspired by birds and how peaceful they can be sitting upon a tree. I was inspired by robins, or *komadori*, which can also symbolize happiness or joy, which is why I decided to make it colorful.



Jasper Powell

Grade 6 Mississippi

I painted a blue heron like the ones I see around Mississippi.
I noticed Edo art also includes herons.



Yeonwoo Jeong

Grade 5 Michigan

I noticed the Japanese screens did not have a lot of bright color but they had lots of details on the feathers. I chose the birds because I like birds.



Anela A. Reese

Grade 10 Hawaii

I was inspired by both of the depicting birds and animals lessons. These lessons taught me to not only incorporate the subject of the animal itself, but the surrounding elements as well to give the animals character and personality. By incorporating these surrounding details and elements, I was able to tell a story between the heron and the fish.



CoCo Fortes

Grade 11 California

I was inspired by the lessons covering how birds and animals were depicted in the art of Edo era Japan. I chose a heron for my subject because herons symbolize a connection to the spirit world, good luck, and long life In Japanese mythology. I combined traditional and nontraditional materials — sumi ink, gouache, and colored pencil — to bring my heron to life.



Alyssa Minn Neubauer

Grade 10 Illinois

This lesson inspired my art because I thought it was very interesting how the artwork depicting birds has a wide range of values, all from using black ink. I learned about the Black Sumi ink from the lesson on birds and its unique properties that allow artists to show depth and texture, also my choice to feature a bird in my work stems from that lesson. Learning about this ink inspired me to experiment and recreate the same techniques to convey the delicacy of Edo period art involving birds.

Depicting Birds and Animals Fish



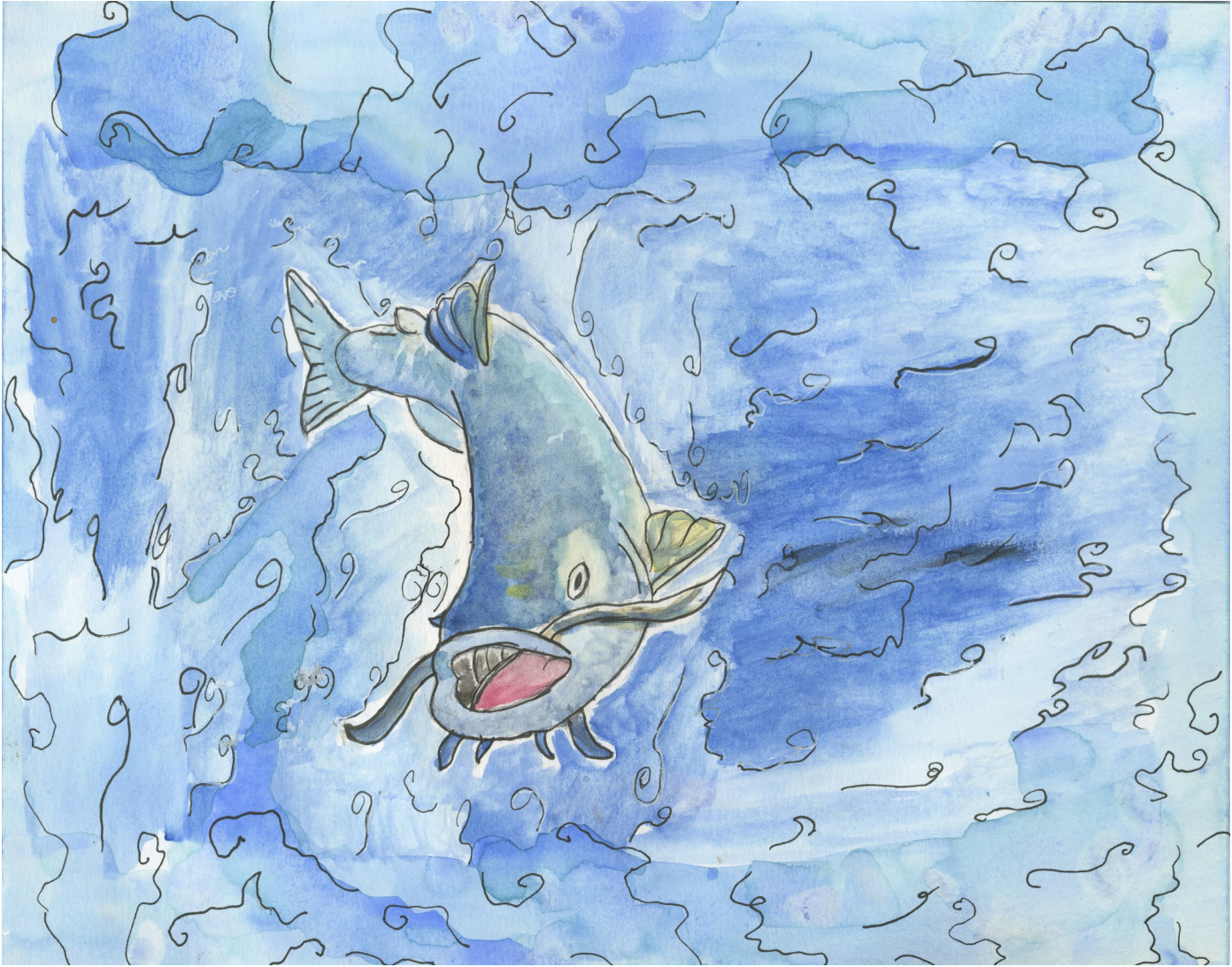
Fish and Turtles (1772-81) Maruyama Okyo
Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Gift of Robert S. and Betsy G. Feinberg



Luyue Zhang

Grade 9 Hawaii

The lesson greatly inspired my art because while examining the artistic representation of the carp, I felt sense of prosperity and love. Learning about the significance of fish symbolism in the Japanese culture has added depth and richness to my artistic expression.



Ryan Mack

Grade 7 Mississippi

I was inspired by the Edo fish. I was inspired to create the movement of the fish.



Charlotte Maeve Jones

Grade 5 Hawaii

The lessons and videos about fish and carp showed me how peaceful fish can be. This inspired me to make a piece that shows a Koi (a type of carp) swimming peacefully in a pond under a Cherry Blossom. Knowing cherry blossoms are a big part of Japanese culture, I incorporated both peace and culture in this piece.



Grace Hendrickson

Grade 9 Iowa

Learning about incorporating a calm sense into my paintings really inspired me to create this Koi fish scene. Even a painting so simple can still be incredibly meaningful.



Kimberly Lee

Grade 10 Maryland

The lesson offered me a chance to practice gesture drawings of carps, being able to practice creating loose and flowy lines to recreate the movement helped inspire me to create my artwork to capture a moment in time of multiple fish swimming by. Having the chance to look at Kuroda Toko's "Carp" inspired me to make a black and white colored drawing and paint the fish as if they are alive and moving, some overlapping each other as they go by. The slight brushwork details to depict the marine plants in Shibata Zeshin's "Carp" not only allowed me to understand the slight details that artists of the Edo period use to signify that the fish is underwater but also inspired me to add some of those details into my own artwork as well.



Griffin Ballard

Grade 7 Mississippi

I was inspired by the Koi fish. I was also inspired by the designs of the waves and water.



Agatha Innes

Grade 10 California

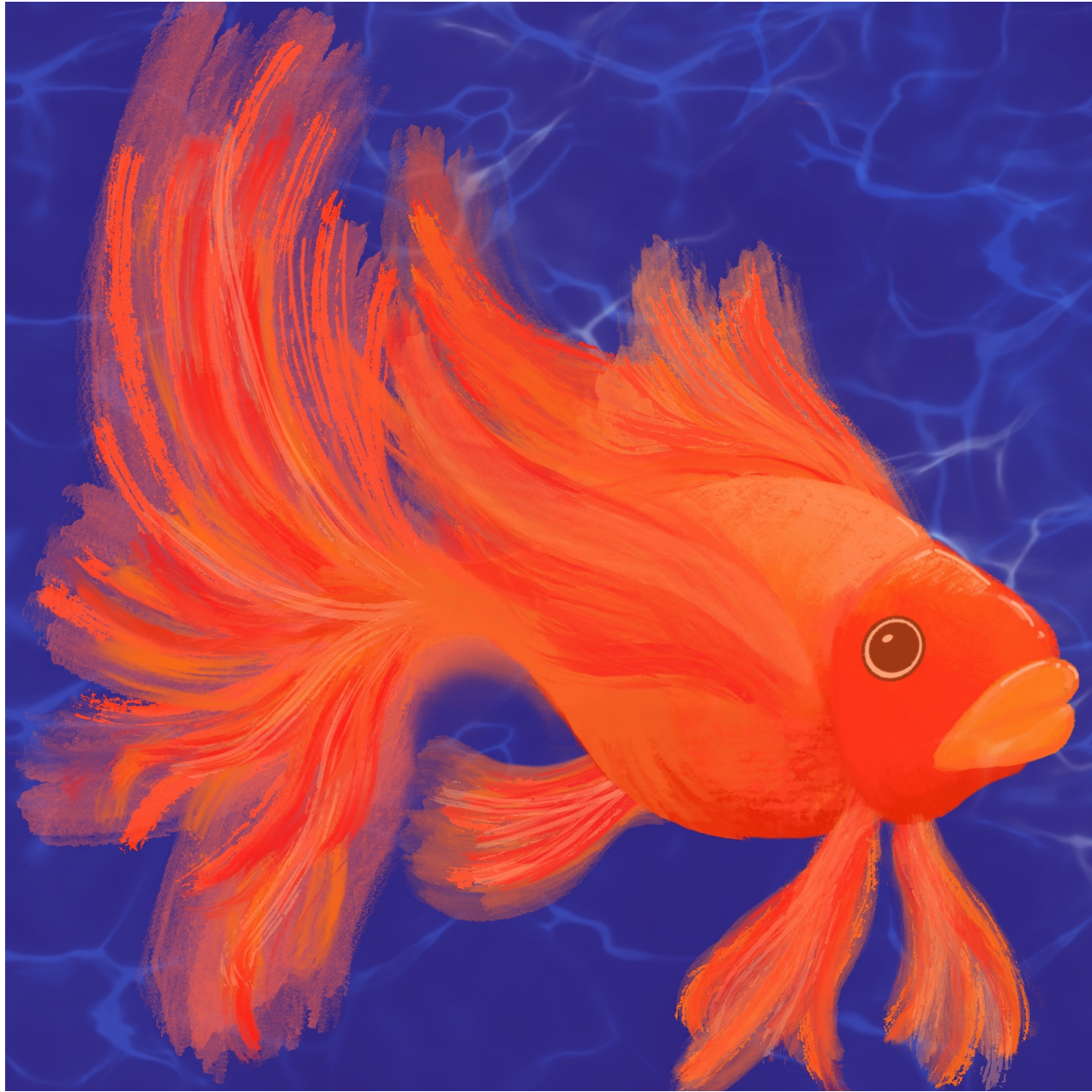
We learned about the Japanese style of painting using Koi fish. I found them very beautiful and elegant. I decided to do my own version of this, being a narwhal.



Jasper McGowan

Grade 10 California

I really liked the fish lesson and wanted to use it to display an animal I personally find majestic. I chose to depict a whaleshark and similar to Edo art, there is a more empty background, where the focus is on the fish. I also included flowers corresponding to Japanese flower language, which I noticed was also often done by Edo artists.



Jessica Wu

Grade 10 California

The lesson about depicting fish inspired my art because it combines natural aspects with artistic styles that demonstrate my own perspective. I used complementary colors which portray the beauty and cohesion found naturally in the world. I also was inspired by this lesson to give this fish a blank expression and invite my audience to engage in self-reflection.



Axel Castillo

Grade 11 California

For this art piece I was inspired by the Edo era lesson about depicting birds and animals. I chose Koi fish which are a symbol of good luck and fortune. From the lesson I learned that movement is a key element. So I decided to add the element of movement by creating a cherry blossom border and cherry blossom petals throughout the artwork. I wanted to portray the joy that koi fish bring and how amazing they are.



Gustavo J. Llaguno-Pérez

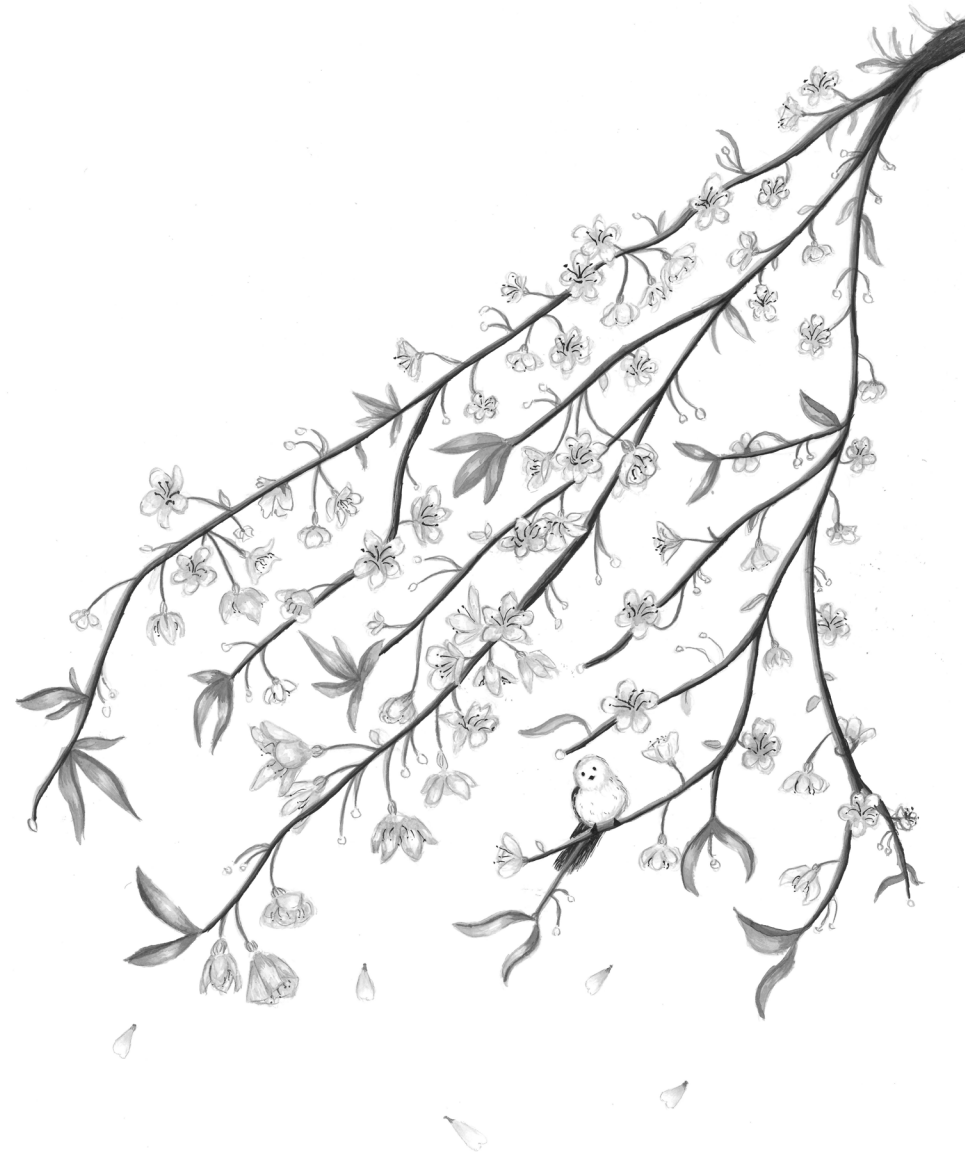
Grade 11 California

I was especially inspired by the lesson Depicting Birds and Animals from the Edo era. To represent this, I drew some Koi fish in a contemporary style, contrasting the blue/gray background. I also drew waves at the bottom to give a contrast in color.

Artistic Techniques The Magic of Water, *Sumi*/Ink, and Brush



Horses (1730-1781) Soga Shohaku
Los Angeles County Museum of Art



Elle Wycoff

Grade 12 Oregon

After completing the Artistic Techniques: The Magic of Water, Sumi Ink, and Brush lesson, I was excited to experiment with Sumi Ink. I was inspired to paint cherry blossoms after I visited the Portland Japanese Gardens at peak blooming time. This piece, titled “Sakura,” represents new beginnings, as demonstrated with using a new medium and the cherry blossoms.



Claire Kauffman

Grade 10 Texas

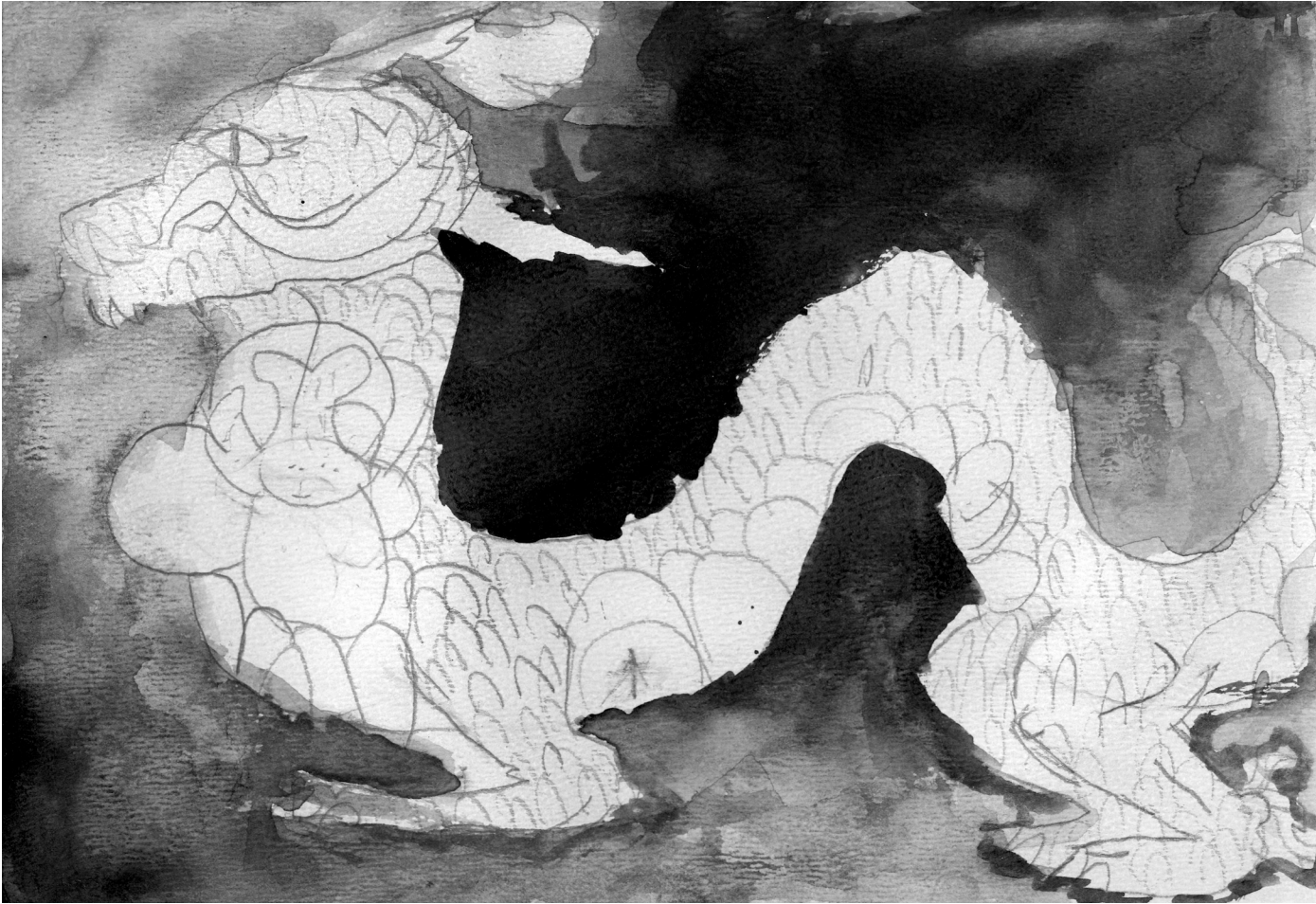
The “Magic of Water, Sumi Ink, and Brush” lesson helped introduce me to and understand the beautiful medium of ink. Ink is so interesting in the way it can express so much meaning with so few brushstrokes. I applied this to my art by expressively and playfully painting my subject.

Artistic Techniques

Tarashikomi - Wet on Wet Ink



Dragons and Clouds (1600-1643) Tawaraya Sotatsu
National Museum of Asian Art



Giovanna Melendrez

Grade 2 Nevada

I was inspired because the ink spread like smoke.
I like dragons.



Madelyn Swenson

Grade 10 Minnesota

Learning of how to create blooms inspired me to create leopard spots. The lesson also encouraged me to play with the way the paint swirled while wet to create clouds.



Rowan Williams

Grade 11 Florida

The way painters used Tarashikomi to make seamless transitions into the light clouds while giving expression through shadows. Tarashikomi expresses what can be found in nature and tells how it moves and acts in their works.

Edo Avant Garde

What is Modern?



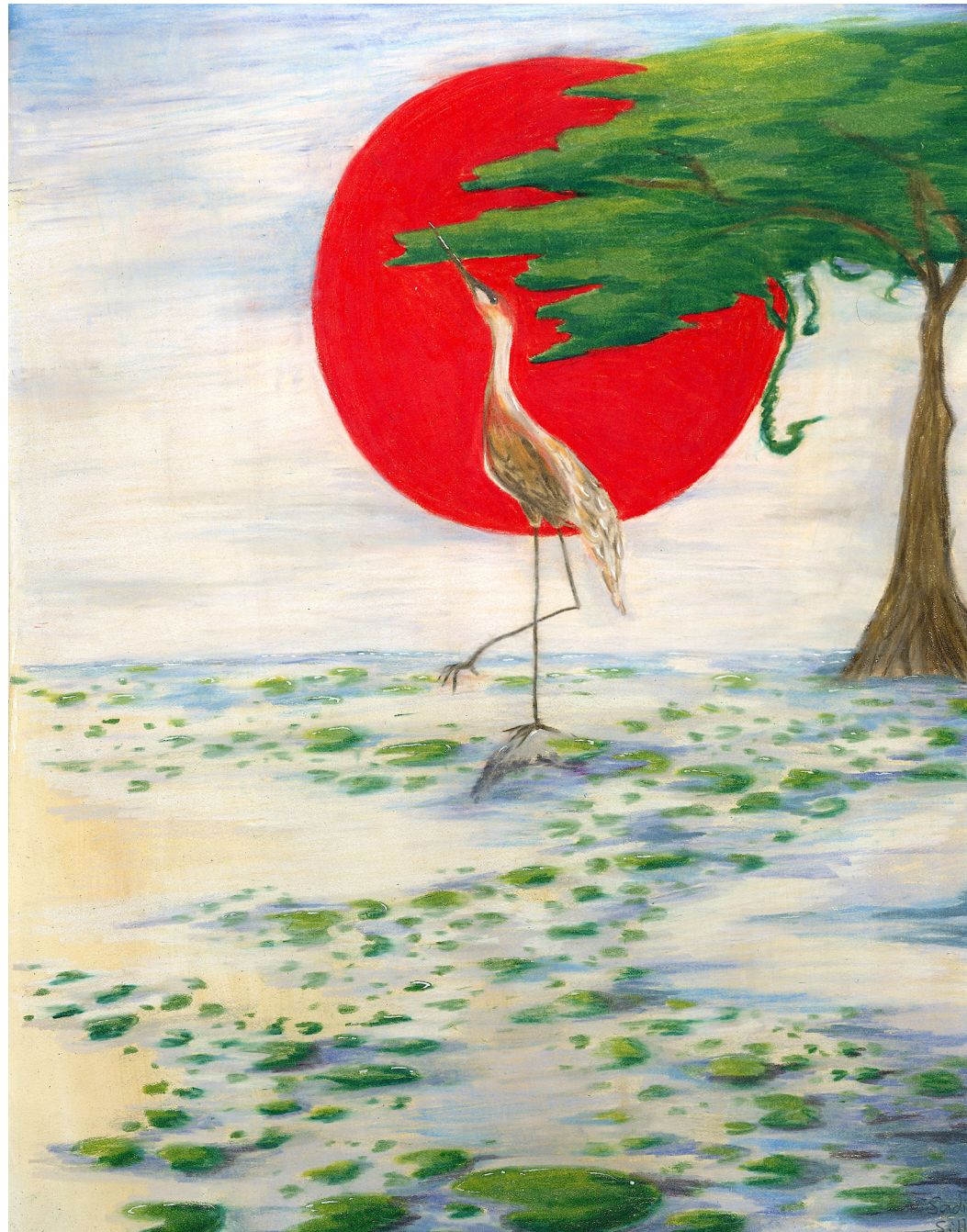
Screen with Scattered Fans (1600-1643) Tawaraya Sotatsu
National Museum of Asian Art



Milo Matsumiya Polesky

Grade 11 California

I found the Scattered Fans piece to be very interesting. There are many ways the piece can be recreated to tell a different story. I decided to tell the story of the Japanese Internment Camps because my family experienced it firsthand.



**Sadie Rui
Kawanishi Sills**
Grade 11 California

This piece is inspired by the depiction of cranes in Edo art. This style may be characterized by harmonized colors and a simple tan background, which I attempted to incorporate into my work. Cranes are graceful animals, so I portrayed this through a serene color palette and traditional figures.

Inspired by Edo Finalists Exhibits

The Descanso Gardens
La Canada Flintridge, CA
July 6 ~ July 28, 2024

The Japan Foundation Los Angeles Gallery
5700 Wilshire Drive Los Angeles, CA
August 5 ~ September 28, 2024

Thank you for hosting the Finalists Exhibits.

Inspired by Edo

Project Director: **Linda Hoaglund**
Project Advisor: **Angela Miesle**
Project Assistant & Instagram: **Cody Horne**
Website Design: **E. Roon Kang**
Poster & Postcard Design: **Maki Takenouchi**

Finalists Exhibit Catalogue

Catalogue Design: **Kawamura Tadao**
Cover Design & Layout: **Mikki Lee**
Cover Art: **Emma Kinslie Rain Sumner**

Special Thanks

Tracy Lew, Rika Hiro,
Jean Gordon and Len Fogge

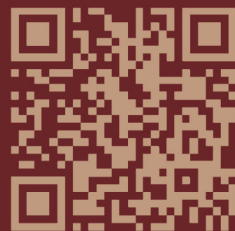
Sakura of America and Royal Langnickel
for providing prizes to the finalists.



Nachi Waterfall (late 18th century) Nagasawa Rosetsu
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco



Are you
inspired
by Edo?



INSPIRED BY EDO QR CODE