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Contact: Christie Chang, ChristieC@ArtsandArtists.org

High-resolution Images available upon request.

International Arts & Artists Launches New Traveling Exhibition on Japanese Washi Paper

Washington, DC (July 25, 2019) — International Arts & Artists (IA&A) is pleased to announce the launch of *Washi Transformed: New Expressions in Japanese Paper*, the first traveling exhibition to focus on washi as fine art.

Celebrated for its durability and utility, *washi* has gained international recognition from conservationists and crafters alike. While most are familiar with “*washi* tape,” as seen on numerous blogs and social media, few know of its traditional origins, laborious production process, and cultural significance.

“At a moment in popular culture when *washi* paper is finding its way into craft stores and YouTube tutorials, *Washi Transformed* deepens our understanding of the history, making, and creative potential of *washi* as seen through the thirty-seven innovative works created by the artists featured in the exhibition,” says Edward Hayes, Director of IA&A’s Traveling Exhibition Service.

Washi, which translates to “Japanese paper,” has been integral to Japanese culture for over a thousand years, and the strength, translucency, and malleability of this one-of-a-kind paper have made it extraordinarily versatile as well as ubiquitous. Historically, *washi* has been used as a base for Japanese calligraphy, painting, and printmaking; but when oiled, lacquered, or otherwise altered, it has had many other fascinating applications in the fields of architecture, religious ritual, and fashion.

The works seen in *Washi Transformed* epitomize the astonishing potential of this traditional medium in the hands of these innovative artists. Using a range of techniques—from layering, weaving, and dyeing to shredding, folding, and cutting—these nine artists embrace the seemingly infinite possibilities of *washi*. Visitors will encounter abstract paper sculptures, lyrical folding screens, highly textured wall pieces, and other dramatic installations—all demonstrating the resilience and versatility of washi as a medium, as well as the unique stature this ancient art form has earned in the realm of international contemporary art.

“Japan has a long and rich history of papermaking and its papers are some of the finest and strongest in the world,” says curator and art historian Meher McArthur. “At a time when many of us worldwide have turned away from paper in favor of screens and digital media, 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.”

Washi Transformed will tour nationally from May 2021 through December 2024, and will feature thirty-seven works and installations by nine contemporary Japanese artists: Hina Aoyama, Eriko Horiki, Kyoko Ibe, Yoshio Ikezaki, Kakuko Ishii, Yuko Kimura, Yuko Nishimura, Takaaki Tanaka, and Ayomi Yoshida.

For more information about *Washi Transformed: New Expressions in Japanese Paper*, visit ArtsandArtists.org/tes

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ARTS & ARTISTS

International Arts & Artists (IA&A) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting cross-cultural understanding and exposure to the arts internationally. For 24 years, IA&A has fulfilled its mission by providing programs and services to artists, arts institutions, cultural organizations, and the public—reaching over 2.1 million people.

IA&A's **Traveling Exhibition Service** develops and circulates a broad range of premiere visual arts exhibitions in the US and abroad. With over 110 unique exhibitions and over 775 presentations, IA&A's exhibitions have toured all 50 US states as well as 24 countries abroad, helping organizations to engage their community, increase public awareness, develop meaningful programming, and foster enhanced support.

IA&A at Hillyer is a contemporary art center based in Washington, DC. Committed to serving the public and supporting artists at all stages of their careers, Hillyer has presented over 300 exhibitions featuring local, regional, and international artists, reaching over 95,000 visitors.

IA&A's **Cultural Exchange Programs** support the next generation of creative leaders by providing exchange opportunities and visa assistance for students, professionals, artists, and researchers from around the world participating in programs across the US. IA&A has connected over 1,700 exchange visitors from more than 90 countries to over 600 host organizations.

IA&A's award-winning **Design Studio** offers a full scope of print and design services specializing in exhibition book design. Design Studio has published 87 exhibition catalogues and over 400 exhibition collateral, as well as various other projects for individual artists and collectors.

International Arts & Artists
9 Hillyer Court NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-338-0680
ArtsandArtists.org
info@ArtsandArtists.org

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