

# Art Openings - Promotes Creative People & Places

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Detail: Works in progress at home-studio.

## Heather Midori Yamada presents *Found*

October 29 - November 13, 2019 at the Gage Gallery Arts Collective

The “art of becoming” is a central theme in the creative outpourings of Heather Midori Yamada. “Nothing is certain in my art practice,” says the artist, “not knowing and understanding is part of my process and ongoing journey.” If Yamada is unsure about the artwork’s meaning and direction, she will let it sit. Often for decades. Each segment has a history which stays hidden until called up. The unfolding piece involves a relationship, between her, the maker, and the artwork coming into existence. By recombining and rearranging elements new meanings come forward. They become “found” moments in time.

Yamada presents *Found* at the Gage Gallery Arts Collective. This is her fifth show at the gallery since relocating to Victoria in 2015. The 18-member arts collective celebrated their fifth anniversary in August 2019. Yamada’s colleagues at the Gage appreciate her teaching skills and impressive CV of awards, grants, commissions and exhibitions. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts and is a hatha yoga instructor. The artist’s printmaking career began in the 1980’s and includes lithographs, plate etchings, aquatints and mezzotints. Some of her eighties prints are included in the upcoming show intact. Others have been up-cycled and re-purposed into current assemblages.



The dark one loves you better, drawing, text and etching on paper. 15 inches square, 1984.



Extended triangle series, etching on Japanese paper, assemblage. 30x20 in, 1984-2019.

*The dark one loves you better*, comes from a series dated 1984. This work on paper includes etching, hand-drawing and text. The artist maneuvers two square shapes into a visual puzzle. She tilts one, setting it in motion, and obscures the other with gestural cross-hatching. Solid shapes become objects in a state of flux. Brightly coloured marks beneath the two squares add balance and energy to the composition. "I like the graphic look of black and white," she says, "the words, like haiku are poetic and ripe with hidden meanings."

*The Extended Triangle* etching was completed in 1984. In 2019, Yamada added a variety of materials to make an assemblage. Now, silk fabrics and folded Japanese papers enliven the sombre patterns of the etched triangle. Areas of intense activity and exaggerated texture are juxtaposed with quiet spaces. Colour, texture and design enhance depth and energy. "This is new for me," says Yamada, "adding a dimensional element in my art." Overlapping adds layers of meaning and subtle nuances, she notes. An "extended triangle" pose is part of her hatha yoga practice.



Detail: Bound Secret, acrylic and ink on Japanese washi paper, 15x4 in closed, 2019



Detail: Bound Secret, acrylic and ink on Japanese washi paper, 15x11 in open, 2019

In *Bound Secret*, the artist creases paper to create a small parcel of perfection. Loosely folded and bound with wire, cord and paper ribbon, an aura of enigma abounds. "I believe a person is triggered by mystery" says Yamada, "and stays to look longer." Her task as an artist is to present open-ended images that intrigue viewers. In the enigmatic *Body Wrap*, we see large-scale folding. The idea emerged from handling the scrolls of washi paper up to seven metres in length.

Yamada's approach to artmaking is meditative, staying in the moment to observe, feel, see and touch. "The more I interact with the world using all my senses," says the artist, "the more is revealed." The artist believes that accepting the flow of life is a key to happiness. These ideas are in tune with Japanese philosophical concepts like *wabi-sabi* and *yūgen*. *Wabi-sabi* honours the beauty of imperfection and patina of aging. *Yūgen* describes a profound experience of the universe that is sensory-based and intuitive, beyond rational thought.



Detail: Sluice, acrylic and ink on gampi udaban washi paper, 55x16.5 in.

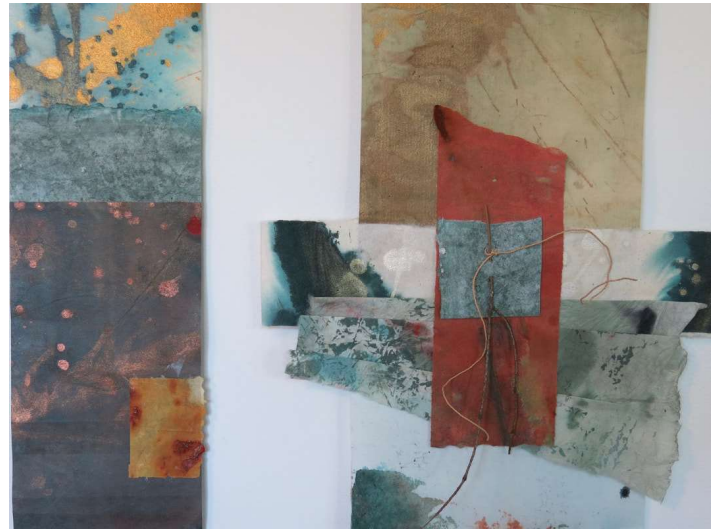


Detail: Body Wrap, acrylic on Japanese washi paper, 45x20 in, 2019.

The tradition of making *washi*, hand-made Japanese paper, dates back to the 8th Century. The complex process uses the inner bark of three different plants, each producing papers with different qualities. In *Sluice*, the *washi* is made from the gampi plant, a strong flexible fibre that allows the ink and acrylic paint to pool and pattern luxuriously. Placement of brush and focus of breath are paramount when making ink paintings on *washi*.



Detail: Burnt Orange Dot Banner, hand painted Japanese washi and silk, 50x11 in, 2019.



Detail: Burnt Orange Dot Banner, hand painted Japanese washi and silk, 50x11 in, 2019.

Yamada applied clear gesso to raw canvas for *Reflected Elements*. The artist then painted acrylic washes using a soft ochre palette. These washes suggest light reflected on water, adding a sense of floating transparency to the aquatic theme. A collage of hand painted papers adorn the under-painting. The gestural additions bring to mind the fundamentals of water, sky, earth, air and fire. "I am now working with spaces between and among different elements," she says.

Heather Midori Yamada welcome interest in her work and can be reached at [hmidoriy@gmail.com](mailto:hmidoriy@gmail.com)  
For info about her workshops and classes please visit [artyamada.com](http://artyamada.com)



Detail: Reflected Elements, mixed media on canvas, Japanese papers, 18 x 72 in, 2019.



Heather at the Gage Gallery 2018.

The Gage Gallery is located at 2031 Oak Bay Avenue, Victoria, V8R 1E5 250-592-2760  
Tuesday to Saturday 11 AM - 5 PM



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