

Art Openings - Promotes Creative People & Places (/)

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Detail: Pond, mixed media on Japanese washi paper, 26 x 45 in, 2017

Heather Midori Yamada presents
ORB - a solo show at the Gage Gallery
 Aug 28 - Sept 8 2018
 Opening Wed Aug 29 5-7pm.

Visual artist Heather Midori Yamada has honed her professional skills over four decades. The artist's CV boasts a host of awards, grants, commissions and exhibitions. Her collectors include many private clients and over 30 corporate and public firms. This is Yamada's fourth show at the Gage Gallery since relocating to Victoria in 2015. "We are an 18 member collective that learn from each other," she says, "and take turns with rotating exhibitions."

This exhibition features ink paintings on washi paper, hanging scrolls, assemblage and prints. The enigmatic title *ORB* has several meanings and associations: the path of a celestial body, light reflections and paranormal phenomenon. In her artist statement, she adds "a landing pad, stepping off point and placement in the imagination." Together we view computer images of "photographic orbs", which are light reflections found in digital photography. Looking at these floating amorphous blue balls Its like gazing into a mystery. Yamada says: "To me the orbs look like planet earth floating in space."



Fire Over Water #1, Acrylic and mixed media, on Seichosen Kozo, Japanese washi paper, 30 x 53 in, 2013



Ibis Head, mixed media on washi paper, 56 x 16 in, 2016

The blue photographic orbs could also be microscopic particles adrift in water or air. In this current series, the artist is grappling with natural phenomenon and her place within these generative forces. Yamada's explosive ink paintings hint at the mystery of creation through their dynamic shifting shapes and forms. The recent volcanic eruption in Hawaii reminds us about nature's power. Works like *Fire Over Water #1* and *Ibis Head* churn with activity that resembles the spewing of molten rock and flowing of lava into the sea. *Elementals #2* and *Pond* focus our attention on inner vibrations through emerging forms and contrasting colours.



Detail: *Elementals #2*, mixed media on washi paper, 29 x 55 in, 2015



Detail: *Pond*, mixed media on Japanese washi paper, 26 x 45 in, 2017

Opposites collide and reform in these dynamic paintings. We see grinding and mixing, expansion and contraction, restless cycles of life and rebirth. Yamada says:

"Our vast minds and open hearts allow us to fully experience the complexity of our life on this planet earth. With excruciating detail we see/ live beauty and brutality daily in ordinary happenings...nature pulses onwards with daring precision."

The world is always ripe for the next seeding, the further birthing of life".



Detail: *Vine #1*, mixed media on Japanese washi paper, 56 x 16 in,



Inner Forest #1, mixed media on canvas, 20 x 16 in, 2018

Yamada's art practice combines her academic training (BFA) and her skills as a hatha yoga teacher. Placement of brush and focus of breath are paramount when making ink paintings on Japanese washi paper. Washi is hand-made paper, made from the inner bark of three plants, available in a marvelous range of tints. "Washi has an inner life," she says, "that responds to various pressures and inks. It's unique qualities become part of the process."

Yamada's *Inner Forest* series are densely painted mixed media works. "These paintings are very emotional," she says, "like digging deep into some kind of well." Much preparation goes into the selection of palette and brushes before she begins. Once started, the artist allows the powerful energies to erupt on to the canvas. Her painting skills turn the upwellings into abstract images using a variety of hues, textures, viscosity and gestural brushwork.



Untitled Princess, mezzotint, 15 x15 in, 1982.



The World is What it Seems, assemblage with text, 12 x 12 in, 2018

The world is what is seems... is a three dimensional assemblage with text. Simple in construction, the cut pieces of paper have history and multiple meanings. The triangular glued down fragment is from a 40-year-old etching. The addition of Japanese paper, straw and cord add balance and serenity. "I like the continuity of past and present spotlighted in the now," she says.

After earning her BFA, Yamada honed her printmaking skills at Open Studio in Toronto. In the early eighties, this artist run centre specialized in fine art prints. *Untitled Princess* (1982) comes from this time, in a series that examines the feminine principal. "A mezzotint is the most labourious type of printmaking," she says. A copper plate is scratched, then smoothed by hand tools, producing prints with subtle tonalities and rich dark hues. Yamada chose this medium because no chemicals or acids are used in the etching process.



Gold Leaf Banner, and two details, mixed media on Japanese washi paper, 62 x 15 in, 2018.

The artist is a skilled workshop instructor with many years experience. July 15-20 2018, she conducted a 5-day workshop in rural Quebec called *Creativity in Nature*. Those lucky enough to attend, were treated to twice daily hatha yoga and guided meditation sessions. Outdoor walking and sketching, mixed media on Japanese washi paper, drawing and painting filled the summer hours.



October 18-23 2018 Yamada leads another 5-day excursion to an historic area in southwest France. Students are encouraged to respond creatively to their unique experiences of place. "It's my dream to lead artist retreats in wonderful places around the globe," she says. For more information visit her website: artyamada.com (<https://www.artyamada.com/upcoming-events>).

Workshops in Halifax Sept 29-Oct 1.

Spontaneous Brush and Japanese washi Papers September 29 & 30 is sold out.

Large Format Painting in Japanese washi on October 1 has limited spaces.

Visit Heather's website for updates and registration.

Workshop October 31 at University of Barcelona

On October 31 (tentative date) 2018, Yamada presents her artwork and offers a demonstration at the University of Barcelona. Presented to Hass Association members interested in art and spirituality, Yamada shares contemplative approaches to spontaneous brush and Japanese washi papers. The lecture/workshop takes place in the meditation room designed by painter Antoni Tàpies.

Heather Midori Yamada welcomes your interest in her work. Email: hmidoriy@gmail.com (<mailto:hmidoriy@gmail.com>)

Gage Gallery Arts Collective is located at 2031 Oak Bay Ave. Hours: Tues-Sat 11am-5pm.

Web Design, Content and Selected Photos
by Kate Cino

Kate is an arts writer published in Focus,
Yam and Boulevard.

She has a History in Art degree and Public
Relations certificate from UVic.

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kate-cino@shaw.ca (<mailto:kate-cino@shaw.ca>)
250 598-4009