

## **Recycling: Washi Tales**

an art exhibit/performance piece

2020 Global Engagement proposal

Fall 2017 (September through November)

Proposer: Lisa Honaker (with support from Suze DiPietro, Performing Arts Center; Denise McGarvey, Stockton Art Gallery; India Karavackas, Office of Global Engagement)

**Background:** In June 2015, representatives from ARHU and the Visual Arts program met with Japanese paper artist, Kyoko Ibe about *Recycling: Washi Tales*, an exhibit and play, featuring traditional Japanese music and theatre forms, on the history of papermaking in Japan. (“Washi” is the Japanese word for “handmade paper.”) For the exhibit, Ms. Ibe creates a dramatic installation out of her own handmade paper. The play, written by New York playwright Elise Thoron, takes place amidst this installation. A storyteller narrates stories of papermakers over time. The performance moves between the narrator, actors performing different styles of Japanese theatre, and musicians playing traditional instruments. The narrator actually makes paper onstage as part of the performance as well.

The performance seeks to explore relationships between words, music, story, images and structures to disseminate ideas not readily suited to traditional art or theatre. Indeed, one of Stockton’s draws for both Ms. Ibe and Ms. Thoron was the opportunity to actually stage the play in the art gallery—on both levels, so that the audience would move as the story moved. (I have attended a performance of *Recycling: Washi Tales* in New York at the Asia Society and feel it would be a valuable piece to bring to Stockton because of its innovative intent and its potential appeal to a variety of Stockton and area constituencies.) In addition to the exhibit, which would be installed in September 2017 in the Stockton Art Gallery, and the performances, which would take place during International Week in November 2017, the performers and artist would conduct workshops and presentations for students throughout the university. Ms. Ibe, for instance, will do a presentation on papermaking for Stockton Visual Arts students. We have also discussed a workshop on Noh drumming for Stockton Music students as well as public school students in Atlantic City. Ms. Ibe and Ms. Thoron have also proposed workshops/presentations on Biwa narrative, shadow dance, and the traditional Japanese tea service. All would occur during International Week, November 13-18. The entire collection of activities would be designed to promote cultural conversation and exchange through art.

**Activities:** While the bulk of the activities connected with this project will occur in November, a very big part of it—an exhibit of Kyoko Ibe’s handmade paper art will be installed on campus in early September and remain on display until the end of November. Ibe, and an assistant, paper artist Tamura Tadashi, will arrive on Stockton’s campus just after Labor Day to install an exhibit of her handmade paper art. Included below is a photo of the stage set from the performance of *Recycling: Washi Tales* at the Asia Society in New York in October 2015. The photo will give

you an idea of the scale of the pieces that Professor Ibe will be installing—and a reminder that this art exhibit will also be the set for the performance of *Recycling: Washi Tales* in November. It should be noted that Professor Ibe is now creating new work in Japan for this exhibit in particular.

Professor Ibe and Ms. Thoron are also excited to set this work in our two-story art gallery, since it will allow them the opportunity to innovate. Indeed they wished to set the play in the gallery rather than the PAC in order to do so. The innovation will involve using both levels of the gallery and asking the audience to travel with the troupe between levels as the play unfolds. The play's narrator, Karen Kandel, will lead guide the actors and audience between the two levels of the gallery (by stairs and elevator) for different scenes and different vantage points on those scenes. The gallery will seat up to 100 for these performances. (The planning for this movement of people will be part of the rehearsal process and will also factor into Professor Ibe's installation of her work in September.)



In addition to installing the exhibition, Professor Ibe and Mr. Tadashi will do a demonstration of papermaking and calligraphy in Mariana Smith's Printmaking I class during the week of September 11-15. Professor Ibe will also do a gallery talk for the general public about her work during that week. Arrangements for both events are currently being made.

Professor Ibe will return in November with the performers and theatre production personnel. In addition to Ibe, this 10-person troupe will include:

Elise Thoron, *Recycling: Washi Tales* author and director  
Cody Hong Chen, production manager  
Nicole Pearce, lighting designer  
Makiko Sakurai, performer  
Sonoko Soeda, performer  
Shonosuke Okura, performer  
Shizu Arai, performer  
Karen Kandel, performer

There will be three performances of the play: two on November 17 (one afternoon performance, which will be free for students and one in the evening) and one evening performance on November 18. The director has also asked that the rehearsals for *Recycling: Washi Tales* be open, so that the public may see the play “under construction” in the Stockton Art Gallery.

Further the *Recycling: Washi Tales* performers and production personnel will also be conducting the following workshops and presentations on traditional Japanese cultural practices and artistic forms:

Biwah tradition and Shomyo chant, Shizu Arai and Makiko Sakurai  
Noh drumming, Shonosuke Okura  
Shirabiushi dance, Makiko Sakurai  
Cross-cultural storytelling, Elise Thoron and the performers  
Japanese tea ceremony (for staff), select performers

While we are seeking times for these activities that will allow attendance by visual arts and performing arts classes in the different disciplines represented, these workshops will also be open to the public. The tea ceremony will be scheduled with staff needs and schedules in mind. In addition to performing a Noh drumming workshop on campus, Shonosuke Okura may also travel off-campus to do a presentation at the Sovereign Avenue School in Atlantic City, which has a thriving music and drumline program and which is part of the Stockton/Bay Atlantic music mentorship program. All activities except this possible trip to Sovereign Avenue School will take place in scheduled classes (and thus classrooms) or in the art gallery, so there should be no scheduling issues.

**Budget:** Our budget is also attached as an Excel spreadsheet.

While no other university will be sponsoring *Recycling: Washi Tales*, the Japan Foundation has agreed to contribute \$13,000.00, to be used specifically for plane fare and travel expenses for the artists and performers traveling from Japan. Additionally, the group coming to Stockton to present *Recycling: Washi Tales* has agreed to repurpose money from another grant to contribute to costs to perform at Stockton. Since we are charging a modest ticket price for two of the performances, we will also have some box office to contribute to the costs. The contributions from

all parties are noted in the spreadsheet. (We will note that we have already contacted the Country Inn and Suites, which is holding blocks of rooms for us for both September and November. We will also contact Seaview to see if it can beat the CI&S prices, but if not, we're ready to reserve now.)

With the \$10,000.00 from 2020 we will have sufficient funds to cover expenses (specified on the spreadsheet) with a small cushion for miscellaneous (visas) or unexpected expenses. We do not anticipate coming back to 2020 for additional funding should we fall short. We will find the funding to make up the difference elsewhere—probably from the ARHU budget.

**Assessment:** We will work with JY Zhou to administer the cultural competency survey to students from classes participating in the workshops and activities and also craft a short survey that also might address questions of cultural knowledge or impact (but brief enough for the audience to handle). We will also schedule a talk back after the performances for audience feedback. We will also track attendance figures in the gallery for the exhibit and for the various activities connected with this project, including the performances.

**Conclusion:** this is an opportunity to bring to Stockton an innovative cross-cultural visual and performing arts project that will last nearly the entirety of the Fall 2017 semester and feature abundant activities and presentations on Japanese culture. It will also provide a considerable amount of programming for International Education Week and promote Stockton's commitment to global perspectives and cross-cultural experiences.

**Funding**

Japan Foundation	13,000.00 (for plane fare for Japanese performers and artists)
ARHU	5,500.00
PAC	5,000.00
OGE	3,000.00
Stockton Art Gallery	3,000.00
Fractured Atlas--Ibe/Thoron funding	2,700.00
Box office (conservative estimate)	1,800.00
Potential 2020 funding	10,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,000.00</b>

**Expenses**

**The Japan Foundation will pay for plane fare for the Japanese artists and performers to travel from Japan.**

Travel	500 Plane fare from Minneapolis to Philadelphia for 1 person; driving expenses from NYC (3 persons driving together)
Hotel	5050 2 persons per room (10 days in September for 2 people; 10 days in November for 10 people)
Per diem	6000 \$50 per person per day (10 day in September for 2 people; 10 days in November for 10 people)
Honoraria	15000 \$1500.00 per person
Shipping	3000 art from Japan to US and back
<b>Total</b>	<b>29550</b>