

ISSUE



Master
Special Issue

Witty Vignettes Depicted in Karakuri Papercrafts

Explore
OJO+ Products Developed in Collaborative Industry-Academia
Project Exhibited at FaW TOKYO, Japan's Largest Fashion Expo

Advance
Cut-and-Fold Origami by Kiwamu Brings
Washi Animals to Life

TSUNAGU is a public relations magazine published by KPP GROUP HOLDINGS CO., LTD. An exploration in rediscovering a fascination with paper, we link paper and culture, paper and business, and paper and people.

Karakuri Paper Models Bring Whimsical Tales to Life

Three-dimensional figures sitting atop boxes can convey many types of stories. Charming enough to enjoy as a decorative piece, these papercraft works incorporate *karakuri*, traditional Japanese mechanical mechanisms, to become automata. Simply rotate the wheel with your finger and parts begin to move. Fusing meticulous design and clever humor, these *karakuri* papercraft models depict amusing scenes that cannot help but make you chuckle. In an interview with paper engineer Keisuke Saka, we explore the charms of his papercraft, an art that transforms flat sheets of paper into life-like, three-dimensional forms.



Aoumigame no Namida
("Marble of the Blue Turtle")

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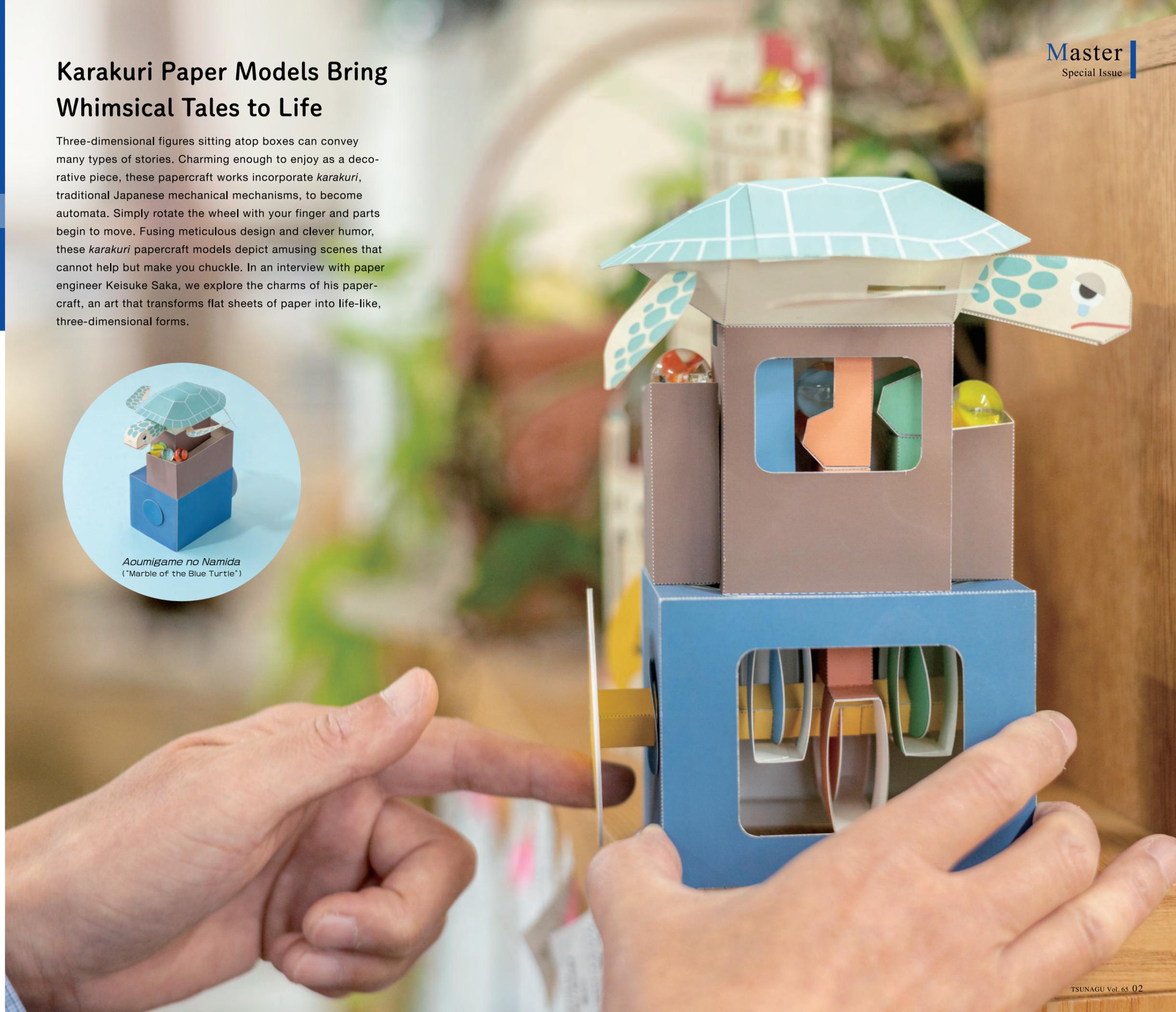
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"Camping Office" Showroom Opened in KPP Group Holdings Head Office Lobby

Create Supplement

Specially created by Keisuke Saka
Karakuri Mechanical Pegasus



For everyone from children to adults to enjoy!

Keisuke Saka's Three-Dimensional Karakuri Models



Keisuke Saka
Paper engineer and graphic designer

Born in Toyama Prefecture in 1965. After graduating from the Faculty of Letters at Kobe University, Saka studied graphic design at Kuwasawa Design School, while working at several different design firms. After going independent in 1994, he established Zukoshitsu (in Shibuya City, Tokyo) with a friend in 2000, following a three-year stay in Denmark. His signature series of *karakuri* papercraft models has gained popularity among people of all ages, earning Saka a growing fanbase both in and outside of Japan.



Official website (Artworks)



Online shop (For customers in Japan)



Online shop (For customers outside Japan)



Hesoten
("Spread Eagle")



Assembling the *karakuri* for *Hesoten*



Shishuposu no Iwa
("The Stone of Sisyphus")

Inspired by *The Myth of Sisyphus* from French author Albert Camus. Sisyphus, having incurred the wrath of the gods, is doomed to endlessly push a massive boulder up a mountain.



YouTube

Watch the video! /

Watch the video here!



Katatsumuri no Kyoho
("Snail Racing")



Kangaru Kea
("Kangaroo Care")



Taikutsu na Eiga
("Boring Movie")



Penguin no Mihatenu Yume
("Ready to Fly")



Shakaiteki Kyori
("Social Distancing")



Baberu no To
("The Tower of Babel")



Dai Dasso
("The Great Escape")



Tamerau Otoko
("Hesitation")

Watch the video! /



Manaita no Ue
("Doomed")

Turn the wheel to watch the carp flop wildly on the cutting board.



YouTube

Watch the video here!



"I want everyone to experience the fun of making papercrafts that move."

Keisuke Saka's *karakuri* papercraft models feature humorous vignettes — the carp flopping wildly on a cutting board in its final struggle or the penguin desperately flapping its wings, dreaming of one day flying through the sky. He also brings a comical touch to everyday scenes — two people eyeing each other warily over the last slice of pizza or a man nodding off during a boring movie, nearly sliding off his seat. A paper engineer, Saka's works are packed with a unique, witty quality that bring a smile to your face before you know it. Key to conveying this worldview is their *karakuri* mechanisms made of paper. The box paired with the figures houses gears, cranks, cams, and other mechanical elements that produce complex movements. This mechanism is activated by turning the wheel on the side of the box. As the parts move, unexpected stories

unfold — some charming, some mischievous. Asked about where he gets his ideas, Saka replies, "I get inspiration from everyday occurrences, as well as from stories, movies, and sometimes even proverbs and idioms." In Britain, home of the modern automata (contemporary Western mechanical dolls), many incorporate satire and irony into their simplicity, in contrast to classical mechanical puppets that were all about precision of movement. "I think my innate contrarian nature influences my work in many ways," Saka says.

When thinking about a *karakuri* piece, Saka says his mind moves in one of two directions.

"One way I work is to decide on the subject and how it will move first, and then I think about the mechanism that will bring it to life. The piece

entitled 'Hesoten ("Spread Eagle")' is a cat lying on its back and wriggling, because I thought that the way a cat moves would be interesting. The other way is simply watching how the mechanism moves and coming up with a subject based on that. I think about what the movements of the underlying mechanisms can be likened to. Either way, fragments of vague ideas are always in my head, and as I see and think about various things, these fragments connect to make new forms until they come together into one work," Saka explains.

After all of this experimenting, Saka has created some 60 unique works. Of these, over 40 have been made into craft kits sold as downloadable PDFs with templates and illustrations for assembly. "Most of the works I create are designed so that someone else can

assemble them. So, it is also important that the instructions are easy to understand and the structure is easy enough for anyone to put together. This style of work, where I need to both think carefully about detailed designs and work within a variety of constraints, suits me well, I think."

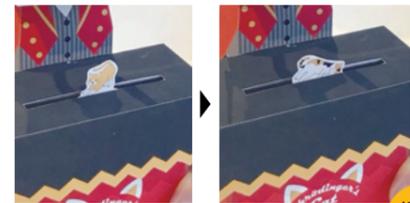
Now a long-active *karakuri* papercraft pioneer in Japan, Saka faced doubts and struggles on the road to where he is today. Born and raised in Toyama Prefecture, he attended university in Hyogo Prefecture, but he did not major in the arts or mechanical engineering that form the foundation of *karakuri*. Instead, he studied literature.

"I entered the school of literature simply because I liked books. Back then, I also had this unfounded confidence that 'a man on his own would be fine somehow,' so when I graduated, I didn't start looking for a job.



Maho no Reshipi
("Magic Recipe")

Watch the video! /



Shuredinga no Neko
("Schrodinger's Cat Show")

Depicting the thought experiment by physicist Dr. Schrodinger. Dressed as a magician, Schrodinger lifts and lowers the box, revealing first the cat alive, then the cat dead.



Watch the video here!



Created as a supplement to the quarterly Biohistory Cards published by the JT Biohistory Research Hall. Saka has been responsible for the graphic design and creation of supplements since 2002.



Books featuring Saka's papercraft works and *karakuri* models. From left, *Karakuri no Moto* ("The Essence of Karakuri", ©2007, Shubunsha), *KARAKURI WORKSHOP — Making Paper Toys That Move* (2021, Alphabet Education, India), *KARAKURI — How To Make Mechanical Paper Models That Move* (2010, St. Martin's Griffin, U.S.)



Usagi to Kame
("The Tortoise and the Hare")



Ma no Warui Homonsha
("Wrong Place, Wrong Time")



Kanagawa Oki Namiura
("The Great Wave")



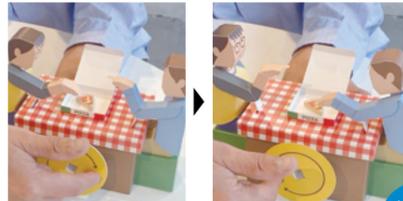
Akachan ga Yorokobu Shikake Ehon ("Delightful Slide-and-Find Books for Baby"), a series of slide-and-find books (written and illustrated by Mitsue Hiragi; published by Holp Shuppan Publications, Ltd.) with Saka's structural and graphic design. Launched 10 years ago, the series has reached 30 volumes with a total circulation of over 3 million copies. Translations have also been published in Taiwan, South Korea, and China.



Papercrafts inspired by famous chairs, created by Saka during his time in Denmark.



Watch the video! /



Enryo no Katamari
("The Last Slice of Pizza")

Two people sit across from each other, the last slice of pizza between them. They each reach out for it as they gauge the other's reaction.



Watch the video here!



Sugao no Hakucho
("Behind the Scenes")



A box of *karakuri* prototypes. The production process is similar to architecture: the orthographic projections (front, side, and top views) are drawn by hand first, after which the computer is used to create a template based on the drawings.



The studio where Saka creates his designs. His work sitting on display is enough to delight.

Since I was also interested in art and design, I enrolled in the night program at a vocational design school. At night, I studied the fundamentals of graphic design at school, and during the day, I worked at design firms. I enjoyed the detailed, hands-on work like preparing layouts and deciding on phototypesetting, but I was not comfortable with the dizzying pace of handling a massive volume of work at breakneck speed every day or with the unending cycle of having to come up with new ideas. After about three years, I decided to take a break from design work," says Saka.

Design was an extremely bustling industry at the time, due in part to the economic boom fueled by the bubble economy. Growing dissatisfied with a job that constantly demanded ideas that anticipated trends, Saka saved the money he made from part-time work and set off on a year-long backpacking trip around the world. He says, "Learning that many

people overseas live carefree lives was a valuable discovery." He resumed his career in design after returning to Japan, going independent in his late 20s. Family circumstances, however, brought him to Denmark.

"I ended up living in Denmark for three years, but I could not work because I did not have a work visa. My days were completely free, and it was then that I became engrossed in papercrafts, which I had long been interested in."

Before traveling abroad, Saka would find spare moments, even while working at design firms, to amuse himself with making pop-up cards and paper cutouts from leftover paper just for fun. Back then, he would visit with a papercraft artist who made magazine supplements and even help out with the work. Later, when he found himself unexpectedly spending time in a different country, Saka was exposed to new stimuli. Over time, he threw himself into what he genuinely loved doing, and as he did, his

uncertainty about the future suddenly vanished.

Saka used his time in Denmark to learn about *karakuri* mechanisms, spending his days experimenting with prototypes. He even started selling papercraft kits featuring Scandinavian-style chairs. Seeing local people enjoying creating works that he had designed gave him genuine joy.

"After coming back to Japan, I showed my work at papercraft exhibitions, and there I was able to see that not only the kids, but also the adults they were with, could not help but smile. My pieces are meant to be enjoyed by people of all ages, and I hope more people will experience the fun of transforming flat sheets of paper into three-dimensional forms and the joy of seeing the papercrafts you create with your own hands move."

Saka's three-dimensional papercrafts feature a wide range of motifs, including not just human and animal figures, but also architecture,

furniture, and vehicles, as well as other formats such as pop-up books for small children. His creative endeavors know no bounds, as he adds the values of "joy" and "surprise" to the paper we all use every day.

Let's try!!
The *Create* section of this issue showcases an original work conceived and designed by Keisuke Saka! Enjoy both features together!

Three-Dimensional Animal Works That Make Use of the Soft, Fuzzy Texture of Washi Paper and Convey a Sense of Warmth

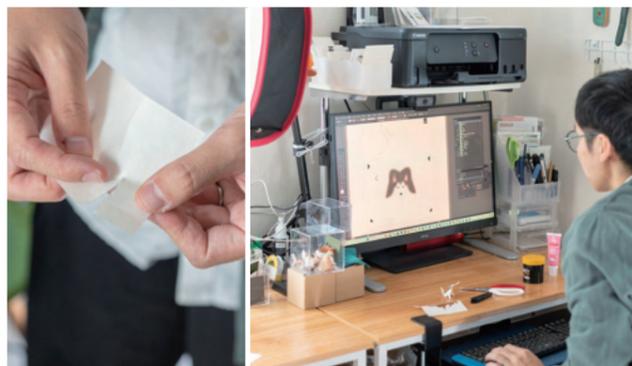
These miniature paper crafts evoke a sense of fluffy cuteness and warmth. The pieces, which express soft animal textures using the traditional feel of *washi* Japanese paper, are gaining much attention on social media, especially among dog lovers. The artist, Kiwamu, is a *washi kiri-origami* (paper cutting and folding) artist who transforms the fuzz on torn *washi* into animal fur to create diverse 3D animals from a single sheet of *washi*. We interviewed him at his studio to explore the appeal of his work.

—I understand you work at a nursery school. How did you get started creating these pieces?

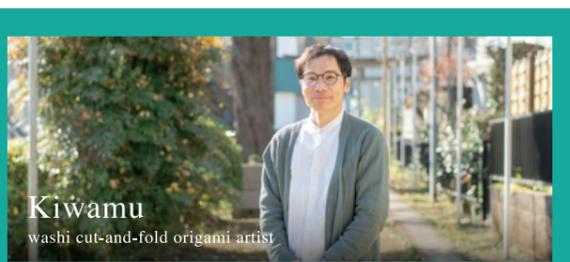
Making crafts freehand based on the children's requests during work at the nursery school sparked my interest in the world of paper cutting and folding. I have always loved foxes and raccoon dogs, and while thinking about how to imitate their fur, I arrived at using *washi* paper. I thought I would like to try making other animals, and started making dog pieces on a whim. When I posted a photo of my *washi* Shetland Sheepdog on social media, it got nearly 100,000 reactions. Now, I create pieces of various dog breeds and coat colors, as well as made-to-order pieces modeled after my customers' own dogs.

—Were the responses to the dog-themed works particularly strong?

While the fox, raccoon dog, and other animal pieces are also doing well, dog owners have deep feelings for their pets, which are members of the family. In particular, I received many delighted responses from owners of breeds for which fewer products are available, and this led to my current sales approach. I had not known much about dogs before, but this inspired me to research various breeds in detail. These days, my greatest reward is the genuine joy of the owners who order my pieces.



Left: Kiwamu says that the unique fuzziness and beautiful feel of *washi* are crucial. Right: Kiwamu's well-organized studio. It is fully equipped and set



Kiwamu
washi cut-and-fold origami artist

Kiwamu juggles two careers, working at a nursery school and as a paper craft artist. Inspired by requests from the children, he began his creative work around 2012. Fascinated by cut-and-fold origami — the art of creating three-dimensional shapes by cutting and folding a single sheet of paper — he went on to establish his own unique style that features the fuzzy texture of *washi* (Japanese paper).

—What was particularly challenging in establishing your unique style?

The hardest thing was finding the right *washi* paper for the pieces. The fibers need to be a certain length to look like a coat of fur, and since I print out design data that I prepare on a computer, compatibility between the *washi* and the printer is also important. I also had to consider various elements, such as the most suitable paper thickness for tearing and its affinity for ink. I ordered and tested various *washi*, eventually settling on Ise Washi and Awa Washi, which I use now.

—What is the process for creating made-to-order pieces?

Once I get an order on the website, I create a design that reflects the dog's personality based on a photo provided by the customer. For breeds I have not made before or for mixed breeds, I adjust the coat colors and patterns to capture their individual traits. I also try to meet requests for accessories such as clothing or ribbons whenever possible. I confirm the final design via LINE chat and revise as needed, so it can take quite a long time to finish. That is why, these days, I take orders in limited quantities, using a lottery system.

—What kinds of reactions have you received from your customers?

Many of them ask me to create pieces for a beloved dog who has passed away, and they display them in their living rooms or on family altars. Hearing comments like "It was like my dog had come back home, and it brought tears to my eyes" or "I am so happy I placed this order," brings me sincere joy. I'll keep doing my best to meet customer requests.

—What are your hopes and aspirations for the future?

In the future, I would like to challenge myself to create not just dogs but also cats and other animals. I am also interested in making pieces that combine a work I created with a diorama that expresses a 3D background. I would also love to give workshops for kids. I could improvise a line drawing based on requests from the children, and they would cut out the paper to create the piece. When I am asked to make something at the nursery school, I find joy in trying to figure out how to put it together, so a workshop is something I definitely want to make happen soon.



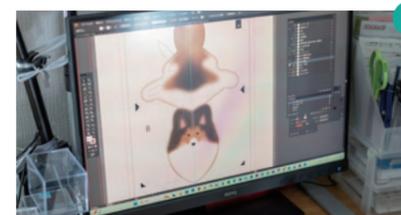
Production Process for Washi Cut-and-Fold Origami



1 Cut a test piece of *washi* paper into the rough form, and adjust overall balance.



4 Fold the paper in half along with the center line, then tear the edges by hand to fluff up the texture.



2 While checking the prototype, arrange pattern data for each dog breed. Employ color shades and color schemes based on photograph.



5 Use a pen or other tool to shape the edges to create round, natural curves.



3 After printing out the *washi* to be used for the piece, roughly cut along the pattern lines with thin-bladed scissors.



6 At left is a prototype made with the test *washi*. At right is the finished piece that used the final *washi*.

INFORMATION



Kiwamu's animal art (finished pieces) and made-to-order pieces are available for purchase from the online store. Made-to-order pieces are sold via lottery; check announcements on X, Instagram or other social media for details.



Made-to-order pieces can also be ordered in sets of two or three animals. At upper right is a photo provided by a client. The others are finished pieces.



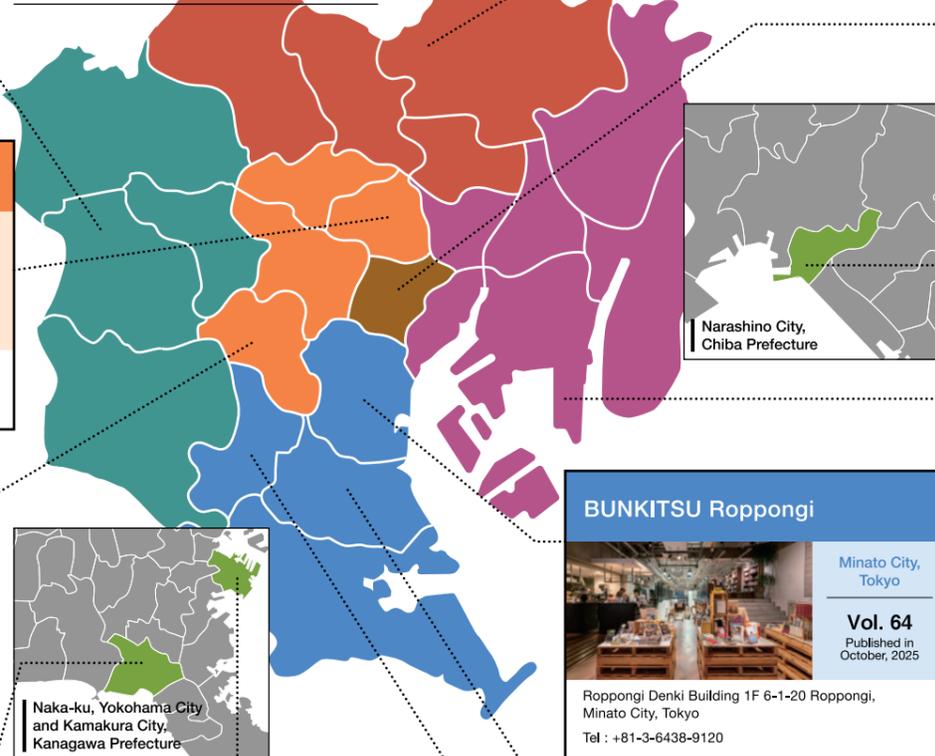
Includes all stores featured to date

TSUNAGU BOOK STORE LIST

From April 2014 (Vol.19) to April 2020 (Vol.43), TSUNAGU ran the Paper Event Calendar project, introducing events where readers could experience the charm of paper. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting self-restraint and restrictions on going out caused the project to be discontinued. Then, in January 2021 (Vol.45), TSUNAGU began a new project featuring bookstores that build "communication through books." It ran for four years through January 2025 (Vol.64). Although we end our bookstore feature project with this issue, it has been a privilege to introduce so many bookstores that foster knowledge and creativity by bringing people together. For this final issue, we have put together a list of all the bookstores we have featured. Some of these stores also offer TSUNAGU, so please visit them.



23 Special Wards of Tokyo



Shoan Bunko
Suginami City, Tokyo
Vol. 58
Published in April, 2024

3-12-22 Shoan, Suginami City, Tokyo
Tel : +81-3-5941-3662
<https://shoanbunko.com/>

Snow Shoveling Books & Gallery
Setagaya City, Tokyo
Vol. 62
Published in April, 2025

2F-C, 4-35-7 Fukasawa, Setagaya City, Tokyo
Tel : +81-6432-3468
<http://snow-shoveling.jp/>

RBL CAFE
Setagaya City, Tokyo
Vol. 57
Published in January, 2024

5-32-12 Daizawa, Setagaya City, Tokyo
Tel : +81-3-6805-2046
<https://rblcafe.jp/>

Honya B&B
Setagaya City, Tokyo
Vol. 47
Published in July, 2021

BONUS TRACK 2F, 2-36-15 Daita, Setagaya City, Tokyo
Tel : +81-3-6450-8272
<http://bookandbeer.com/>

books & café BOUSINGOT
Bunkyo City, Tokyo
Vol. 45
Published in January, 2021

2-33-2 Sendagi, Bunkyo City, Tokyo
Tel : +81-3-3823-5501
<https://www.bousingot.com/>

Bookcafe days
Shibuya City, Tokyo
Vol. 48
Published in October, 2021

1F Royal Palace Shibuya, 15-10 Uguisudani-cho, Shibuya City, Tokyo
Tel : +81-3-3461-1554
<https://ehonbox.net/hp/bookcafe-days-homepage/>

So-common
Kamakura City, Kanagawa Prefecture
Vol. 51
Published in August, 2022

2-19-31 Kamakurayama, Kamakura City, Kanagawa Prefecture
Tel : +81-467-80-2736
<http://so-common.com>

Naka-ku, Yokohama City and Kamakura City, Kanagawa Prefecture

Archishop Library & Cafe
Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture
Vol. 56
Published in October, 2023

4-9 Yoshida-machi, Naka-ku, Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture
Tel : +81-45-326-6611 (Archishop Studio Inc.)
<https://libraryandcafe.wordpress.com/>

Machi Library @ MUFG PARK
Nishitokyo City, Tokyo
Vol. 63
Published in August, 2025

MUFG PARK, 4-4-40 Yanagisawa, Nishitokyo City, Tokyo
<https://machi-library.org/where/detail/8096/>



Book Cafe Hale Kitazawa
Adachi City, Tokyo
Vol. 54
Published in May, 2023

2-33-3 Rokugatsu, Adachi City, Tokyo
Tel : +81-3-3859-1141
@bookcafehalekitazawa



Antenna Books & Cafe cocoshiba
Kawaguchi City, Saitama Prefecture
Vol. 50
Published in May, 2022

5-5-13 Shiba, Kawaguchi City, Saitama Prefecture
Tel : +81-48-499-1719
<https://cocoshiba.com/>

Book House Cafe
Chiyoda City, Tokyo
Vol. 55
Published in July, 2023

1F Kitazawa Bldg., 2-5 Kanda Jinbo-cho, Chiyoda City, Tokyo
Tel : +81-3-6261-6177 (books) / +81-3-6910-0819 (cafe or bar)
<https://bookhousecafe.jp/>

ESPACE BIBLIO
Chiyoda City, Tokyo
Vol. 53
Published in February, 2023

B1F, YK Surugadai Bldg., 1-7-10 Kanda Surugadai, Chiyoda City, Tokyo
Tel : +81-3-6821-5703
<https://www.espacebiblio.jp/>

BUNKITSU Roppongi
Minato City, Tokyo
Vol. 64
Published in October, 2025

Roppongi Denki Building 1F 6-1-20 Roppongi, Minato City, Tokyo
Tel : +81-3-6438-9120

Books & Café Dreadnought
Koto City, Tokyo
Vol. 61
Published in January, 2025

2-3-21 Hirano, Koto City, Tokyo (Relocating to Jimbo-cho, Chiyoda City, Tokyo around the beginning of 2026)
Tel : +81-3-5809-9008
<https://www.dreadnought-2019.com/>

noma books
Narashino City, Chiba Prefecture
Vol. 59
Published in July, 2024

2F Yamatoya Bldg., 3-11-9 Okubo, Narashino City, Chiba Prefecture
Tel : +81-50-5485-4883
<https://gj0n300.gorp.jp/>

KAIDO books & coffee
Shinagawa City, Tokyo
Vol. 46
Published in April, 2021

1F Maruya Bldg., 2-3-7 Kita-Shinagawa, Shinagawa City, Tokyo
Tel : +81-3-6433-0906
<http://kaido.tokyo/>

FUGENSHA – A Communication Oriented Gallery
Meguro City, Tokyo
Vol. 52
Published in November, 2022

5-3-12 Shimo Meguro, Meguro City, Tokyo
Tel : +81-3-6264-3665
<https://fugensha.jp/>

Stores that carry TSUNAGU
Stop by a store with this icon and pick up TSUNAGU.

*mitaka nova, which we featured in Vol.49 (published in January 2022), has closed.
*Before visiting a store in person, please check for its business days and hours on its website or social media account.

Making Letters Speak Tomone Uemura

Humans are creatures who express their thoughts. I feel that letters are the most profound and noble form of human expression. When it comes to letters, hand-written letters are best.

When we try to read between the lines, we can see the personality of the writer.

Vol. 43: Aya Koda

I spent the majority of my nearly 40-year career as a salaried worker involved in television program production. The only time I myself directly produced a program, however, was directing *Hito ni Rekishi Ari* (“Everyone Has a Story”), a show that featured interviews detailing the lives of living figures who had earned fame and recognition. As that was for only a little over two years, it is hardly something I can boast about. Literary critic Katsuichiro Kamei once wrote, “It is chance meetings that are matters of vital significance in life,” and looking back now, I get the sense that the greatest “matters of vital significance” in my own life are to be found in that era.

This marks the 43rd installment of this column that I have had the honor of writing for this publication for over a decade. I am now realizing that many of the people I featured have been individuals I encountered through that program in that era.

I happen to be quite an ordinary person myself with no particular merits to speak of, but if I were really held to it, being somewhat of a “people person” is something I suppose I might be able to count. I find myself drawn to almost everyone, including those with rather strong personalities, and my associations with them tend to spring from that. “Everyone Has a Story” brought the joys of interacting with featured guests in person and touching on their lives, as well as the fun of

getting to hear sub-guests depict candid sides of them that they might not reveal themselves—and indeed, the joys of meeting with those guests, too. Selecting featured guests was the producer’s responsibility, while arranging their appearances was left to the director. I might be being a bit boastful here, but I can say there were only two occasions when I was turned down in negotiating appearances: only Aya Koda and Chishu Ryu.

I think it must have been around 1969 that I paid Aya Koda a visit at her home in Koishikawa, Tokyo. Amazingly, that would mean half a century ago. Flipping through the records, she would have been 65 that year, while I was a mere 31. Briefly, for readers unfamiliar with Aya Koda, she was the second daughter of literary giant Rohan Koda, mother of essayist Tama Aoki, and a writer herself. After Rohan’s death, she made her debut as a writer, penning memories of her father and his final days. Representative works of hers include *Nagareru* (“Flowing”), *Ototo* (“Little Brother”), and *Kuroi Suso* (“Black Hems”).

While my memory is vague, as I visited only twice, I remember it was a compact yet splendid house located near Korakuen Gardens. Aya was a refined woman, appearing in a traditional *kimono*. As I was shown into the Japanese-style reception room, I began by talking about my father, who had been a lifelong history teacher and a book lover, as well. He had written a number of works on writers including Rohan Koda and Ogai Mori, and I mentioned that he had taken part in the Rohan-kai (“The Rohan Society”), a gathering of the author’s devoted readers organized by Toshihiko Dobashi (San Shiotani), a scholar on Rohan and supporter of the author. At this point, our conversation came to life. Aya told me she had read my father’s work and was familiar with him. When I invited her to appear as the featured guest on “Everyone Has a Story,” however, she was adamant in her refusal, giving the reason that, “Someone like me is not fit for such a prestigious role.”

Incidentally, Ryu turned down the invitation on the same grounds. Yet, it was not that he was rejecting the idea of appearing on television; rather that, like Aya, he was declining to appear on a program in which he would be the center of attention. In fact, shortly after that, he was willing to appear on a Shochiku 50th anniversary program that I helped write the script for, and he graciously offered remarks as well. In times past like that era, people had more of a humble mindset of a sense of humility and self-awareness. And for my part, pressuring anyone to appear on a program was something I never did.

In the two times I met with Aya Koda in person, I can recall very little of what we discussed. My father was an avid reader of Rohan’s writings and penned a number of short related works, including comparisons of the author and Ogai Mori and subjects such as Rohan’s biographical literature and his *Jingisu Kan Denki* (“Fantastic Tales of Genghis Khan”). Although I did not know much about Rohan, I suppose we must have spoken about things like that. My father had researched Mongolian history, and he revered Rohan and Ogai as “luminaries” of modern Japanese literature. “The Rohan Society” was led by Toshihiko Dobashi, who had attended to Rohan in his final hours, and although Dobashi must have still been alive when I visited Aya, I did not know him personally. I doubt if our conversations touched on him.

Of Rohan’s work, I had not read much more than his *Gojunoto* (“The Five-Storeyed Pagoda”). I had, however, read Aya’s account of his final days in her *Chichi—Konna Koto* (“My Father—His Sort of Thing”) and undoubtedly drew on that as we conversed. Writings Aya left behind describe Rohan as being well-versed in just about everything. He was knowledgeable about ceremonies and daily customs, too, it seems, and as Aya tells it, “Most things a daughter would ordinarily be taught by her mother, I learned from my father instead. How to apply white face powder, how to re-paper *shoji* screens, and how to settling debt-related formalities, courtship matters—my father advised me on it all.”

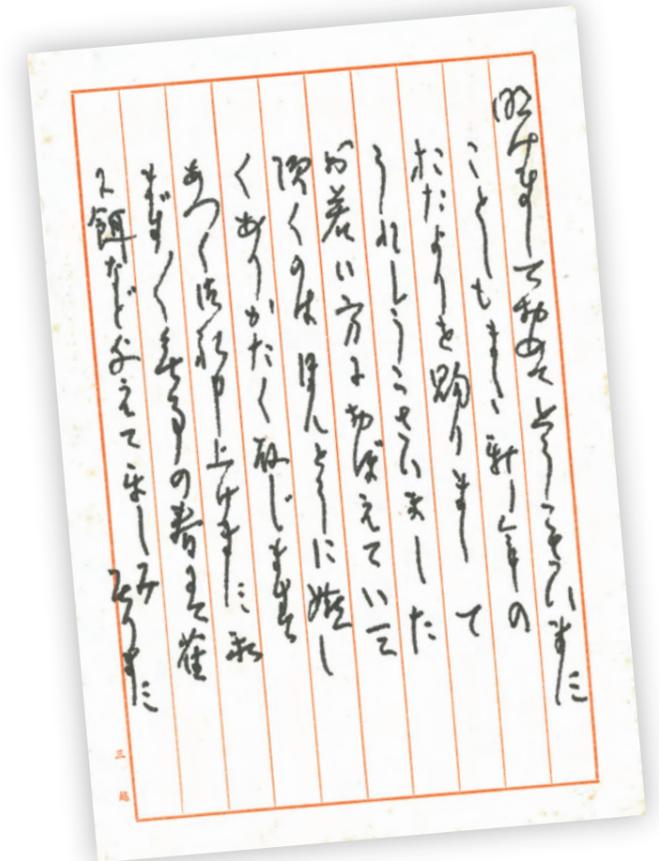
Chichi—Sono Shi (“My Father—His Death”) is an early piece of writing by Aya that, just as the title suggests, describes Rohan’s final days in minute detail over the roughly three weeks leading up to his passing. While it is not clear quite how much corresponds to actual reality, the work depicts the eventual resolution at her father’s deathbed of the internal conflict Aya experienced in worrying whether her father’s love for her might be less than for her older sister and younger brother both of whom had passed away earlier. It is an outstanding portrayal.

“During the brief spells when he would come back to being my real father from time to time, torrents of sadness and nostalgia would wash over. ‘Father, do you know me?’ And his reply, ‘That’s you, right, Aya?’ The sorrow was so piercing; this was the image of a father worthy of respect. Even on the verge of death, he remained the very image of a father; exalted, tranquil. The sense of me gazing up through the far gap between us—this I shall not forget. His smiling eyes gazing back at his dear Aya who he would leave behind on her own—these, truly those of a doting father.”

I think Aya and I exchanged New Year’s cards several times, the only one I can find remaining in my home is a single card, postmarked 1973, four years after my first visit.

“Happy New Year. I was honored and delighted to receive a New Year’s greeting from you once again this year. It brings me true joy and gratitude to be kept in mind like this by such a young fellow as yourself. I am warmly appreciative. For my part, I am heading into a peaceful spring with the enjoyment of feeding sparrows and such.”

As for me, I read books at a leisurely pace. I know, however, the time left for me is short. I hope to continue reading, at least, until my dying breath. On my bookshelf, the sets of complete works left to me by my father—by Rohan Koda, Ogai Mori, Soseki Natsume, Ryunosuke Akutagawa— still sit untouched. Just this moment, though, I feel inspired to make a start reading through Rohan’s work.



Aya Koda

Essayist, novelist
1904–1990



Photo: Mainichi Shinbun, Aho

Born in Tokyo in 1904. After graduating from Joshi Gakuin, she married and divorced before supporting her father Rohan in his later years. After Rohan’s death, she made her debut in the literary world with collections of memories *Zakki* (“Random Notes”) and *Shuen* (“The Last Hours”). Representative works of hers include *Kuroi Suso* (“Black Hems”), *Nagareru* (“Flowing”), and *Ototo* (“Little Brother”). She received the Yomiuri Prize, Shincho Literary Prize, Japan Art Academy Prize, and Joryu Bungaku Sho Literary Prize. Her essays, which depicted scenes from day-to-day life and expressed affinity with plant and animal life, were acclaimed as well, and she left behind numerous collections including *Konna Koto* (“His Sort of Thing”), *Misokkasu* (“Good-for-nothing”), *Kuzure* (“Landslides”), and *Ki* (“Tree”). Her daughter, Tama Aoki, is also active as an essayist, making for a literary family that spans three generations. She passed away at the age of 86 due to heart failure.



Author

Tomone Uemura
Essayist

After graduating from the Department of History, the Faculty of Letters, Arts and Sciences at Waseda University in 1962, he worked at Toei Co., Ltd. before entering TV Tokyo Corporation, where he was later appointed to managing director of TV Tokyo and president and representative director of PROTX.

Presenting the KPP Group's Diligent Efforts toward Realizing a Sustainable Society

KPP Sustainable Times

The circulation and recycling of resources and energy is an extremely important issue in today's world. The mission of the KPP Group is to contribute to the realization of a recycling-oriented society. Through our business activities, we contribute to building a sustainable society and work to enhance corporate value. In this issue, we report on an industry-academia collaboration project that uses OJO+ paper yarn, which is attracting attention in a wide range of industries.

Industry-Academia collaboration brings a new creative dimension to OJO+. Youthful creativity illuminates the future of sustainable manufacturing.

OJO+ paper yarn is a natural fiber made from paper that is garnering attention as an eco-responsible material. To expand its potential and convey the significance of sustainable manufacturing to the next generation, the KPP Group (Kokusai Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd. and Oji Fiber Co., Ltd.) launched an industry-academia collaboration project with TOKYO MODE GAKUEN.

The project began in June 2025, with 99 third-year students enrolled in the school's Fashion Design Course taking part. In the special lecture that kicked off the project, a representative from Oji Fiber Co., Ltd. explained the manufacturing process and environmental performance of OJO+. Students then used the knowledge they gained to create design sketches. Four of these were selected through a school-wide competition to be made into dresses using OJO+ fabric and displayed in October at FaW TOKYO, one of the largest fashion exhibitions in Japan. The inventive designs and their exceptional functionality featuring lightness and dry textures drew the attention of the fashion professionals and buyers in attendance.

This initiative gave students a valuable opportunity to experience sustainability that begins with selection of materials. The KPP Group will continue to support the talent of the next generation in order to open up the unlimited potential of paper, and contribute to the realization of a recycle-oriented society.



Toka (Crystalline Flowers), by Minori Sakata



Orihana (Folded Flower), by Sota Hara



Myakujo Ryuki (Venous Ridges), by Takumi Ikeda



Forest Glimmer—Mori no Kirameki, by Hiyori Kojima

OJO+ Paper Yarn and TOKYO MODE GAKUEN's Industry-Academia Collaboration Project

Step1 Special Lecture

June 18, 2025 @ TOKYO MODE GAKUEN

A representative from Oji Fiber Co., Ltd. gave a special lecture on OJO+, covering its manufacturing process and environmental performance. Students then handled OJO+ fibers and products firsthand. Many were struck by the material's lightness and texture, asking questions such as, "Is the paper washable?" and "Why use biodegradable materials for clothing?"



Step2 Making the Design Sketches

@ TOKYO MODE GAKUEN

Drawing on their coursework and the insights gained from the lecture, students created design sketches. They examined OJO+ from multiple perspectives, resulting in a wide range of original and forward-looking designs.



Step4 Displaying Works at the Exhibition

October 1-3, 2025 @ Tokyo Big Sight

At the Autumn edition of Fashion World Tokyo (FaW Tokyo), which was attended by about 25,000 visitors from all over the world, the students' four dresses were exhibited as the culmination of their learning. With many fashion professionals eyeing the pieces, attendees voted Sota Hara's Orihana ("Folded Flower") the most popular (receiving 198 votes out of 619 cast).



Step3 Selection of the Four Works for Exhibit

@ TOKYO MODE GAKUEN

The school and KPP selected four designs for production using OJO+ fabric. The students refined the pieces through trial and error, making use of the paper fabric's bounciness and moisture absorption and release properties while experimenting with sewing techniques.



OJO+ Paper Yarn

An eco-responsible natural fiber developed by KPP Group company Oji Fiber Co., Ltd. For details, see the official website.



- Raw Material:** Uses fast-growing, pesticide-free Ecuadorean abaca.
- Functionality:** Abaca fibers have hollow centers that make them much lighter than other natural fibers. Superior moisture absorbency and release properties also make them comfortable to wear—both cool in the summer and warm in the winter.
- Environmental Performance:** Fully circular material that exerts low environmental impact in the manufacturing process, and is biodegradable; after use it is decomposed naturally in the soil by microorganisms.

TOKYO MODE GAKUEN

A vocational school directly connected to the business world that trains professionals ready to make immediate contributions in a wide range of industries, including fashion, design, business, interior design, graphics, and the beauty industry.

Address: Mode Gakuen Cocoon Tower, 1-7-3 Nishi-shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo



Editorial postscript

As I write this in late December, just before final proofreading, we still have not finished the prototype for this issue's paper craft supplement, the Karakuri (Mechanical) Pegasus. That is how difficult this one is!

This is the first craftwork in the roughly 18-years since TSUNAGU started that has a moving mechanism. While we aim for freshness on every page of every issue, this collaboration with paper engineer Keisuke Saka—a pioneer in

mechanical paper models—was something I had long hoped to pursue.

Saka did not start out doing this work. He left the design firm he had been working for, moved overseas, and eventually became interested in the world of paper crafts. Looking back calmly on his past, he said things just turned out the way they turned out.

I asked him, "Letting go of a familiar environment must have required resolve. Was that your

situation?" He replied, "I did not feel like I had to become something or be a certain way. Those were just the times back then."

In our hectic daily lives, we often find ourselves thinking about purposes and goals, and work backwards to figure out how to live our lives now. However, to discover the new me, I for one would like to try walking 'Que Sera, Sera' (or seeing where life takes me).

Tomoka Kato



We post short videos that show the making of TSUNAGU's supplements on our YouTube channel. The Pegasus in this issue was also created with great effort by our newest editorial staff members. Please watch and see its wings take flight!



“Camping Office” Showroom Opened in KPP Group Holdings Head Office Lobby

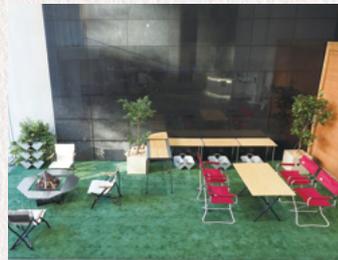
We created a special space where people can experience a new way of working at the KPP Group Holdings head office.

The showroom that was built in the entrance lobby in December 2025 has a campsite-like atmosphere, with bonfire tables and outdoor chairs. Here, one can experience a “camping office,” where the comfort of nature blends with the business environment.

The camping office concept has been attracting attention in recent years. It is expected to offer a new workstyle that will enhance creativity and productivity. While indoors, the space affords a taste of openness, encourages communication among employees, and functions to foster free thinking.

This showroom was planned and designed by Snow Peak Business Solutions, Inc., whose concept is, “Nature and work go well together.” It redefines conventional office norms, proposing a new way of working where relaxation and concentration coexist.

Next time you are in the area, please stop by and experience this workspace of the future.



A Comfortable Space Featuring Paper Turf

Supporting the comfort of this space from underfoot is Paper Turf made from the paper yarn, OJO⁺, which covers the entire floor. This artificial turf product made from paper, not plastic, is sold by KPP group company Kokusai Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd. It helps support a sustainable, comfortable workstyle that gives one a feeling of nature while in an office in the city. The Paper Turf is a soft-textured, environmentally responsible material that brings a sense of gentle comfort and peace of mind, forming the foundation for a new kind of office that nurtures creativity for everyone who works there. Designed to support future-oriented ways of working from the ground up, it symbolizes a step toward a more sustainable world.

Recently, it was also introduced in the communication hall of the head office of TAKEO Co., Ltd.

* For more information on the paper yarn, OJO⁺, see page 13.



TAKEO Co., Ltd. Headquarters
Communication Hall

INFORMATION

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Tel : +81-3-3542-4169
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We have adopted a bookbinding method free of staples, paste and heat, taking into consideration recycling and the risk of injuries.



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