



JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM

PERSEVERANCE

Japanese Tattoo Tradition in a Modern World

EXHIBITION FACT SHEET





EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION

This groundbreaking photographic exhibition by Kip Fulbeck and Takahiro Kitamura explores the artistry of traditional Japanese tattoos as well as their rich history and influence on modern tattoo practices.

Although tattooing is largely seen as an underground activity in Japan, it has persevered and is now internationally renowned for its artistry, lineage, historic symbolism and the skill of its practitioners.

Perseverance features the work of seven highly acclaimed tattoo artists—Horitaka, Horitomo, Horishiki, Miyazo, Shige, Junii, and Yokohama Horiken—as well as a host of other modern tattoo experts. The exhibition includes life-sized photographs of full body tattoos, interactive elements, and more.



HORITAKA (TAKAHIRO KITAMURA),

CURATOR

Horitaka is a tattoo artist as well as the author and publisher of numerous books on tattoo art and culture. His books include *Bushido: Legacies of the Japanese Tattoo* (Schiffer Publishing, 2001), *Tattooing From Japan to the West* (Schiffer Publishing, 2004); and *Tattoos of the Floating World: Ukiyo-e Motifs in Japanese Tattoo* (KIT Publishers, 2003). Horitaka is renowned for his advocacy of Japanese tattooing as an art form and has worked as a visiting artist across the U.S. and Europe. Horitaka has lectured at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, UC Santa Barbara and conferences held in Italy and Hawaii. He is the co-founder and co-director of the annual Bay Area Convention of the Tattoo Arts and the owner of State of Grace tattoo shop in San Jose, California. His graphic designs have been used by Nike SB, Bacardi, and many other companies.



KIP FULBECK,

PHOTOGRAPHER & DESIGNER

Kip Fulbeck is the author of several books, including *Part Asian*, *100% Hapa* (Chronicle Books, 2006) and *Permanence: Tattoo Portraits* by Kip Fulbeck (Chronicle Books, 2008). He has exhibited and performed throughout the U.S. and abroad, including solo exhibitions at the Japanese American National Museum, Invisible NYC Gallery, Space180 Gallery, Ghettoogloss Gallery, and Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center. A Professor of Art at the University of California, Santa Barbara, he has been featured on CNN, MTV, The Today Show, and National Public Radio.



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FEATURED ARTISTS

HORITAKA (TAKAHIRO KITAMURA), see above.

HORITOMO (KAZUAKI KITAMURA)

Horitomo rose to the forefront of pioneering Japanese tattoo artists in the 1990s by challenging traditions and bringing his own version of the Western style to Japan. In a marked shift, he undertook a Japanese apprenticeship, was re-titled as Horitomo, and devoted his life to the study of traditional Japanese tattooing. In addition to his extensive knowledge of Japanese culture and tradition, Horitomo is also highly experienced in *tebori* (hand tattooing), the traditional method of Japanese tattooing which predates the electric tattoo machine. He has published two volumes of his artwork: *Immovable: Fudo Myo-o Tattoo Design by Horitomo* (State of Grace, 2011) and *Monmon Cats* (State of Grace, 2013). His graphic designs have also been used by numerous companies, including Sega Game Systems.

HORISHIKI (CHRIS BRAND)

Horishiki works in Southern California and is one of the world's leading tattoo artists. He has worked with tattoo legend Jack Rudy at the famed Good Time Charlie's Tattooland in Anaheim for over a decade. Horishiki is the co-author of *The Ulysses Guide to the Los Angeles River* (GK Editions, 2008), which had an accompanying exhibition at the Pasadena Museum of California Art. His work is included in the "LA Liber Amicorum" blackbook project at the Getty Research Institute, and he has done graphic design for various companies as well as illustrations for books and magazines. As a pioneer in new fusion styles, Horishiki brings a unique perspective to Japaense tattooing and showcases some of the most original Chicano/Latino interpretations of traditional Japanese fables. He received the title Horishiki from Horitomo in 2013.

MIYAZO (MASAO MIYAZAKI)

Miyazo is widely considered one of Japan's premier traditional tattoo artists. Based in Osaka, a city well known in the world of Japanese tattooing, he is the only heir to the famed Horitsune lineage. Miyazo exemplifies the regional notoriety of tattooing and in his thirties is considered by many worldwide to be a master tattoo artist. He often exhibits at international conventions and is well known and respected in tattoo circles, but his core clientele are Osaka tattoo enthusiasts.

SHIGE (SHIGENORI IWASAKI)

Based in Yokohama, Shige embodies the synthesis of traditional Japanese tattoo with contemporary, modern styles. He is nothing short of a global phenomenon. His tattoo work and paintings have been praised worldwide, and his work has been featured in magazines and at conventions, museums, and galleries. In 2010, Shige was part of the groundbreaking "Basara" show organized by renowned artist Tenmyouya Hisashi. Held in an art gallery in the busy Aoyama District in Tokyo, "Basara" was the first event of its kind. Shige represented Japanese tattooing by speaking and showing ten of his body suit clients in person—a very rare sight in Japan. A monograph of his work, entitled *Shige (State of Grace, 2009)*, has sold over 5,000 copies to date. Shige is not only an award winning tattoo artist, but also an ambassador of Japanese art.

JUNII (JUNKO SHIMADA)

Originally from Japan, Junii is a pioneer in Japanese tattooing. She began getting a traditional Japanese bodysuit in the late 1970s, something that is still rare for a woman in Japan. In 1987, she attended an American tattoo convention to display her tattoos and met her future husband, Bill Salmon. She now tattoos with Salmon at Diamond Club Tattoo in San Francisco, California, and has lectured at museums and conventions throughout the nation. She possesses unparalleled inside knowledge of both the Japanese and American tattoo worlds and is recognized as the most important woman in Japanese tattooing.

YOKOHAMA HORIKEN (KENJI HORI)

Originally from Yokohama, Horiken is a renowned *tebori* specialist, one of the few residing in the U.S. He is a graduate of Tama Art University, and a self-taught tattoo artist who constantly works to refine and improve his tattoo skills. His work has been shown internationally, and he has been featured in numerous magazines. Horiken has also received a visa as an artist of extraordinary ability and currently tattoos at State of Grace.

EXHIBITION PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Estimated number of crates: 8

Linear footage requirement: 250 ft.*

- 8 life-sized prints on metal (each is 36" x 84")
- 5 framed large prints (each print is 61" x 63")
- 90 framed prints (each print 24" x 24")
- 1 12' curved aluminum photographic panorama of 14 full body tattoos with artist biographies
- 1 traditional *torii* (78" x 102", ceiling support for *torii* [two cables] at 250 lbs)
- 24 silk *tako* (kites)
- 1 large and 7 small lanterns
- 5 traditional and modern tattooing tools
- 1 wooden relief carving
- 8 circular glass *bonji* script art pieces
- 2 primary text panels (plus an additional introductory text panel)
- 7 secondary text panels
- 6 graphic elements (overheads and installation instructions provided)
- 13 video presentations (DVD format)
- 2 life-sized photo stand ins (48" x 57" and 24" x 24")

* A subset of the photographs can be made available for venues with space limitations.



FEATURES



GRAPHIC ART

In addition to the photographs, graphic elements are added to the exhibition through the application of original artwork applied to the gallery's walls. The graphic designs included are: exhibition title lettering by internationally known street artist Chaz Bojorquez; *gaman* (the Japanese word for perseverance) in Japanese calligraphy; a drawing of a koi fish; a drawing of Kannon Bodhisattva (Goddess of Mercy, one of Asia and Japan's most beloved deities); and a drawing of the *bonji* (representing the eight Buddhist guardian deities based on year of birth). These large graphic elements add drama to the presentation and are simple to create (overheads and instruction included).

WOOD RELIEF CARVING

Wood relief carving of a suikoden warrior created by Horishiki (Chris Brand).



PORTRAITS

This exhibition features over 100 photographs of contemporary Japanese tattoos, as well a curved aluminum photographic panorama of 14 full body tattoos.



TORII

A *torii* is a traditional Japanese gate most commonly found at the entrance of or within a Shinto shrine, where it symbolically marks the transition from the profane to the sacred.



TATTOO TOOLS

To gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the art of Japanese tattoos, both traditional (3) and modern (2) tattooing tools are featured in the exhibition. These hand tools were made by Horimomo.

AUDIO FILES

Audio files featuring voices of the curator and artists are available for use in conjunction with the exhibition as an audio tour.

CIRCULAR GLASS BONJI SCRIPT ART PIECES

These glass circles feature *bonji*, the Japanese generic term for the Siddham script which has its roots in North Indian script used for writing Sanskrit. The *bonjis* represent the eight Buddhist guardian deities based on year of birth.

PHOTO STAND INS

Provide a wonderful opportunity for guests to interact with the exhibition by placing themselves in two of the portraits, thus becoming instantly tattooed.

MEDIA PRESENTATION

Video presentations include interviews by the exhibition curator and artists, offering insights into the exhibition.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Text panels exploring the symbolism of central Japanese tattoo imagery/ subjects and a historical overview of Japanese tattoo and its modern origins as an art form derived from ukiyo-e (literally pictures of the floating world).



LANTERNS

These handmade lanterns feature the title of the show and the names of the artists in *kanji* (Japanese calligraphy). Lanterns are traditionally used by Japanese tattooers to announce themselves and their titles.



TAKO

Individually crafted silk *tako* (kites), each featuring tattoo art by one of the exhibitions participating artists.



EXHIBITION PUBLICATION

The companion book, *Perseverance: Japanese Tattoo Tradition in a Modern World*, features 300 photographs by Kip Fulbeck, a selection of which are included in the exhibition. The book is edited by exhibition curator Takahiro Kitamura and features writings by Dr. G.W. Kimura; Fulbeck; Junko Shimada; Chaz Bojorquez; Chris Brand; Jill Halpin; Kenji Hori; and Kitamura. It is published by the Japanese American National Museum.

TOUR

Available beginning mid-August 2016.

SHIPPING

JANM makes all arrangements; exhibitors pay outgoing shipping within the contiguous United States.

EXHIBITION SPONSORSHIP

Perseverance: Japanese Tattoo Tradition in a Modern World is organized by the Japanese American National Museum. This exhibition is made possible, in part, by the support of Mariko Gordon and Hugh Cosman; Creative Superette; Phase One; PROLAB Digital Imaging; Lucky Supply Tattoo Museum; Samy's Camera; UCSB Academic Senate; UCSB Department of Art; Richard Ross; and Spoonflower, Inc.

CONTACT

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The mission of the Japanese American National Museum is to promote the understanding and appreciation of America's ethnic and cultural diversity by sharing the Japanese American experience.

Japanese American
National Museum

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janm.org/perseverance

