

Every Living Thing: Animals in Japanese Art

Every Living Thing: Animals in Japanese Art is the first exhibition in the United States to bring together artistic representations of animals in all media across Japanese history from the fifth century to the present. On view until December 8, 2019, the exhibition is an excellent opportunity to expose your students to nearly two hundred works of art that shed light on the relationship between humans and animals in Japanese culture. Plentiful connections can be made between exhibition content and core content areas, including History-Social Sciences, English Language Arts, and the Life Sciences.

The Japanese reverence for nature is underpinned by the nation's unique spiritual heritage of Shintō and Buddhism, resulting in artwork that represents animals in a wide variety of ways: as spiritual, supernatural, or auspicious beings; as symbols of power; as sentient beings capable of achieving salvation; and as manifestations of the beauty of the natural world.

The essays in this packet take a close look at five artworks in the exhibition—painted screens, a woodblock print, two carved wooden statues, and a scroll painting—that illuminate the importance of animals in Japanese culture. Each artwork offers insight into how the Japanese relate to nature and the roles that animals play in everyday life.

Cranes by Maruyama Okyo is an Edo period pair of screens that celebrates the beauty of red-crowned and gray cranes. Likely based on actual birds that the artist observed at the Imperial Palace in Kyoto, the paintings are some of the first in Japan to represent animals directly from nature. The screens' gold backgrounds also highlight the birds' auspicious significance: cranes were traditionally believed to live for one thousand years and are therefore symbols of longevity and good luck.

A woodblock print from 1858 entitled *Picture of the*

Twelve Animals to Protect the Safety of the Home combines all twelve zodiac animals to create a kind of super creature that has special powers to watch over the home and help bring about a bountiful harvest. Adopted from China in the sixth century, the Japanese zodiac, or *Junishi*, is used to order time and space, and also provides information about one's personality traits and fortune.

Sacred Deer of Kasuga Shrine and *Pair of Sacred Foxes* are carved wooden figures that serve as messengers for or incarnations of Shintō deities, or *kami*. An ancient Japanese faith that continues to this day, Shintō involves showing reverence toward *kami* through prayer, offerings, festivals, and other worshipful expressions. Deer are especially meaningful in Nara, where they are represented both in artistic form at the shrine Kasuga Taisha and through living deer that occupy the surrounding park. Foxes, often associated with mischief and trickery, symbolize the important deity Inari, who oversees rice cultivation.

Japan's other primary religious practice is Buddhism. Within a Buddhist worldview, animals are viewed as sentient beings able to attain salvation. This belief is often expressed in art that demonstrates a symbiotic relationship between humans, animals, and plants. Kanō Eitai's scroll painting *Hōjō-e Ritual of Releasing Captured Animals* depicts a Buddhist ceremony that involves freeing captive animals so that, like humans, they might escape the cycle of suffering after death and achieve enlightenment.

Much of Japanese art is characterized by a deep interest in animals and can reveal rich information about Japanese belief systems and ways of life. We hope this resource packet will allow you to share Japanese culture with your students and open their minds to animals' importance as unique sources of beauty, Shintō messengers, powerful zodiac symbols, and recipients of Buddhist compassion.

Works Cited

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Cranes, 1772, Edo period (1772–1780)
Maruyama Ōkyo

These may be seventeen of the best-known cranes in the history of Japanese art, yet they seem completely unfazed by their reputation as they bob and peck their way across two folding screens (*byōbu*).

Painted by renowned artist Maruyama Ōkyo in 1772, the screens embody his naturalistic style, which the artist achieved by working directly from nature. Ōkyo's approach to painting was considered revolutionary at the time, when artists were trained to copy sketches and paintings by other artists instead of directly observing the natural environment. Ōkyo even founded his own school based on this new style of painting called the Maruyama school.

Ōkyo probably based the cranes in these screens on birds he observed at the Imperial Palace in Kyoto as they foraged, rested, slept, and preened. Speaking about his artistic process, Ōkyo once reflected, “for my part, I always have a small diary with me for use in daily drawing. When I see mountains, rivers, grasses, trees, birds, animals, insects, fish, people, and anything else in its living state, I believe I should copy it down.”¹

Despite Ōkyo's faithfulness to nature, there is no horizon line in the paintings and the cranes do not appear before a naturalistic background. Instead, they go about their daily activities amid flat squares of shimmering gold leaf. Look closely and you will see that there are two different species interacting on the screens: red-crowned cranes (*tanchozuru*) and gray cranes.

Cranes are important, mystical animals in Japanese culture. They were traditionally believed to live for one thousand years and are therefore symbols of longevity as well as good luck. Cranes appear across all art forms and are especially popular subjects for origami. An ancient Japanese legend promises that anyone who folds one thousand paper cranes will be granted a wish.

The art of painted folding screens, or *byōbu*, was

brought over from China around the eighth century, in the late Nara period. Literally meaning “wind wall,” *byōbu* were typically used to block wind drafts in traditional open-layout Japanese homes. They were also used as diplomatic gifts, as decoration in Shintō or Buddhist temples, and as symbols of wealth and power by the elite.

When Maruyama Ōkyo's *Cranes* joined LACMA's collection in 2011, Japanese Art Curator Robert Singer proclaimed, “this is the finest pair of Japanese screens to leave Japan in its 440-year history of Western contact.”² Considered by many to be among the most beautiful and unusual Japanese screens, *Cranes* enchants with its majestic, life-size birds set in an abstract golden world.

Discussion Prompts

1. Ōkyo chose to fill the backgrounds of the screens with gold leaf instead of a naturalistic landscape. Why do you think he chose to do that? How does the gold background affect how you perceive the cranes?
2. What would these screens look like if they had naturalistic backgrounds? How would that change your impression of the cranes? Research crane habitats and make a drawing or painting of them.
3. In recent years, threats such as overhunting, habitat loss due to climate change, and pollution have led to the red-crowned crane's near-extinction. Luckily, conservation efforts have succeeded in bringing back this important animal. Today it is on the endangered species list. What are some ways that art can be used to help endangered animals?

¹ Timon Screech, *The Shogun's Painted Culture: Fear and Creativity in the Japanese States 1760–1829*, (Reaktion Books, 2000), 193.

² Suzanne Muchnic, “Prized 18th century screens join LACMA's Japanese art collection,” *Los Angeles Times*, accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-xpm-2013-jan-17-la-et-cm-8th-century-screens-lacma-collection-20130117-story.html>.



Maruyama Ōkyo, *Cranes*, 1772, Edo period (1772–1780), pair of six-panel screens; ink, color, and gold leaf on paper, .1-.2) mount: 67 ¼ x 137 ¾ x ¾ in. (170.82 x 349.89 x 1.91 cm) each, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Camilla Chandler Frost in honor of Robert T. Singer (M.2011.106.1-.2), photo © Museum Associates/LACMA



Maruyama Ōkyo, *Cranes*, 1772, Edo period (1772–1780), pair of six-panel screens; ink, color, and gold leaf on paper, .1-.2) mount: 67 ¼ x 137 ¾ x ¾ in. (170.82 x 349.89 x 1.91 cm) each, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Camilla Chandler Frost in honor of Robert T. Singer (M.2011.106.1-.2), photo © Museum Associates/LACMA



Maruyama Ōkyo, *Cranes* (details), 1772, Edo period (1772–1780), pair of six-panel screens; ink, color, and gold leaf on paper, .1-.2) mount: 67 ¼ × 137 ¾ × ¾ in. (170.82 × 349.89 × 1.91 cm) each, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Camilla Chandler Frost in honor of Robert T. Singer (M.2011.106.1-.2), photo © Museum Associates/LACMA

**Picture of the Twelve Animals to Protect the Safety of the Home
(Kanai anzeno mamoru Junishi no zu), late Edo period (1615–1868), 1858, 9th month
Utagawa Yoshitora**

This animal looks like it could be a new species of Pokémon, but it is actually an auspicious creature made up of all twelve animals from the Chinese zodiac. It has been assigned the special task of protecting the home.

Adopted in Japan in the sixth century, the Chinese zodiac is used in numerous Asian countries. Called *Junishi* in Japan, the zodiac is based on the lunar year and consists of twelve animal symbols that correspond to the hours of the day, points on a compass, and individual years in a repeating twelve-year cycle. Each year of the cycle is associated with a different animal. In order, they are: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat or sheep, monkey, rooster or chicken, dog, and wild boar.

Looking closely at the print, elements of each zodiac animal can be identified, including a rat's face, an ox's horns, a rooster's cockscomb, a rabbit's ears, a horse's mane, a goat's beard, a dog's torso patterned with a tiger's skin, a monkey's legs, and the tails of a boar and a snake, with the front legs wrapped in the flames of a dragon. A rhyme above the creature includes all of the animals' names and reveals the source of a good harvest: "the farmer who rises before dawn, in the hour of the tiger, and works in the fields through noon, the hour of the horse."

The rhyme makes a strong connection between the zodiac animals and farming, indicating that the animals play an important role in the agricultural calendar. The rhyme also suggests that the animal's innate powers work in combination with human efforts (waking early and working until noon) to bring about good fortune. Additionally, the title suggests that the print itself has a special protective power and invites speculation about how it may have been used: did people hang it up somewhere meaningful in their home, perhaps?

Each zodiac animal has distinct personality traits that

are said to describe all the people of that sign. As in the Western zodiac, some signs are considered more or less compatible with other signs. Zodiac signs also have auspicious meanings assigned to them, making them symbols of good fortune. Historically, many people relied on the fortune forecasts of the animal signs to make major life decisions, such as where to build a home, what kind of business to establish, and even whom to marry.

At the New Year, it is customary to exchange greeting cards featuring that year's animal, and someone born under that sign might hang up an artwork depicting the animal in their *tokonoma*, the alcove in a Japanese home where art is displayed.

Discussion Prompts

1. Look closely at the composite creature. How else could you combine the twelve animals? Make a drawing of your new version.
2. Reread the quote above. What time should the farmer rise, according to the animal clock? Hint: each animal is assigned a two-hour block, beginning with the rat from 11 pm to 1 am.
3. The print's title suggests that the image itself has special power, and we can speculate that people may have displayed the print in their homes to more directly invoke its protection. What kinds of images or objects do people in your culture display in their homes to serve as protection or bring about good fortune? What is special about them? What kinds of stories are attached to them?
4. The rhyme in the print suggests that good fortune is achieved through a combination of the animals' innate powers and human efforts to achieve success. How would you characterize our society's understanding of good fortune and hard work?

家丹
安全守
十二支之忌

子
丑
寅
卯
辰
巳
午
未
申
酉
戌
亥



額面
廿五
千九
今旦吉

Utagawa Yoshitora, *Picture of the Twelve Animals to Protect the Safety of the Home (Kanai anzeno mamoru Junishi no zu)*, late Edo period (1615–1868), 1858, 9th month, color woodblock print, 35.24 × 24.29 cm (13 7/8 × 9 5/16 in.), Museum of Fine Arts, William Sturgis Bigelow Collection, 11.41304, photo © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Sacred Deer of Kasuga Shrine, late Kamakura period, 14th century
Unknown (Japanese)***Pair of Sacred Foxes, late Kamakura period, 14th century***
Unknown (Japanese)

This wide-eyed deer statue comes from the Kasuga Taisha (Kasuga Grand Shrine) in Nara, which was founded in 710 and is the capital city of Nara Prefecture. Details such as the white-spotted coat, the curvature of its snout, and the delicately carved fur on its chest give the sculpture a realistic appearance that imitates the sika deer that freely roam the shrine's grounds and surrounding park to this day.

Deer were considered sacred in prehistoric and ancient Japan, and over time they acquired special status as messengers of the Shintō deities, or *kami*. Shintō is an ancient religious practice native to Japan that involves showing reverence toward *kami*, which can be deities, spirits, or forces of nature believed to reside in a particular place, animal, or object. Many *kami* reside in rocks, trees, waterfalls, and rivers, as well as in animals such as oxen, horses, rabbits, and birds. *Kami* are very close to human beings and respond to human prayers, and they can influence the course of both human events and natural forces.

Every place with a *kami* has its own story. Deer are the animal symbol of the Kasuga Taisha in Nara because it is believed that the Shintō deity Takemikazuchi-no-mikoto rode into Nara on the back of a white deer in the eighth century, landing on Mt. Mikasa. Since then, he has been considered a protector of the city, and watches over it in the form of a sika deer. *Sacred Deer of Kasuga Shrine* may have once guarded the entrance to the shrine, as a stand-in for Takemikazuchi-no-mikoto.

Pair of Sacred Foxes comes from the Kiyama shrine in Okayama and would have served a similar purpose as the *Sacred Deer of Kasuga Shrine*. Unlike the sika deer in Nara, however, foxes do not have a special connection to Okayama. They are messengers of

Inari, a popular deity who oversees farming, rice cultivation, and worldly success. Inari shrines, of which there are at least 30,000 in Japan, are always guarded by statues of foxes, some carrying bags of rice or jewels. One of the foxes shown here holds a treasure ball in its mouth, symbolizing Inari's sacred rice granary. The other holds the key to the granary, representing worshippers' hope to share in Inari's power.

Every Shintō shrine holds an annual festival (*matsuri*) in order to please the *kami* and earn their goodwill. *Matsuri* are often held at specific times of year connected to agrarian cycles in order to ensure a good harvest. Sports and performances are also offered to the *kami* during shrine festivals. Sports include sumo wrestling matches, horse racing, and archery. Performing arts include music, dance, and theater.

Discussion Prompts

1. Compare *Sacred Deer of Kasuga Shrine* with *Pair of Sacred Foxes*. What is similar about them? What is different?
2. Animal statues representing *kami* often stand at the entrances to shrines, marking the moment of transition from outside to inside. Why might this location be significant? How do you think the statues' presence affects visitors to the shrine?



Sacred Deer of Kasuga Shrine, Japan, late Kamakura period, 14th century, wood, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Lenore and Richard Wayne in honor of their granddaughters Audrey and Charlotte (M.2012.148a-c), photo © Museum Associates/LACMA



Unknown, *Pair of Sacred Foxes*, late Kamakura period, 14th century, wood, a) Right sculpture: $20 \frac{7}{8} \times 15 \frac{3}{4} \times 8 \frac{11}{16}$ in. (53 x 40 x 22 cm), a) Right base: $5 \frac{7}{8} \times 16 \frac{9}{16} \times 9 \frac{1}{4}$ in. (15 x 42.1 x 23.5 cm), b) Left sculpture: $20 \frac{1}{2} \times 15 \frac{5}{16} \times 8 \frac{1}{4}$ in. (52 x 39.5 x 21 cm), b) Left base: $5 \frac{7}{8} \times 16 \frac{5}{8} \times 9 \frac{7}{16}$ in. (15 x 42.2 x 24 cm), Kiyama Jinja

Hōjō-e Ritual of Releasing Captured Animals, late Edo period, early 19th century
Kanō Eitai

Buddhism arrived in Japan in 552, when an embassy from the southeastern Korean kingdom of Paekche brought Buddhist scriptures, an image of the Shaka Buddha, and ritual implements to the Japanese Yamato court. Rather than abandon Shintō, the Japanese accepted both faiths. Buddhism was able to take root in Japan within a hundred years, and many Shintō shrines and their deities were combined with Buddhist temples and figures.

Within a Buddhist worldview, animals are considered sentient beings that can attain salvation. There is also a Buddhist precept that instructs followers to abstain from killing living beings. There are five precepts altogether, which form a code of ethics that is intended to guide followers' behavior on their path to enlightenment. The other four precepts involve abstaining from stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxication.

The belief in animals' ability to attain salvation and the precept to abstain from killing laid the groundwork for a practice called life release, which was introduced to Japan from China in the seventh century. Life releases are rituals that involve freeing captive animals, usually into ponds created specifically for the purpose. Historically, life releases were performed by well-respected monks and the pious elite, and were often highly public occasions.

In Kanō Eitai's scroll painting, the viewer is placed in an elevated position, looking down on a life release as it is taking place. The oversized figure standing near the center of the painting is Master Junsho Daiocho, an abbot of the Seiganji Pure Land temple in southern Kyoto and the orchestrator of the event. He wears a colorful brocade robe that denotes his religious identity and holds his hands in prayer, as several laypeople clasp prayer beads and kneel before him.

On all sides of Master Junsho many animals are being freed. Behind him, a man in a boat releases fish into the open water. To his left various land animals run off toward the trees, including deer, monkeys, and boar. In the foreground, two men free fish and turtles. And framing the left side of the painting in a C-shape are various species of birds, which a nun has just released from their baskets. Her huddled, static figure forms a strong contrast with the flowing tide of birds, emphasizing their vitality and movement.

Life releases have various goals. They are typically intended to ensure the posthumous salvation of released animals. They are also opportunities for human participants to develop compassion and attain virtue. Some Buddhists believe that releasing animals has karmic benefits, such as extended lifespans, protection from illness, good fortune, and prosperous descendants.

Discussion Prompts

1. What did the artist do to show that Master Junsho Daiocho is the main subject of the painting? Why do you think he made the abbot the central figure?
2. Do other religions share similar beliefs about animals and their treatment? What are they and how are they similar or different?
3. Why is it important to show compassion toward both animals and humans? What are some ways that you show compassion for others?



Kanō Eitai, *Hōjō-e Ritual of Releasing Captured Animals*, late Edo period (1615–1868), early 19th century, hanging scroll; ink and color on silk, overall (image): 128 × 56.2 cm (50 ³/₈ × 22 ¹/₈ in.), overall (mount): 205 × 67.2 cm (80 ¹/₁₆ × 26 ⁷/₁₆ in.), width (including roller ends): 74 cm (29 ¹/₈ in.), private collection

Resources

Books for Students and Teachers

Am I small? Watashi, chisai?

Phillipp Winterberg, Nadja Wichmann

A little girl meets many animals on her journey in this bilingual children's book. Grades PK–2

An Introduction to Zen Buddhism

D.T. Suzuki

A classic text on Zen written by leading authority Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki. Grades 8 and up

The Fox Wish

Kimiko Aman, illustrated by Komako Sakai

This story follows two children who go looking for their jump rope and discover that a group of foxes have claimed it as an answer to their wish. Grades K–3

Gon, the Little Fox

Nankichi Niimi, illustrated by Genjirou Mita

Retelling of a Japanese folktale about a mischief-loving little fox who spends his days spying on the villagers who live near his forest home. Grades K–3

The Life of Animals in Japanese Art

Robert T. Singer and Masatomo Kawai

This exhibition catalog celebrates centuries of Japanese artwork depicting both real and imagined animals. Grades 9 and up

The Paper Crane

Molly Bang

Retelling of an ancient Japanese folktale in which a man pays for his meal at a restaurant with a magical paper crane. Grades K–3

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes

Eleanor Coerr, illustrated by Ronald Himler

Based on a true story, this historical novel celebrates the courage that made one young woman a heroine in Japan. Grades 3–7

Shinto: The Kami Way

Sokyo Ono and William P. Woodard, illustrated by Sadao Sakamoto

This book provides an introduction to Shinto, the ancient Japanese faith. Grades 8 and up

Tree of Cranes

Allen Say

A mother in Japan folds delicate paper cranes to celebrate Christmas with her son. Grades PK–3

Online Resources

“The Art of the Samurai”

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

This Evenings for Educators resource packet explores animal symbolism in samurai armor.

https://www.lacma.org/sites/default/files/module-uploads/E4E_samurai_Consolidated.pdf

“The Life of Animals in Japanese Art”

National Gallery of Art

Landing page for the exhibition's iteration at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

<https://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/2019/life-of-animals-in-japanese-art.html>

Classroom Activity

A Swoop of Cranes

Essential Question	How do the Japanese show respect for animal life in their art?
Grades	K–6
Time	Two class periods
Art Concepts	Origami (japanese ori= fold, gami= paper), observation, setting, composition, foreground, background
Materials	Origami paper (approx. 6" square), 8 ½" × 11" white cardstock, pencils, erasers, colored pencils, glue sticks or glue dots to attach crane to cardstock background
Talking About Art	<p>The Japanese view all living things to hold a place of significance in life. Animals are celebrated in Japanese art, stories, even in the 17-syllable haiku. Cranes were believed to live for 1,000 years. They are symbols of longevity and good luck, and they mate for life. Sometimes people fold 1,000 paper cranes for wedding decorations, anniversaries, and other special occasions.</p> <p>Maruyama Ōkyo worked directly from nature at a time when artists were trained to copy sketches and paintings by other artists. Look at the cranes. What words would you use to describe them (stately? natural? hungry?)? How did Ōkyo show respect for cranes? Hint: through his close attention to detail in observing the birds, through the size of the screens, and through his choice in background.</p> <p>Even though Ōkyo's style is naturalistic, what do you see in the painting that does not look natural? How would you design the background? What would a naturalistic background look like?</p>
Making Art	<p>Although China was the first to produce paper, and they created some origami, it was the Japanese who expanded the number and variety of forms. Buddhist monks carried paper to Japan during the 6th century. The first origami was used for religious ceremonial purposes. In 1797 the first known origami book was published in Japan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fold a crane. Illustrated instructions can be found here: https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/easy-origami-crane-instructions-40822822. Discuss ideas for a background then create one for your crane by drawing on a sheet of cardstock.3. Glue your crane to the background with a glue stick or a glue dot. <p>When you are folding the crane, notice how math and geometry are part of origami. What shapes develop as we fold? Teachers: the artform helps students practice listening skills and fine motor skills.</p>
Reflection	Display your work and have an artwalk! Explain why you created the background you did.

**Curriculum
Connections**

Younger students can listen to or read *The Paper Crane* by Molly Bang and discuss kindness and compassion. Older students can read *Sadako and the Thousand Cranes* by Eleanor Coerr, and discuss hope, loss, and the effect of past events on the future. Students can also discuss the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Japan and the statue of Sadako there that is draped with paper cranes.

As an extension to the artmaking process of creating an origami crane, ask students to write a story or a haiku about Maruyama Ōkyo's painting.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.K-6

K-6.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

California Visual Arts Content Standards

K.VA:Cr2.3 Create art that represents natural and constructed environments.

5.VA:Cr2.1 Experiment and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice.

Classroom Activity

Wishful Painting (Shintō Ema)

Essential Question Why do we make wishes? What does it mean to honor someone or something? What is a symbol? How do people in Japan honor Shintō tradition and make wishes for the future?

Grades K–12

Time One class period

Art Concepts Shintō, sacred, symbol, representation, votive, miniature painting, wash, background, calligraphy, composition, collaboration, shrine, plaque, installation, two-sided art, invoke, animate

Materials Watercolor paper, watercolor pencils, brushes, calligraphy pens, brush pens, ribbon, hole punch, scissors

Talking About Art Compare *Sacred Deer of Kasuga Shrine* and *Pair of Sacred Foxes*. Where do you think they might have been displayed? How might people have interacted with them? What do the artworks' titles tell you about them? What do you think they might have been used for?

Shintō is an ancient religious practice native to Japan that involves showing reverence toward *kami*, which can be deities, spirits, or forces of nature believed to reside in a particular place, animal, or object. Many *kami* reside in rocks, trees, waterfalls, and rivers, as well as in animals such as oxen, horses, rabbits, and birds. *Kami* are very close to human beings and respond to human prayers, and they can influence the course of both human events and natural forces.

Ema (絵馬, “picture-horse”) are small wooden plaques on which Shintō followers inscribe wishes. *Ema* are then hung up alongside many others at Shintō shrines, where the *kami* are believed to receive them. Typically 15 cm wide and 9 cm high (although they can also be much bigger), *ema* are often decorated with images.

Making Art You will create your own *ema* on a 4” × 6” sheet of watercolor paper that is cut to look like a rectangle with an angled roof. These dimensions are similar to those of the wooden *ema* that the Japanese hang up at Shintō shrines.

Who is someone that you honor? Who is someone that has helped you? Think of something you would like to wish for this person that will help them. You can also think of a helpful wish for someone you don't know. What does this person look like, what are some of their favorite things? What is your memory of them? What is a symbol and how might you symbolize them?

1. Using calligraphy pens, write down your wish for this person on one side of your *ema* using fancy lettering. Using brush pens, decorate the space around the letters of your written wish.
2. On the other side of your *ema*, use watercolor pencils to draw a symbol or picture that represents the person you are honoring or the wish that you are making. By carefully adding water with a brush, you will magically transform your watercolor pencil drawings into miniature watercolor paintings.
3. Finally, punch a hole at the top of your *ema* and thread a piece of colorful ribbon through it. After tying your ribbon into a knot your *ema* is ready to be hung up and your wish sent out into the world!

Reflection

How does the symbol or image on your *ema* represent the person you are thinking of or the wish that you made? How did it feel to use calligraphy pens? How can art help you visualize an idea and transform it into reality?

Curriculum Connections

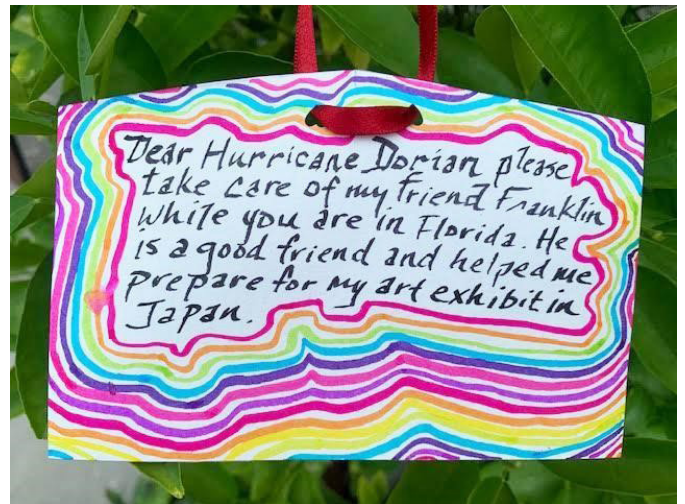
You may go on to discuss the idea of a shrine or a special place in your classroom to hang your *ema*. You may also discuss the art of display. What is the best way to hang your *ema*? Will only the wishes be visible at the same time, or the images? Will you hang them on a spaced-out grid or in a cluster? Will they be hung in the classroom or outdoors?

Consider other materials that could be used to make artworks inspired by Japanese *ema*. Think about experimenting with *ema* that go beyond a rectangular format. Perhaps the *ema* can be cut out into a specific silhouette, such as an animal or person.

California Visual Arts Content Standards

3.VA:Cr1.2 Apply knowledge of available resources, tools, and technologies to investigate personal ideas through the art-making process. Prof.VA:Cr1.2 Shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present day life using a contemporary practice of art or design. 1.VA:Pr5 Ask and answer questions such as where, when, why, and how artwork should be prepared for presentation or preservation. 6.VA:Pr5 Individually or collaboratively, develop a visual plan for displaying works of art, analyzing exhibit space, the needs of the viewer, and the layout of the exhibit.

Images



Classroom Activity

Animal Scrolls

Essential Question What are some benefits of releasing animals into the wild? How can people show compassion toward animals and nature?

Grades K–8

Time 1–2 class periods

Art Concepts Scroll, Buddhism, landscape, composition, ritual

Materials Watercolor paper (9" × 12" cut in half), decorative or construction paper (cut into 2" × 4.5" wide strips), yarn (cut into approx. 10" pieces), glue sticks, watercolor pencils, brushes, water bowls (plain cardstock and colored pencils can be substituted)

Talking About Art Take a close look at *Hōjō-e Ritual of Releasing Captured Animals, Birds, and Fish* by Kanō Eitai. What is happening in the **composition**, or the way objects are placed in the picture? What animals do you recognize? How are the human figures interacting with the animals? Who is at the center of the painting? What do you notice about how the artist placed the figures in the picture plane? What do you think is the overall mood of this painting?

This image depicts the Japanese Buddhist practice of releasing captured animals into the wild. Within **Buddhism**, a faith practiced by people all over the world, animals are considered conscious beings that can be reborn. Historically, many Buddhists believed that humans should not kill animals, which resulted in the development of a practice known as life release (many Buddhists still carry out life releases today). Life releases are **rituals** that involve freeing captive animals, usually into ponds created specifically for this purpose. Historically, life releases were performed by monks and the pious elite, often in public.

It was believed that by releasing animals into the wild people can attain virtue and good karma. What do you think are some reasons for releasing animals into the wild today? Why is it important to show compassion toward both animals and humans? How can we be more compassionate toward animals and nature in our daily lives? How does one's religious faith affect how they relate to animals and nature?

Making Art Think about the animals that typically live in captivity today, such as chickens, cows, or horses. What do those animals provide for people? Now think about how people care for these animals. What can people do to be kinder and to provide them with a good quality of life?

Select an animal and imagine its life in captivity. Then imagine its life in the wild. What is the animal doing? Where is it located? Make a drawing of the animal in this ideal environment. Consider how to arrange different elements in your composition. Who will be at the center? What details will you include to show the animal's setting?

You will make this drawing on a hanging scroll.

Making Art (cont.)

1. To assemble your scroll, take two strips of decorative paper and fold them in half lengthwise (the hot dog way).
2. Then take a piece of yarn and tie it in a knot so that a large loop is created.
3. Now, take one of the folded strips and put glue on the undecorated side of it. Attach half of the glue covered side to one of the short ends of the cardstock paper, aligning the strip's central fold with the bottom edge of the paper. Then fold the strip over to the back of the paper and press both sides to seal.
4. Repeat this on the other short end of the cardstock paper, inserting the yarn loop along the center of the fold before sealing closed.

When using watercolor pencils, color your drawing the way you would with regular pencils. When you finish, take a brush with a little water and gently go over parts of the pencil drawing. The pencil will turn into watercolor paint! You can paint over the entire image or select certain parts to paint while keeping others dry. Teachers: If watercolor pencils are not available, you may use any coloring material.

Reflection

What have you discovered through your artmaking about compassion toward animals? What actions can you take to treat animals and/or the environment better? Write a short poem, such as a haiku, about the animal you represented. Write it in neat handwriting somewhere on your scroll painting.

Curriculum Connections

California Visual Arts Content Standards

K.VA:Cr2.3 Create art that represents natural and constructed environments.

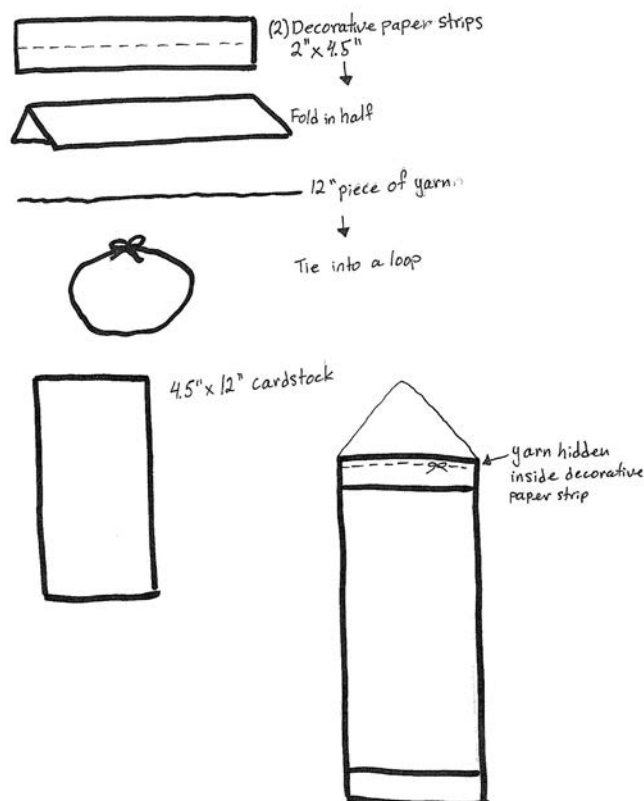
6.VA:Cr2.1 Demonstrate openness in trying new ideas, materials, methods, and approaches in making works of art and design.

3.VA:Re7.2 Determine messages communicated by an image. 5.VA:Re7.2 Identify and analyze cultural associations suggested by visual imagery.

California History-Social Science Content Standards

7.5.4 Trace the development of distinctive forms of Japanese Buddhism.

Images



Classroom Activity **Jumbled *Junishi* Animals**

Essential Question How can the zodiac help us understand ourselves and others?

Grades 9–12

Time 1–2 class periods

Art Concepts Symbolism, contour line, silhouette, negative space, texture, hybridity

Materials Sketch paper, pencils, 12 Japanese zodiac animal stencils, 12" × 18" heavy weight black paper, scissors, X-Acto knives, and cutting mats

Talking About Art View and discuss *Picture of the Twelve Animals to Protect the Safety of the Home* by Utagawa Yoshitora. What do you notice? What parts of the creature seem realistic and which seem imaginary? How many animals can you find represented in this composite creature? What special skills or powers might this creature possess?

This animal looks like it could be a new species of Pokémon, but it is actually an auspicious creature made up of all twelve animals from the Chinese zodiac. It has been assigned the special task of protecting the home.

Adopted in Japan in the sixth century, the Chinese zodiac is used in numerous Asian countries. Called *Junishi* in Japan, the zodiac is based on the lunar year and consists of twelve animal symbols that correspond to the hours of the day, points on a compass, and individual years in a repeating twelve-year cycle. Each year of the cycle is associated with a different animal. In order, they are: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat or sheep, monkey, rooster or chicken, dog, and wild boar.

Each zodiac animal has distinct personality traits that are said to describe all the people of that sign. Like in the Western zodiac, some signs are more or less compatible with other signs. Historically, many people relied on the fortune forecasts of the animal signs to make major life decisions such as where to build a home, what kind of business to establish, and even whom to marry.

- Find the animal associated with your birth year. Do you feel these traits represent your personality? Why or why not?
- How would you describe yourself? List five adjectives that describe your personality, values or interests.
- Brainstorm animals that could symbolically represent the adjectives on your list.

Making Art Inspired by the *Picture of the Twelve Animals to Protect the Safety of the Home* by Utagawa Yoshitora, you will create an imaginary hybrid creature that represents your multifaceted personality.

1. Sketch: Experiment with combining the body of your zodiac animal with individual physical characteristics from at least 2 of the other animals you chose to create a hybrid creature.
 - a. Trace the zodiac animal stencil on sketch paper and play with adding other animal elements (limbs, wings, an extra head, etc.).
 - b. Consider including different animal textures (fur, feathers, scales) and markings (stripes, spots, patches).

Making Art (cont.)

- c. Pay special attention to the outside edges of your creature—we will be creating a dynamic silhouette and the contour line will be very important.
 - d. Play with positive and negative space to create visual interest in your design.
2. When satisfied, trace the zodiac animal stencil onto a sheet of heavy weight black paper. Draw the rest of your hybrid creature design with pencil. Don't worry about erasing.
3. Cutting: Teachers, walk your students through an X-Acto blade demonstration and discuss safe handling. Show students how cutting can be a form of drawing.
 - a. Do not pick up knives by their blades.
 - b. Do not use X-Acto knives with dull blades.
 - c. Do not use X-Acto knives with broken or loose handles.
 - d. Always cut away from your body and keep your other hand clear.
 - e. Cut the contour line first and then cut out the details.

Reflection

Participate in a gallery walk and share your work with the class. What do you observe about the artwork we created? Did you learn something new about your classmates? Do you feel this is an accurate self portrait? Why or why not? Why do you think the zodiac animals play such an important role in so many people's lives?

Curriculum Connections

These hybrid *Junishi* creatures will cast beautiful shadows when lit. A collaborative class installation could be created by overlapping shadows and experimenting with light sources. The dynamic figures could serve as inspiration for film, animation, or other new media projects.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

California Visual Arts Content Standards

Acc.VA:Cr2.2 Artists and designers balance experimentation and safety, freedom and responsibility while developing and creating artworks. Adv.VA:Cr1.2 Artists and designers shape artistic investigations, following or breaking with traditions in pursuit of creative artmaking goals.

Images



The Japanese Zodiac *Junishi*

Rat <i>nezumi</i>	Intelligent, artistic, charming, charismatic and persuasive. Manipulative and scheming. A tremendous capacity for pursuing a course to its end. They will work hard for their goals. They are easily angered but maintain an outward show of control.	2008, 1996, 1984, 1972, 1960, 1948, 1936, 1924, 1912
Ox <i>ushi</i>	Patient and confident, aim for success, mentally alert and tactful, inventive, skillful speakers with a gift for inspiring others, this allows them to achieve a great deal of success.	2009, 1997, 1985, 1973, 1961, 1949, 1937, 1925, 1913
Tiger <i>tora</i>	Sensitive, courageous, stubborn and short-tempered, selfish and slightly mean. Deep thinkers capable of great sympathy for those they are close to and love.	2010, 1998, 1986, 1974, 1962, 1950, 1938, 1926, 1914
Rabbit <i>usagi</i>	Very good luck, ambitious, talented, admirable, honest, trustworthy and punctual, smooth-talkers with fine taste.	2011, 1999, 1987, 1975, 1963, 1951, 1939, 1927, 1915
Dragon <i>tatsu</i>	Healthy, energetic, brave, short-tempered. Known to have good fortune, can inspire trust in most anyone. The most peculiar of the 12 signs of the zodiac cycle.	2012, 2000, 1988, 1976, 1964, 1952, 1940, 1928, 1916
Snake <i>hebi</i>	Wise, lucky when it comes to making money and handling it, take failures very personally, deep thinkers, speak very little and possess tremendous wisdom.	2013, 2001, 1989, 1977, 1965, 1953, 1941, 1929, 1917
Horse <i>Uma</i>	Skillful in paying compliments and talk too much, skillful regarding finances. Quick thinkers and wise. Can be short-tempered and impatient.	2014, 2002, 1990, 1978, 1966, 1954, 1942, 1930, 1918, 1906
Sheep <i>Hitsuji</i>	Artistic, elegant, loves and cares for nature, passionate and religious.	2015, 2003, 1991, 1979, 1967, 1955, 1943, 1931, 1919, 1907
Monkey <i>Saru</i>	Geniuses, skillful and clever. Smart and decisive with finances. Inventive and original.	2016, 2004, 1992, 1980, 1968, 1956, 1944, 1932, 1920, 1908
Rooster <i>tori</i>	Devoted to work, always want to do more than they are able. Rooster people have a habit of speaking out directly whenever they have something on their minds.	2017, 2005, 1981, 1969, 1957, 1945, 1933, 1921, 1909
Dog <i>inu</i>	Dutiful and loyal, honest, confident.	2018, 2006, 1982, 1970, 1958, 1946, 1934, 1922, 1910
Boar <i>inoshishi</i>	Brave, honest, short-tempered but good at keeping their cool, the kindest of the zodiac, inner strength.	2019, 2007, 1983, 1971, 1959, 1947, 1935, 1923, 1911