

The Brooklyn Paper *The Brooklyn Paper*

Your Neighborhood – Your News®

January 20, 2015 / GO Brooklyn / Greenpoint / Art
TUKUJI HMANAKA: NEGATIVE CIRCLE' AT OWEN JAMES GALLERY
The artwork formerly known as prints

By Trupti Rami
for *The Brooklyn Paper*

This show is a riff off the old block.

A Greenpoint artist skilled in the art of Japanese woodblock printing has used the two-dimensional medium to create a mind-bending, three-dimensional experience in a new exhibition opening at Owen James Gallery on Jan. 23. But artist Tukuji Hamanaka’s use of the traditional art form is not immediately obvious in the very contemporary-looking works, according to the gallery’s owner.

“From afar, one is drawn into the intricate, swirling and cross-hatch patterns,” said Owen James Gallery owner Owen Houhoulis. “Upon closer inspection, one sees that these forms are created with layer upon layer of very thin, translucent gampi paper that is built up upon the surface.”

All seven works in the show, dubbed “Negative Circle,” are rendered on layered pieces of gampi, a Japanese handmade paper or washi made with bark from the gampi tree. Hamanaka, who honed his craft in Tokyo, has been actively working with gampi paper since 2008. The paper is used in traditional woodblock printing and sculpture-making and is valued for its durability and thinness, Houhoulis said.

Hamanaka crafted each piece in the show by hand — even carving the woodblocks himself. It is a painstaking process, but the artist said he enjoys it.

“I like the process of repeating, in my case cutting and pasting paper to create layers. It almost functions as recording device for time spent and deed done on a particular piece,” said Hmanaka, who has lived in Greenpoint for more than 20 years. “Because of characteristic of gampi paper, even after pasting hundreds of them, it’s as if you look down at clean, serene water from top to the bottom.”

Houhoulis said Hamanaka uses gampi paper in a unique way, making it a feature of the artwork, rather than a simply canvas.

“Whereas gampi is often used as the support upon which a work of art is made, such as in ukiyo-e prints, Hamanaka uses the paper as an art material in its own right. He creates his images with the paper itself,” he said. “Traditional printing techniques are used, and presented, in an entirely new way.”

Hmanaka, who teaches the Japanese-style woodcut printing at art schools and studios throughout the city, said he wants viewers to notice both the technical and aesthetic qualities of each artwork.

“Unexpected use of paper, for one thing, different interpretation of printmaking medium, and hopefully its beauty,” Hamanaka said.



Tukuji Hamanaka

So many layers: Greenpoint artist Tukuji Hamanaka makes his trippy artworks from hundreds of pieces of handmade gampi paper.



Tukuji Hmanaka

Prince of prints: Greenpoint artist Tukuji Hsamanaka trained in traditional Japanese woodblock printing in Tokyo.

“Takuji Hamanaka: Negative Circle” at Owen James Gallery [61 Greenpoint Ave. Suite 315 between West and Franklin streets in Greenpoint, (718) 395-4874, www.owenjamesgallery.com]. Opening reception Jan. 23 at 6-8 pm. Exhibition runs through Feb. 28. Free.

©2015 Community News Group

Share 3
submit

Tweet 6

+1 1

Print this story

Permalink

Today's news:



GREENWOOD HEIGHTS: Brooklyn cop seeks top spot in police union



WILLIAMSBURG: Shooting near W'burg school



CINEMA: New doc chronicles Bay Ridge hardcore band Indecision

READER FEEDBACK