

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS ST. PETE

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**“Above the Fold: New Expressions in Origami” Reveals the Extraordinary
Power and Potential of a Contemporary Art Form**

Massive, elaborate works of paper art will suspend from the gallery ceiling and span hundreds of feet across the walls in the Museum of Fine Arts

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA (June 11, 2019) — Origami is an ancient art form rooted in history and spirituality, but nine international artists in the traveling exhibition *Above the Fold: New Expressions in Origami* are using light, shadow, nature and even math and science to elevate contemporary origami to a global art form. Even the art itself is being taken to new heights — from riveting pieces suspended from the ceiling to mind-bending sculptures that combine the delicacy of paper with the sturdiness of glass. *Above the Fold* is on view June 22 through Sept. 22 at the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, and includes nearly 20 paper-based works of arts in the form of dramatic sculptures, large-scale installations, and conceptual works that express contemporary, social, political, aesthetic, and cultural dialogues.

Above the Fold is the first traveling exhibition to bring a group of origami installations and conceptual sculptures from around the world to North American audiences. The MFA is the second-to-last museum to host the exhibition before it concludes in 2020.

In *Above the Fold*, visionary master folders—**Erik Demaine** and **Martin Demaine** (Canada/USA), **Vincent Floderer** (France), **Miri Golan** (Israel), **Paul Jackson** (UK/Israel), **Dr. Robert J. Lang** (USA), **Yuko Nishimura** (Japan), **Richard Sweeney** (UK), and **Jiangmei Wu** (China/USA)—push the boundaries of paper as a medium to create bold, provocative works. *Above the Fold* is curated by Meher McArthur and the tour is organized by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC.

Origami, literally meaning “paper folding,” has evolved from a Japanese craft into a highly expressive, global art form that intersects and impacts the realms of art and science. Today, artists all over the world are folding paper into increasingly elaborate and provocative sculptural works, while scientists and mathematicians are using origami to unlock the mysteries of the universe. Here are a few highlights about select artists from the exhibition:

- Nishimura, the sole Japanese artist in the exhibition, taps into her architecture and design background to create dramatic pieces where light and shadow interplay on the folded surface of the paper.
- Father and son art-science team, the Demaines, use advanced computer programs and mathematical equations to fold along a curved line rather than a straight one. Martin Demaine is also a glass artist, and a series of the duo’s work features their signature curved paper forms floating inside hand-blown glass.
- French artist Floderer approaches origami through “crumpling,” dampening and stretching origami paper to create organic and multi-layered forms. The result is 30 to 32 floating, rotating organic models that move via air flow in the gallery.
- Dr. Lang, a former NASA physicist, specializes in modular origami, where multiple sheets of paper are folded into individual units—or modules—and combined to form larger, more complex geometric structures. One of his pieces features koi fish forms folded from 60 uncut squares of paper covering 400 to 500 square feet of wall space in the gallery.
- The largest work in the exhibition is a paper sculpture measuring 7 feet tall and 20 feet long created by Wu, assistant professor in design at Indiana University Bloomington.

“Paper is a fascinating medium, and we’re excited to present these brilliant contemporary works of art, in such an immersive way, that reflect how origami has evolved as an art form,” said Executive Director Kristen A. Shepherd. “This is one of the MFA’s most ambitious installations, and our guests will be able to experience origami as never before.”

In addition to the captivating paper art, the MFA exhibit will incorporate artwork from its collection, such as Japanese woodblock prints, and other local loans. The gallery will also include a paper-folding interactive space for guests to create paper cranes and other paper patterns. Guests can take the cranes home or leave them on display in the space for the duration of the exhibition. The ones left will be sent to the Children’s Peace Monument in Hiroshima, Japan. The MFA’s goal is to send 1,000 cranes to be placed at the peace monument commemorating Sadako Sasaki and all the children lost to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.



Image credit: Erik Demaine and Martin Demaine, *Together*, 2012, Mi-Teintes watercolor paper. Photo courtesy of the artists.

Above the Fold: New Expressions in Origami Scheduled Public Programs

[**Above the Fold 1,000 Cranes Folding Party**](#)

Saturday, July 27, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. (instructional workshops 10 a.m.–12 p.m.)

During this event, student ambassadors from Takamatsu, St. Petersburg's Sister City in Japan, will teach attendees how to create folded cranes. In Japan there is a long-standing tradition that a person who folds 1,000 cranes will be granted their deepest wish. In 1955, a young girl named Sadako Sasaki folded more than 1,000 cranes as she tried to recover from leukemia caused by exposure to the radiation from the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. Though she did not recover, Sasaki's story of hope spread throughout the world, and today the folded crane is a well-known symbol of peace. With this event and an interactive space in the *Above the Fold* gallery, the MFA will collect 1,000 cranes to be placed at the Children's Peace Monument in Hiroshima dedicated to Sasaki and other child victims of the atomic bombings.

Free with general Museum admission.

[**Marly Music: Erik and Martin Demaine accompanied by pianist John C. O'Leary III**](#)

Sunday, August 11, 2019, 2–4 p.m.

During this special event as part of the Marly Music concert series, artists and computer scientists Erik and Martin Demaine will fold a series of their signature, abstract "Curved-Crease Sculptures" and place them inside a blown glass sculpture.

(The glass sculpture will be created by the Demaines at St. Petersburg's Duncan McClellan Gallery the day prior.) John C. O'Leary II, a Mexican-American jazz pianist, composer and neuroscientist, will accompany the father-son team on piano during this performance piece blending art and science.

\$15 for Marly Music Society Members and Students (with current ID); \$25 for Adults; Tickets include general Museum admission.

Cinema at the MFA Presents: *Kubo and the Two Strings* and *Cranes* short film

Saturday, Aug. 24, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Kubo and the Two Strings is a 2016 animated film about a young origami storyteller, Kubo, who wants to know more about his father, a fallen samurai who died protecting Kubo's mother from her own father. On a journey filled with magic, conflict, and loss, Kubo must complete the ultimate quest to defeat his mother's tyrannical family and find the most powerful thing in all of Japan: his father's invulnerable battle-suit.

Prior to the feature film is the premiere of *Cranes*, a short film by local teen filmmaker Alex Archipov, with a brief Q&A afterward. Set entirely in St. Pete, the film follows a young boy dealing with grief who finds hope through folding origami paper cranes. Origami activities for all ages will be included as part of the event.

Free with general Museum admission.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

The MFA at 255 Beach Drive NE has a world-class collection, with works by Monet, Morisot, Rodin, O'Keeffe, Willem de Kooning, and many other great artists. Also displayed are ancient Greek and Roman, Egyptian, Asian, African, pre-Columbian, and Native American art. Selections from the photography collection, one of the largest and finest in the Southeast, are on view in a gallery dedicated solely to the medium. Kristen A. Shepherd is the Executive Director.

Hours are 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday; 10 a.m.–8 p.m. on Thursday; and noon–5 p.m. Sunday. Regular admission is \$20 for adults; \$15 for those 65 and older, Florida educators, college students, and active duty military; and \$10 for students 7 and older. Children under 7 and Museum members are admitted free. Groups of 10 or more adults pay only \$14 per person and children \$4 each with prior reservations. Also, admission is just \$10 after 5 p.m. on Thursday. The MFA Café is open from 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Tuesday–Sunday. For more information, please call 727-896-2667 or visit mfastpete.org.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ARTS & ARTISTS

International Arts & Artists in Washington, DC, is a nonprofit arts service organization dedicated to increasing cross-cultural understanding and exposure to the arts internationally through exhibitions, programs, and services to artists, art institutions, and the public. Visit www.ArtsandArtists.org.

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