

# Mayumi Sherburn

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This series of collages is a tribute to my late grandmother. She lived several generations ago. She was a very kind, gentle and caring person. She led an ordinary life as a Japanese woman of her era. I'd like to capture her gentleness and kindness in subtle colours and textures, as well as her inner strength in washi (Japanese paper). I added some gestural drawings to tell her stories. She was a religious person and worshipped the Kannon Goddess, so some items, such as lotus flowers or doves, represent her belief. I value intricacy and negative spaces and these aspects are an expression of my Japanese heritage and personify the essence of my work.

## My grandmother's story (1904-1978):

My grandmother was the youngest child of a wealthy Tokyo family (they owned a bank and her father was an MP for Tokyo City). Her mother died when she was a baby, then her father, who lost his business and money because of the big recession in 1907, also passed away, when she was only 5. She had to live with a distant relative, working as a young maid. She survived the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake (M7.9, 142,800 people killed). Her friends who were running just behind her were killed by collapsing walls. She married to my grandfather (an arranged marriage which was very common at that time) and had 6 children. She raised them through World War II, then she had to look after her parents-in-law. I am one of her 11 grandchildren. My grandfather had stroke and she was his solo carer for 14 years. There was no public help those days and my grandfather didn't like his daughter-in-law to look after him. To me he was a quite typical old Japanese husband (bossy and dominant). My grandmother died just one year after my grandfather, she had pancreatic cancer. We thought she was too busy looking after my grandfather and was ignoring her symptoms. For me she was always smiling and encouraging, she never complained and always found some time for us. One of my precious

memories of her is going shopping together for my birthday and stopping at a cafe for sweets. I guess it was a rare occasion for her to go out. The image was still so vivid, her gentle face just front of me.

My great regret is not having a chance to take her out and treat her with something nice or travel together, but I was still young at the time. I was given a beautiful ring from one of my aunts several years ago. It was the last present from my grandfather to my grandmother and my grandmother had wanted me to have the ring. I was touched and the same time so blissful to know how much my grandmother was loved.

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Japanese laws concerning women

1945 Women's suffrage

1985 Equal Employment Opportunity Act

1999 Basic Act for Gender Equal Society

2000 Long-term Care Insurance Act

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## Tsubaki Scythe

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I do drypoint prints. I enjoy doing black and white realism in drypoint, especially animals. I am influenced by New Zealand and Japanese culture, two of my cultural backgrounds.

The theme of the two artworks I have submitted focuses on the Japanese mythical creature called the Kitsune (fox) and Maiko (apprentice Geisha). The kitsune has supernatural abilities such as shapeshifting into people. I wanted to show the kitsune morphing into Maiko and vice versa. I also wanted to portray that Maiko and the kitsune are connected and they are essentially the same being.

## Aaron Scythe

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In Japan: Over a 16-year period I held over 60 solo shows and participated in many group exhibitions.

I have held workshops and appeared on national television. I have work in many pottery publications.

My work is held in many private collections throughout New Zealand Japan, Europe and America.