

CHRIST WITH US

Faithful Witness Through the Work of Sadao Watanabe



Eve and the Serpent
1965, hand colored kappazuri
stencil print on momigami wrinkled
paper, 8/70, 20.5 x 17.24 in.
Genesis 3:1-5



Presentation in the Temple
1982, hand colored stencil
print on handmade washi
paper, 13 x 12 in.
Luke 22:22-40



The Annunciation
1972, hand colored kappazuri
stencil print on momigami
wrinkled paper,
21.5 x 18 in.
Luke 1:26-33



Three Men in a Boat
1966, hand colored kappazuri
stencil print on momigami wrinkled
paper, 21 x 17 5/8 in.
Matthew 2:12



An Angel and Shepherds
1971, hand colored kappazuri
stencil print on momigami
wrinkled paper, 55/70,
23 x 27 in.
Luke 2:8-12



Flight to Egypt
1987, hand colored kappazuri
stencil print on momigami wrinkled
paper, 24.5 x 28 in.



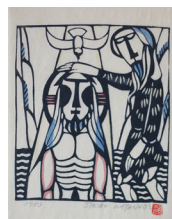
Nativity
1963, hand colored kappazuri
stencil print on momigami
wrinkled paper,
23.75 x 20.25 in.
Luke 2:16-19



Descent from the Cross
1973, hand colored kappazuri
stencil print on momigami
wrinkled paper, 28.25 x 23 in.
John 19:38



Adoration of the Magi
1968, hand colored kappazuri
stencil print on momigami
wrinkled paper, 22 x 18 in.
Matthew 2:1-13



Baptism of Jesus
1973, hand colored kappazuri
stencil print on washi
handmade paper,
13 x 8.75 in.
Mark 1:9-13



ALL SAINTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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The church seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, though focusing, in turn, on Christ's first coming and promised return, His birth, and His life and earthly ministry, all celebrate the simple, awe-inspiring truth: Christ is with us. It's literally His name: Emmanuel - God with us.

The masterful work of Japan's foremost Christian artist, Sadao Watanabe (1913-1996), selected from the Bowden Collection, uses the vernacular of traditional Japanese stencil drawing and dying to bear profound witness to this truth. Every scene, from the Fall to the Annunciation, the Nativity to the Adoration, the Presentation to His Baptism and death on the Cross, points to the Savior-God who took on flesh and dwelt among us so that His flesh would ultimately be broken on our behalf. Christ is with us so that we can be with Him forever. Christ is with us so that we can follow Him forever.

Through captivating imagery and symbolism, richly rendered colors, and elegant, yet simple, composition on the crinkled, momigami paper, Watanabe breathes fresh life into familiar scenes and opens our imaginations to new insight into Christ's incarnation. Consider his Temptation and the Annunciation pieces side-by-side, how the almost identical postures of the figures help us to grasp the truth of Romans 5:17 - "For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ."

Though internationally renowned, with his work in top collections, including the Vatican Museum, National Galleries in Washington, DC and London, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, Watanabe's primary goal was simply to lead others to Christ, to bear faithful witness to the truth that Christ is with us as an act of thanksgiving, adoration, and, ultimately, joyful obedience. Come, let us adore Him - Christ the Lord!

I owe my life to Christ and the gospel. My way of expressing my gratitude is to witness to my faith through the medium of biblical scenes. - Sadao Watanabe

- David Lutes, Gallery Director

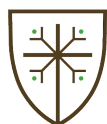
Sadao Watanabe (1913-1996)

Japan's foremost Christian artist, Sadao Watanabe converted from Buddhism to Christianity at 17 years old. He soon combined his new faith with an interest in preserving the complicated, traditional Japanese folk art of stencil dying, or *katazome*, formerly used for dying kimonos. Each hand-cut print is a colorful representation of biblical scenes that he hoped would speak to his people. He said, "my task is to stand within the artistic tradition of Japan...theology will not take deep root in Japanese soil if it is merely an import."

Within the framework of his Christian faith, Watanabe was able to translate the biblical narratives into Japanese settings, thereby giving them broad resonance.

He was less concerned with representing visual reality than with finding ways to communicate his Christian beliefs to other Japanese. The result is a body of art that is an expression of deep faith as well as a valuable contribution to the history of Christian art.

- Excerpt from the Bowden Collection Show Description, edited for clarity (Sandra Bowden, Curator)



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