

Takao Tanabe career print retrospective opens in Kelowna

Takao Tanabe: Printmaker
July 1 to October 1, 2023

June 28, 2023 – Kelowna, BC: Artist Takao Tanabe is among Canada’s most celebrated painters and printmakers. He is recognized for his beautifully rendered landscapes that bridge the gap between abstraction and realism. Beginning this weekend, Okanagan audiences will be able to see a career-spanning retrospective of Tanabe’s prints in *Takao Tanabe: Printmaker* at the Kelowna Art Gallery.

“Takao Tanabe’s work contains so much raw physical and emotional power within them,” says **Nataley Nagy**, Executive Director at the Gallery. “We are very honoured to present this first within Canada, a 75-year survey of Tanabe’s accomplished printmaking, with work borrowed from the Vancouver Art Gallery and Winnipeg Art Gallery.”

Visitors will have the chance to view some of the artist’s earliest prints, like two linocut *Christmas Cards* from 1948, up to his most recent West Coast landscape titled *Cormorant Island*, completed in 2023 (at the youthful age of 96). Other featured works include *Prairie Storm* (1979), a landscape that breaks broader conventions in printmaking by incorporating ink hand brushing techniques, and *Malacca Strait: Dawn* (2004), a woodcut/intaglio print that utilizes form and colour to depict a stillness between ocean and land.

Takao Tanabe says of his approach, “...the views I favour are the grey mists, the rain-obscured islands and the clouds that hide the details. However much we desire order and clarity in all the details of our lives, there are always unexpected events that cloud and change our course. Life is ragged. The typical weather of the coast is like that, just enough detail to make it interesting but not so clear as to be banal or overwhelming. It can be a metaphor for life.”¹

Behind the selection of work on view is Guest Curator **Ian M. Thom**, who has included prints that have never been exhibited until now. The exhibition is accompanied by a 72-page catalogue with essays by Curator Ian M. Thom and Curator Christine May.

Takao Tanabe: Printmaker runs from July 1 to October 1, 2023. It is presented with support from the Audain Foundation, Equinox Gallery, and the Mira Godard Gallery.

Takao Tanabe (Canadian, b. 1926) was born in Seal Cove, now Prince Rupert, BC. He was the son of a commercial fisherman, and summered in fishing camps on the Skeena River, BC during his early years. He studied at the Winnipeg School of Art from 1946 to 1949. He then

¹ Takao Tanabe, from an artist’s statement cited by Roger H. Boulet in his curatorial essay included in *Takao Tanabe: Wet Coasts and Dry Lands* (Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna, B.C., 2000)


studied at the Brooklyn Museum Art School. From 1953 to 1955, he travelled in Europe, then came back to Vancouver to build his career as a painter. He moved to Parksville, on Vancouver Island, in 1980. In 2000, the Kelowna Art Gallery organized and circulated a solo exhibition entitled *Takao Tanabe: Wet Coasts and Dry Lands*, guest curated by Roger Boulet. In addition to a Governor General's Award (2003), Tanabe has been a recipient of two honorary degrees, the Order of British Columbia (1993), and the Order of Canada (1999). Tanabe's work is included in many prestigious public and private collections, including over 120 corporate collections.

The Kelowna Art Gallery is located at 1315 Water Street, in downtown Kelowna, B.C.

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Media Inquiries

Joshua Desnoyers ↓ Marketing and Events Coordinator
Kelowna Art Gallery ↓ 1315 Water Street Kelowna, BC V1Y 9R3
250-762-2226 x305 | josh@kelownaartgallery.com

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