

surrey
art gallery

TEACHERS GUIDE

Takao Tanabe: Printmaker

ABSTRACTION | COLLAGE | LANDSCAPE



WITH BIG IDEAS & CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Takao Tanabe, *Nootka Afternoon*, woodcut on paper, 62x85cm, 1993.
Image appears courtesy of the artist.

Dear Teachers,

This guide is a classroom resource designed to support teachers and students visiting the exhibition *Takao Tanabe: Printmaker* on display at Surrey Art Gallery from April 13–June 2, 2024.

This Teachers Guide contains an activity that will help prepare your students for their Gallery visit and engage them in classroom discussion, exhibition information, terms & concepts, a resource section, an image gallery, and connections to the BC Education K-12 curriculum.

The *Art Encounter* workshop offered at the Gallery this season is based in the process of printmaking and examines themes of nature, environmental sustainability, and the abstract beauty found in the landscape.

We hope this resource enriches your visit to the Gallery, engages your students in the classroom, and that you enjoy making meaningful connections to contemporary art and ideas with your class through the exhibition tour and workshop programs at the Gallery.

Sincerely,

Jinsil Haveliwalla, School and Family Programmer

This Teachers Guide was created with contributions from Surrey Art Gallery staff including: School and Family Programmer Jinsil Haveliwalla, Assistant Curator Rhys Edwards, Artist-Educator Claire Moore, Visual Arts Programmer Lindsay McArthur, and Curator of Learning Chris Dawson-Murphy.

ABOUT SURREY ART GALLERY

Surrey Art Gallery is the second largest public art gallery in the Metro Vancouver region. Internationally recognized, the Gallery showcases diverse contemporary art practices including digital and sound art and exhibits by renowned local, national, and international artists. Surrey Art Gallery's mission is to engage the public in an ongoing dialogue about issues and ideas that affect our numerous communities as expressed through contemporary art, and to provide opportunities for the public to interact with artists and the artistic process.

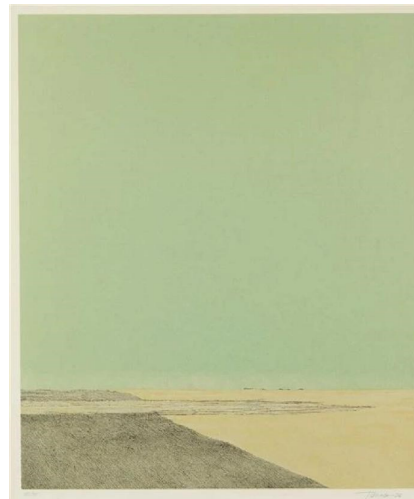
To receive announcements about exhibitions and related events at the Gallery, sign up for our e-newsletters at surrey.ca/12392.aspx. You may also be interested in the City of Surrey's e-newsletter, *Teachers in the Know*.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Gallery's school programs develop an appreciation, understanding, and excitement about contemporary art. Visit the Gallery's website to learn more about our school programs and teacher resources: surrey.ca/galleryeducation.

IN THIS GUIDE

About Surrey Art Gallery	2
About the Exhibitions	3
Focused Activity	5
Curriculum Connections	9
Terms & Concepts	10
Online Resources	11
Image Gallery	12
Surrey Art Gallery Information	18



Takao Tanabe, *After Harvest*, 1976.
Image appears courtesy of the artist.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS

Takao Tanabe: Printmaker

April 13–June 3, 2024

Tanabe is among Canada's most celebrated painters and printmakers, recognized for his landscapes that bridge the gap between abstraction and realism. This iteration of the exhibition will additionally feature selections from Surrey Art Gallery's own permanent collection.

As well as the tranquil, contemplative portrayals of the Gulf Islands and the Albertan plains for which he is widely known, the exhibition also includes screen-printed hard-edge colour abstractions from the 1960s, monotypes (single editions) of natural forms from the 1950s, and even some of the physical woodblocks used to produce his more recent prints.

Featured works include *Prairie Storm* (1979), a landscape that breaks broader conventions in printmaking by incorporating ink hand brushing techniques, and *Nootka Afternoon* (1993), a woodcut print that utilizes form and colour to depict a stillness between ocean and land.

This exhibition is organized by the Kelowna Art Gallery with Guest Curator Ian M. Thom, featuring over sixty prints by renowned artist Takao Tanabe from their collection, as well as Vancouver Art Gallery and Winnipeg Art Gallery's collections. It is accompanied by an illustrated exhibition catalogue with essays by Guest Curator Ian M. Thom and Curator Christine May.

Guest Curator: Ian M. Thom
Origin of Exhibition: Kelowna Art Gallery



Takao Tanabe, *Prairie Storm*, lithograph, 58.5 x 43.5cm, 1976/2003.
Surrey Art Gallery Permanent Collection: SAG2004.11.08.
Image appears courtesy of the artist.



Josh Hite, *A Vista (Portals)*, video still, 2019.
Image appears courtesy of the artist.



Gallery visitors viewing the exhibition, Arts 2023.
Photo by Daniel Negatu.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS

Josh Hite: A Vista

December 8, 2023–April 21, 2024

Josh Hite: A Vista documents a performance of the same name which took place at New Westminster's Massey Theatre in 2019, one of Canada's few remaining theatres with a classical hemp house rigging system (most theatres now use motorized systems). The Massey Theatre becomes the stage for an ever-changing sequence of painted theatrical backdrops—an attempt to partner with the theatre's collective movement possibilities and limits. In Hite's multimedia artwork, the labour that ordinarily marks a transition between scenes becomes the star of the show.

In the artwork, which consists of three separate recordings of the performance over three nights, viewers encounter the Massey Theatre's history of performance through choreographed arrangements of theatrical backdrop: standard backdrops, which traverse the entirety of the stage; 'cut' drops, which feature a central portal or arch through which actors enter and exit; and 'leg' drops, smaller painted elements isolated from other parts of the stage. The backdrops are continually unfurled, raised, and lowered by Hite's collaborators in the Fight With a Stick Performance company. These gestures of concealment and revelation would ordinarily not be seen by audiences.

Rhys Edwards
Assistant Curator

Arts 2024

April 27–July 14, 2024

For over four decades this annual open-juried exhibition, held in partnership with the Arts Council of Surrey, celebrates the best in local artmaking.

A team of community jurors comes together to select artworks that demonstrate originality and skill. Anyone may enter. Prizes are awarded across five categories, spanning from traditional works on paper to textiles and new media art. Visitors to the Gallery can also vote on their favourite to select the People's Choice award.

Rhys Edwards
Assistant Curator

FOCUSED ACTIVITY: ABSTRACT LANDSCAPE COLLAGE

THEME: ELEMENTS OF ART IN NATURE

OBJECTIVES

Through this activity, students will:

- Learn about Takao Tanabe's artistic practice from abstract art to landscape prints.
- Understand the difference between abstract and representational art.
- Use the elements of art, shape, and colour to express themselves creatively.
- Exercise compositional skills by arranging and layering shapes.
- Make connections between abstract art and the landscape in Tanabe's practice.
- Contemplate their own experience of the land, the landscape in different parts of Canada, and how they connect to places and communities.

MATERIAL LIST

- White cardstock
- Construction paper
- Tissue paper
- Pencils
- Rulers
- Glue sticks
- Scissors

BIG IDEAS FROM BC CURRICULUM

- People create art to express who they are as individuals and community (Art Education, Grade 1)
- Artists experiment in a variety of ways to discover new possibilities (Arts Education 4)
- Experiencing art challenges our point of view and expands our understanding of others (Arts Education 7)

ACTIVITY

Students create an abstract landscape collage by the work of Canadian painter and printmaker, Takao Tanabe. Using coloured construction and tissue paper, students will use cut out shapes and arrange them to construct unique landscape compositions. Students will develop their own artistic interpretation of the landscape and gain a deeper appreciation for abstract and representational art.



Takao Tanabe, *Bright Sky*, block print on paper, 2010. Image appears courtesy of the artist.

FOCUSED ACTIVITY: ABSTRACT LANDSCAPE COLLAGE

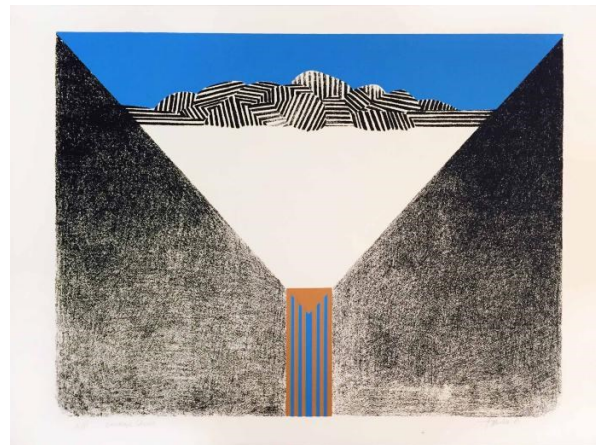
THEME: ELEMENTS OF ART IN NATURE

DISCUSSION & INTRODUCTION

Explain to students that they'll be creating their own landscape collage using coloured construction and tissue paper. Spend time with your class looking at the examples of Tanabe's work in the image gallery in this guide (pg.12-17). Takao's landscape work was inspired by his experience of travelling through the prairies on his way to the Rocky Mountains, and his time living on the west coast of British Columbia.

Reflect on the differences and connections between his purely abstract geometric work and more representational landscape work including his *Cut Corners* series and exploration of geometric abstraction. Ask them:

- What do you notice about these artworks?
- Explain the difference between abstract art, art that isn't meant to look like something we'd see in the world, and representational art that describes things, people, or places around us.
- What is this a picture of? Can you find the artworks that are abstract? And representational?
- What shapes do you see? How does Takao use shapes to create a picture?
- What about Takao's work inspires you? Are you ready to try making your own collage?



Takao Tanabe, *Envelope Sketch*, 1967.
Image appears courtesy of the artist.

PRE-ACTIVITY OPTION

Encourage students to think about a landscape that's meaningful to them. In preparation, take them out to explore, observe, and sketch outdoors, playing with colour, shape, and elements they encounter in nature and their own environment.

Demonstration—how to create an abstract landscape collage

- Cut out simple shapes from the construction paper that reflect forms in nature, or geometric shapes such as triangles, circles, squares, and rectangles.
- Arrange the shapes on a separate sheet of card stock, encourage students to play with their composition, to move elements around to create different quick artworks inspired by Tanabe's abstract artworks and landscape prints.
- Once satisfied with the arrangement, glue the shapes onto the paper to create the collage.

FOCUSED ACTIVITY: ABSTRACT LANDSCAPE COLLAGE

THEME: ELEMENTS OF ART IN NATURE

INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

- Distribute scissors, glue sticks, pencils, and construction and tissue paper, ensuring students have an array of colours to work with.
- Let the students use their imagination to create their own abstract collages, drawing inspiration from Tanabe's artwork and the themes discussed.
- Encourage them to experiment with different shapes, colors, and arrangements, reflecting Tanabe's willingness to challenge his own artistic boundaries.

REFLECTION

- Create a safe sharing circle for students to discuss their artwork and artistic process. Ask students to share their collages. This reflection promotes sharing, creativity, a deeper understanding of art concepts, and develops vocabulary and language skills.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What do you like about our artworks?
- Do you like the abstract work, or the landscape art better? What is your favourite? Why?
- How did seeing Takao's work inspire you?
- Can you point out the abstract forms or landscape elements in your collage?
- Why did you choose the colours you used in your artwork?
- How did you choose the shapes that you created to use in your collage?
- Did you face any challenges while making your collage? How did you overcome them?
- What did you learn by creating your artwork?



Takao Tanabe, *Strip*, ink on paper, 1967.
Image appears courtesy of the artist.

FOCUSED ACTIVITY: ABSTRACT LANDSCAPE COLLAGE

THEME: ELEMENTS OF ART IN NATURE

OPTIONAL REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES

WRITING REFLECTION

Have students write a short artist statement describing their artwork and what inspired their work.

- What did they learn by making this artwork?
- How were they inspired by Takao Tanabe?
- How did they make their work?

This supports the development of critical thinking skills, and self-reflection in connection to their creative practices.

CLASS EXHIBITION

Exhibit the student's artworks in the classroom. You could consider adding the following:

- Write a short curatorial statement to created a didactic panel introducing the exhibition and the project.
- Include student artist statements.
- Involve the class in choosing how to arrange and install their artworks.

This promotes an appreciation for each other's creativity and furthers students expression and understanding of the artistic process, and ways of sharing their art and ideas together.



Takao Tanabe, *Boxed*, silkscreen print on paper, 1967.
Image appears courtesy of the artist.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS FOR SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Participating in a guided tour, studio workshop, or self-guided tour in conjunction with the exhibitions supports Big Ideas and Learning Standards in the British Columbia Arts Education Curriculum for grades K-12. The exhibitions can be used as a touchstone for discussion relating to themes and concepts addressed in a variety of curricular areas.

K-12 ARTS EDUCATION CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES

Students will be able to use creative processes to create and respond to the arts:

KINDERGARTEN-GRADE 2

- Explore elements, processes, materials, movements, technologies, and techniques of the arts
- Explore artistic expressions of themselves and community through creative processes
- Reflect on creative processes and make connections to other experiences
- Interpret how symbols are used through the arts
- Express feelings, ideas, stories, observations, and experiences through the arts
- Experience, document, and share creative works in a variety of ways
- Describe and respond to works of art

GRADES 3-4

- Connect knowledge and skills from other areas of learning in planning, creating, interpreting, and analyzing works for art
- Reflect on creative processes and make connections to personal experiences
- Explore identity, place, culture, and belonging through arts experiences
- Explore relationships among cultures, societies, and the arts

GRADES 5-7

- Works of art influence and are influenced by the world around us
- Engaging in creative expression and experiences expands people's sense of identity and belonging
- Explore identity, place, culture, and belonging through arts experiences

GRADES 8-9

- Interpret and communicate ideas using symbols and elements to express meaning through the arts
- The arts provide opportunities to gain insight into the perspectives and experiences of people from a variety of times, places, and cultures

GRADES 10-12

- Create artistic works that demonstrate personal, cultural, and historical contexts
- Purposeful artistic choices enhance the depth and impact of an artistic work
- Express meaning, intent, and emotion through visual art
- Intentionally select and combine materials, processes, and technologies to convey ideas and justify choices

TERMS & CONCEPTS

Abstract art: Art that does not depict visual reality but instead uses formal elements: i.e. shape, colour, form, and line to create an image or object.

Abstract expressionism: A term describing abstract painting practiced by artists such as, Jackson Pollock, Jules Olitzky, and Willem de Kooning, beginning in the 1940s and 1950s. It is often characterised by gestural brushstrokes and mark making.

Aquatint: A printmaking technique that produces tonal effects by using acid to etch into the printing plate creating sunken areas which hold the ink.

Block print: A printing technique of pressing and stamping onto a surface, often paper, using wooden blocks with a carved negative image that is filled with ink to create a positive image.

Collage: the technique and resulting work of art in which pieces of paper, photographs, fabric, and other ephemera are arranged and adhered onto a supporting surface

Debossed: A depressed surface created using a printmaking process.

Embossed: A raised surface created using a printmaking processes.

Etching: A printmaking technique that uses a chemical reaction to produce

incised lines in a metal printing plate which then hold the applied ink and form the image.

Hard edge abstraction: An approach to abstract painting that became popular in the 1960s characterized by areas of flat colour (often geometric) with sharp, clear (or 'hard') edges.

Ink: A writing, drawing, and printmaking medium in liquid or paste form, available in variety of colours and values.

Intaglio: Any printmaking technique in which the image is produced by incising into the printing plate – the incised line or area holds the ink and creates the positive image.

Pattern: In art, a repeated visual element, especially a design made from line, shape, or colour on a surface or object.

Print: An impression made by any method involving transfer from one surface to another.

Landscape: In art, a depiction of natural scenery that may capture images of mountains, valleys, bodies of water, fields, forests, and coasts and may or may not include man-made structures as well as people.

Linocut: A relief print produced by cutting into linoleum to create a

negative image, that is the printed onto a surface to create a positive image.

Lithography: A printing process that uses a chemical process to create an image on a flat stone or metal plate. This is then coated with ink and pressed onto a surface, most often paper, to create an image.

Monotype: A printmaking process in which ink is applied directly to a polished plate, such as glass or metal, to be pressed onto a surface to create a unique single image.

Representational art: Art that depicts images or objects found in the real world. It can have a subject of landscapes, animals, fruit, figures, etc.

Screenprint: An image created by blocking areas on a screen, and then forcing ink through the screen onto a surface to create an image, often on paper or fabric.

Two-dimensional: In art, a planar composition that has length and width but does not possess depth. Examples of two-dimensional art includes paintings, drawings, prints, and photographs.

Woodcut: A method of relief printing in which wood is cut along the grain using a metal gauge or chisel to create an image.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITING ARTIST

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



Takao Tanabe, *Cormorant Island*, 2023, photogravure print. Collection of the Kelowna Art Gallery. Photo: Rachel Topham, 2023.

RESOURCES

Takao Tanabe, Life and Work (Ian Thom)

www.aci-iac/art-books/takao-tanabe

Tour of *Takao Tanabe: Printmaker* with Guest Curator

Ian Thom at Kelowna Art Gallery

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRACg6LkmS8>

Bordercrossings review of *Takao Tanabe: Printmaker*

<https://bordercrossingsmag.com/article/takao-tanabe2>

Surrey Art Gallery exhibition listing

<https://www.surrey.ca/arts-culture/surrey-art-gallery/exhibitions/takao-tanabe-printmaker>

Kelowna Art Gallery exhibition listing

<https://kelownaartgallery.com/takao-tanabe-printmaker/>

Museum of Modern Art—What is a Print?

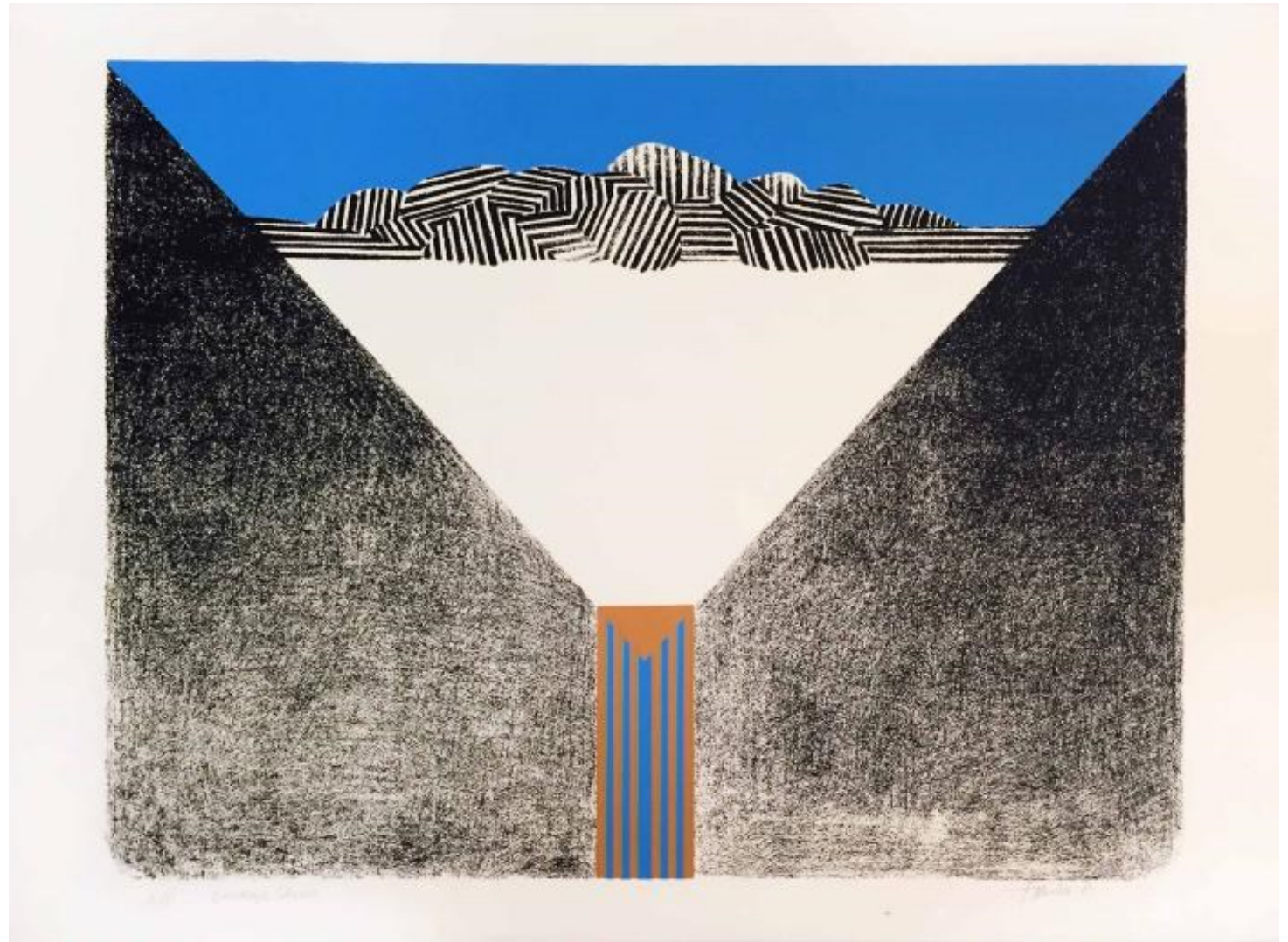
www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/learn/courses/what_is_a_print_brochure_1999.pdf

IMAGE GALLERY



Takao Tanabe, *Bright Sky*, block print on paper, 58 x 66cm, 2010.
Image appears courtesy of the artist.

IMAGE GALLERY



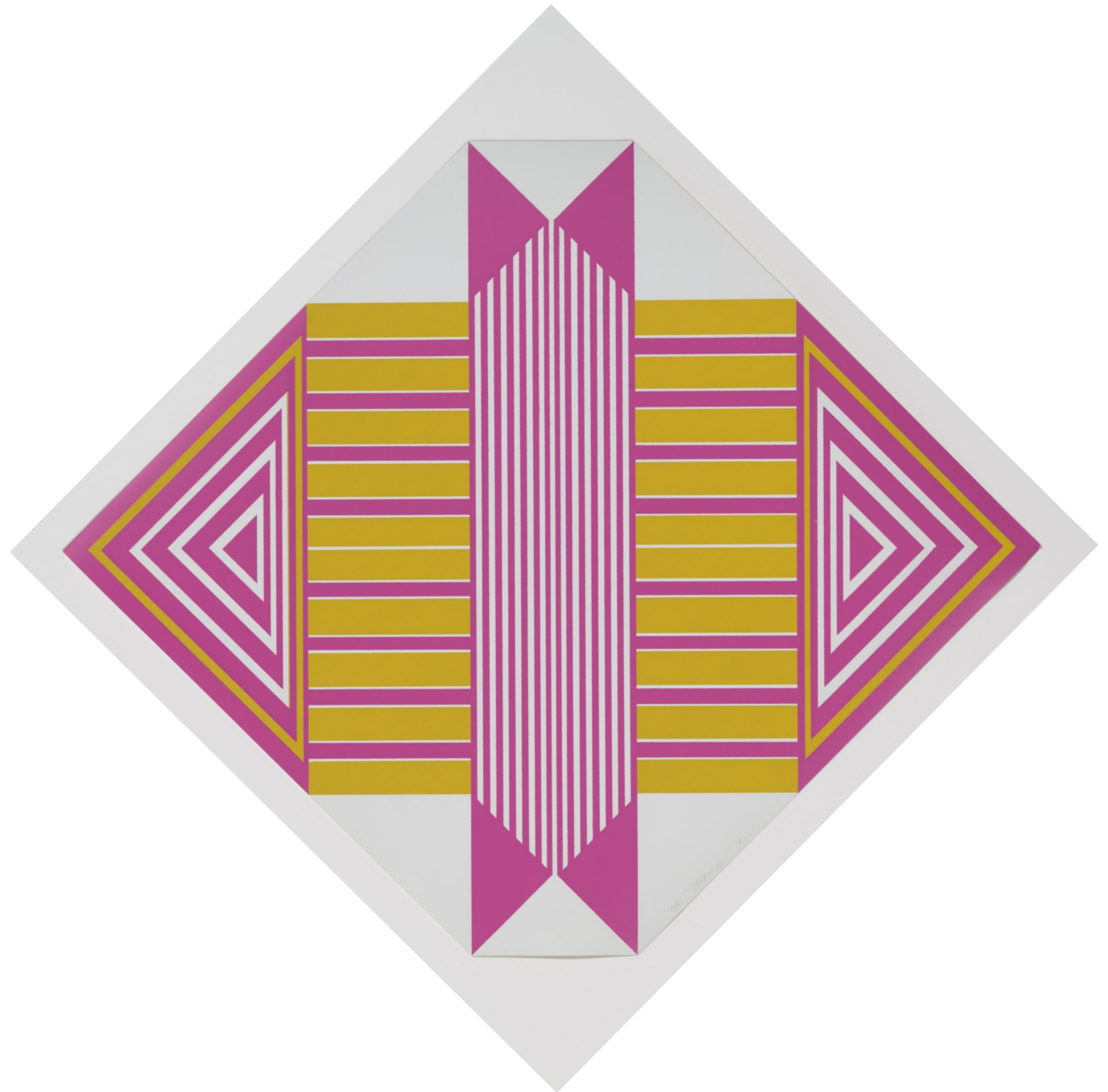
Takao Tanabe, *Envelope Sketch*, silkscreen print - ink on paper, 38 x 50.8 cm, 1967.
Surrey Art Gallery Permanent Collection: SAG1991.01.21.
Image appears courtesy of the artist.

IMAGE GALLERY



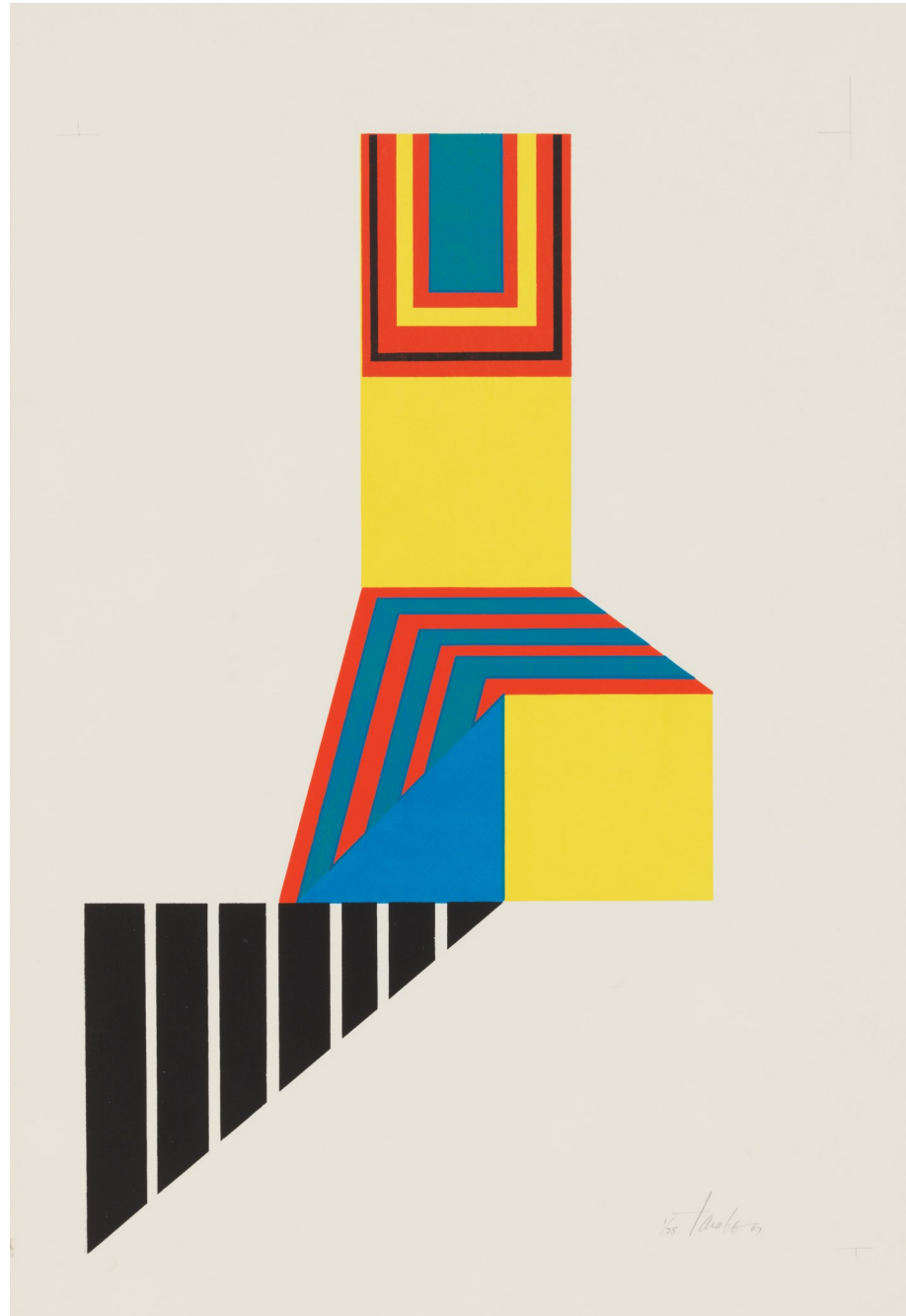
Takao Tanabe, *Wing*, screenprint on paper, 50.8 x 33.2cm, 1968.
Image appears courtesy of the artist.

IMAGE GALLERY



Takao Tanabe, Cut Corners: Kite, 1968, screenprint on paper. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery.
Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery. Image appears courtesy of the artist.

IMAGE GALLERY



Takao Tanabe, *Window*, 1967, screenprint on paper. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery. Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery. Image appears courtesy of the artist.

IMAGE GALLERY



Takao Tanabe, *Strip*, screenprint on paper, 50.8 x 33.2cm, 1967.
Surrey Art Gallery Permanent Collection: SAG2004.11.01.
Image appears courtesy of the artist.

INFORMATION / MAP



**SURREY ART GALLERY /
SURREY ARTS CENTRE**
13750 88 AVE IN BEAR CREEK PARK

SKYTRAIN STATIONS

- 1 SURREY CENTRAL (FOR CITY HALL, LIBRARY, & 96 B-LINE OR 321 BUS TO SURREY ARTS CENTRE)
- 2 KING GEORGE (TO CATCH 96 B-LINE OR 321 BUS TO SURREY ARTS CENTRE)

- 40 minute drive from downtown Vancouver
- 2 km walk from King George Station
- Catch Bus #321 or R1 at Surrey Central Station and get off on King George Hwy at 88 Avenue.

SURREY ART GALLERY

13750 88 Avenue
Surrey, BC V3W 3L1

604-501-5566
artgallery@surrey.ca
surrey.ca/artgallery

GALLERY HOURS

Tue, Wed, Thu: 9am–9pm
Fri: 9am–5pm
Sat: 10am–5pm
Sun: Noon–5pm

Closed on Mondays & holidays

Admission by donation

SIGN UP FOR OUR E-NEWSLETTERS

Visit surrey.ca/arts-signup to receive gallery exhibition and program updates.