

Linda Stephen Origami Landscapes

Artist/Illustrator Bio

Linda Stephen's paper artworks are part of public and private collections around the world, from the Mayor's Office in Omihachiman, Japan to the JW Marriott Hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan to the Minden Opera House in Minden, Nebraska. Her commissioned works range from animated TV commercials to collaborative community artworks.

A native of Michigan, Linda spent much of her youth outdoors in all seasons. She has also traveled and worked extensively across North America, Asia, and Europe. Her art celebrates special moments and beauty in our everyday lives.

Linda has more than 25 years of experience in *origami*, the Japanese art of paper folding. Fluent in Japanese, Linda studied at the Japan Center for Michigan Universities and worked for six years as a teacher and translator in Shiga, Japan.

Linda began making paper landscapes through constructions of invented *origami* and layered papers in 2003 while working in New York City. Since then, her artworks have won national and regional art awards and have been featured in more than 150 juried exhibits across the country including the U.S. Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C., The Museum of the Hudson Highlands in New York, and the University of Michigan.

She speaks on Japanese paper arts, Japanese culture, *origami* (paper folding), and *origami*'s connection to math and design thinking to audiences at libraries, museums, arts centers, schools, universities, businesses, and senior centers across the U.S.

Her origami picture book *The Day We Went to the Park* was published by Handersen Publishing in 2020 (ISBN: 978-1-647030-03-2). In 2021, it won the Nebraska Book Awards Illustration Honor, presented by the Nebraska Center for the Book and the Nebraska Library Commission. The art took seven months to create and includes more than 1,000 origami sculptures from hundreds of *washi* papers. The illustrations reflect the diverse communities in which we live and include people of different ages, mobility, ethnicity, race, and gender.

A lifelong student of culture and language, Linda has worked in communications on five continents for United Nations' agencies, international nonprofits, Fortune 500 companies, and book publishers. She lives in Lincoln, Nebraska with her children.

Artist, author, illustrator
LindaStephen.com
TheDayWeWentToThePark.com
Facebook.com/LindaStephenOrigamiArt
Info@LindaStephen.com or 402-483-0747 (studio landline)

Linda Stephen Origami Landscapes

Artist Statement

I have lived and traveled around the world - from Osaka to London, Chicago to Oslo. There is beauty of place, and of spirit, all around us, though these are often overlooked. In my art, I aim to celebrate both the festive and the quiet moments in our everyday lives.

Origami is the Japanese art of folding paper into representational shapes. My *origami* and layered paper constructions represent a new and unique approach to this ancient tradition.

My medium is paper, primarily a wide range of handcrafted Japanese *washi* papers, which I first began collecting when I was a student in Japan. The colors, patterns and textures found in the *washi* papers themselves, as well as those created through the folding process, are key design elements in my art. Hundreds of artisanal papers form my palette – from tissue-thin, transparent *chigiri-e* hand-dyed rice papers to wrinkled *momigami* papers to the vibrant silkscreened *yuzen* fabric papers.

For the background, I create a watercolor *look* through layering thin *chigiri-e washi* papers. I do not use any paint, so my color choices are limited to the papers I have gathered, not unlike the limited choices we have at times in life. After choosing key papers, I invent 3D *origami* paper sculptures that add shadow, give dimension, and bring my work to life. This is an intricate process – both the folding of individual pieces and carefully gluing each piece in place, one layer at a time. Large, detailed works take months to complete and may include 10 different planes/layers, from the back to the foreground. Although I may incorporate 1,000+ paper sculptures in dozens of patterns and colors, every piece is added with purpose and must enhance the composition.

To me, *origami* is a metaphor for the potential that lies within each person and each place in our world. One flat piece of paper, a seemingly simple material, through a multifaceted progression of paper-folds, can be transformed into almost anything. It can even be deconstructed – *unfolded* – in order to begin again.

Even in the hardest seasons, there are opportunities to be grateful. It is my hope that my art inspires viewers to live with intention and appreciate the beauty, people and moments of their lives.

Artist, author, illustrator
LindaStephen.com
TheDayWeWentToThePark.com
Facebook.com/LindaStephenOrigamiArt
Info@LindaStephen.com or 402-483-0747 (studio landline)