



**M I N G E I 2 0 2 5**

**A N A R T R E T R E A T**

**I N J A P A N**

with **Monica Dengo** and **Satsuki Hatsushima**

## Are you looking for a meditative art retreat in a country of millennial traditions? This is the workshop for you!

We will be immersed in the quiet and profound beauty of southern Japan, in the middle of the countryside, surrounded by rice fields and mountains. This year 2025 the focus will be on experiencing the spirituality of Nature through the practice of mark making in every experience we live.

**Arrival date:** May 17, 2025

**Departure date:** May 25, 2025

### **Location:**

We will live and work at Kahoalpe, Kama city area, at the bottom of the Kaho Alps mountains in the Fukuoka prefecture.

### **'Pattern is the essence of beauty, form reduced to its primary elements'**

*Soetsu Yanagi*

Mark making is the 'materia prima' of all written communication, in every form and in the infinite relationships between orality and writing, but it is also a primary need that goes beyond logic and enters into a profound experience of our being alive.



During the whole week we'll give special attention to the development of patterns in Japanese culture and folk art. We will also see how the Japanese folk crafts movement Mingei has helped to preserve traditional crafts. Yanagi Soetsu (1889-1961) evolved a theory of why certain objects made by unknown craftsmen were so beautiful and became the founder of Mingei movement.

Our retreat will be an immersion into calligraphic and design culture.

Students will have the opportunity to make multiple artist's books in a classroom located within the Kaho Alpe premises, open at any time of day and night. There will be two special artisan's days: one in Koishiwara, a small pottery village in the mountains where we'll learn how to make marks on ceramic tiles in Taketoshi Oota pottery studio, and one in Akizuki, another village in the mountains where Mr.Inoue will teach us the process of making washi (Japanese paper) and where we'll make our own sheets of paper to be used in our artist's books. Students will also

learn how to paste Japanese papers together and on fabric, using traditional Japanese techniques. Furthermore we will make our own Rakkan-in chop : we'll develop our own symbol (from letters or from ideograms) and we'll carve it into our own stone chop. During the week we will experience several mark making meditative exercises using calligraphic techniques and we'll keep a sort of visual diary of our art experiences.

In Akizuki we'll visit an extraordinary Japanese garden at Seryuan <https://seiryuan.com/> and we'll have lunch there. We'll also meditate while mark-making at a small nearby shrine, take night walks, listen to cello and Taiko drum's performances, participate in a tea ceremony and more. At the end of the retreat we will exhibit all our artist's books at the Kaho Alpe's lobby.

### **Class times**

Normal class time will be 10:00am to 4:30pm.

(Optional morning walk with the group)

Students can also stay in the classroom in the evening or at any time.

### **Bike rentals**

At Kahoalpe students will have the opportunity to rent bikes. The closest center with shops is at 5 km and can be reached through easy secondary roads.

Photo by Marco Mensa



## Accommodation

We will live and work at Kahoalpe, a beautiful, comfortable facility with lots of light which used to be a school and has been recently turned into an accommodation facility. Students will stay in single or double rooms and will have access to a classroom open at any time during day and night.

## Meals

Most meals will be at Kahoalpe. We will also eat at two restaurants and sometimes, on the occasion of trips, we'll eat bentos.

The breakfast is vegan food with fresh local vegetables.

The cook at Kaho Alpe can manage any food allergy request. Their motto is "Everybody in the world can eat at the same table!" They use no chemical seasonings, being concerned for the Earth, not only for human beings.

There will be a coin machine for those who want coffee!

Kaho Alpe, dinner preparation. Art retreat with Monica and Satsuki, 2023  
Photo by Max Fish - Opposite page, photo by Anna Maria Rocca.



Maximum number of participants: 16

**Fee, deposit and registration:**

First contact Monica at [ciao@monicadengo.com](mailto:ciao@monicadengo.com) to know if there are spaces available and to receive additional information.

**FEE**

**Yen 312000 (threehundredtwelvethousand) is the total fee.**

**Deposit of yen 80000 (eightythousand) is due by December 15, 2024.**

If we receive more than 16 requests, we may need to ask you to send the deposit before the December due date, as we may run a second retreat.

**Final payment is due by February 28, 2025**

**Fee includes:**

- Accommodation in Kahoalpe\*
- All meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- Lessons in a classroom open exclusively for us 24/7
- Visits and workshops in Akizuki and Koishiwara and all the week's events.
- all the course's materials

**\* Accommodation is in double rooms, if you wish single room there will be an additional fee of yen 20000 (twentythousand).**

**See Terms and Conditions:**

Your place on the workshop is confirmed with full payment. Due to the logistics, people and places involved, these events are non-refundable.

Please ensure you are suitably insured.

**We look forward to being together with you in Japan!**



For more information and subscription, contact:

Monica Dengo at [ciao@monicadengo.com](mailto:ciao@monicadengo.com)



All photos are from the Art retreat at Kahoalpe, Kama City, 2023 by Marco Mensa





Above: The Mingei art magazine and traditional wood containers.  
Below: Stone chops for seals, called 'rakkan-in' or 'hanko'.

