



### NAOMI KASUMI:

Associate Professor of Digital Design and Asian Studies at Seattle University

Seattle-based artist-scholar, educator, and designer, was born and raised in Kyoto, Japan. She earned a BA in Social Welfare from Bukkyo University. Kasumi left Japan in 1995 to enter the University of Oregon, where she received an MFA in Visual Design in 2002.

After moving to Seattle, she established the Digital Design Program in the Department of Fine Arts at Seattle University in 2003. Kasumi also created and now directs the Siena Program, a summer study-abroad Studio Art program taught in Italy. While in Siena, students learn all aspects of book art, thanks to the collaborative efforts of Kasumi and local hand print artisans.

Since 2009, Kasumi has been an affiliated professor of the Asian Studies Program at Seattle University.

Kasumi has held numerous solo and group exhibitions at galleries and educational institutions nationally and internationally. In Seattle, her exhibits have been enjoyed at the Wing Luke Asian Museum, the Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle Center, the University of Washington, and Seattle University. She has also exhibited her work widely in the U.S.: Rochester, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Gainesville, GA; Denver, CO; Chicago, IL; Anchorage Alaska; Portland and Eugene, Oregon. Internationally, Kasumi has exhibited in Brisbane, Australia; New Delhi, India; Budapest, Hungary; and in Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, Osaka, Kyoto, Hyogo, Nagano, Fukushima, Kamaishi/Iwate, Kagoshima, and many other cities in Japan.

### ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My research and art explore and address the following concepts: "presence and absence," "memory/memorial," and "loss and healing." These themes derive from my personal experiences of loss and grief; they have been the primary focus of my installation art and research for the past 16 years. Although I also works in a variety of media—some ephemeral, some permanent—in a smaller scale (i.e., book art, video, and printmaking), my main creative work focuses on a memorial ritual series in which I create a seemingly infinite number of small objects that express my intent and exhibit my craft and skill in a conceptual and tangible fashion. More recently, at the Tohoku Tsunami disaster site in North-Eastern Japan, I created a memorial in Fukushima and Kamaishi through a large relief project in the form of an art installation. The series of benches were built in various sizes and were intended to promote public conversation and offer a gathering and healing space for a community of displaced persons who were in mourning after losing their family members and homes.

While I may be known as a "memorial artist," I am not interested primarily in making permanent monuments. Rather, I hope to create an ephemeral and sacred space allowing people a place to grieve or connect uniquely with nature, their own spirits, and various memories.

My creative journey centers on a search for a moment of STILLNESS, where time and space merge. My creative process uses ritualistic repetition as a gateway to deeper awareness. In this reality, art objects and nature may unite, or art objects and human dialogue may become possible. I believe that the creative process begins with silence and can be used to build community and promote healing.

My work is inspired by memories of a life-changing experience and my emotional reaction to the event. When that event re-engages me in new way, a new place, or in relation to some aspect of nature, the use of indigenous or everyday organic materials allows me to enter into a sacred space, the ancient home of my soul.

### DESCRIPTION OF MEM: memory • memorial no.7 scriptorium

This installation book art memorial piece is made of many used tea bags. I created a sacred space where people could come to calm their spirit and have a silent conversation. The poster image for the exhibition was taken from the main hall of a Buddhist temple in Nagano, Japan, and shows five tapestry-like books. Each panel is made up of 108 encaustic cards which contain Japanese sutra calligraphy, digital images, Xerox images, personal writing, maple leaves, plants, and butterfly wings.

The color of the books comes from tea dye and bee's wax. The various hues were naturally released in brewing a cup of tea, and this process meant that I had no control over the color and staining process. So, each page of the book, in which three tea bags are randomly layered, is visually unique and none of the pages is the same.

Binding involved the most significant effort in this project. White cotton threads were used to bind the 108 cards as a book. However, unlike regular books, the pages/cards were not continuously sewn by one long thread, but instead each was stitch tied and knotted individually by hand, much like surgical sutures. This production of 5,346 stitches seemed timeless and acted as an important ritual in my creation of this work.