

# First Cut

COMMUNICATION FROM MEMBERS OF THE GUILD OF AMERICAN PAPERCUTTERS

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## Kurpie Cuts

CAROLYN GUEST FILLS US IN

GAP member Carolyn Guest, a talented cutter in her own right, was kind enough to share her knowledge of Kurpie papercuts with us. The Kurpie region of Poland is northeast of Warsaw. The region's papercuts have several predominant styles as shown here.

### Wstegi

*Ribbons* are colorful stickers made of a star and two strips of paper which bend down. The ribbons are crowned with a circle that is always in a contrasting color.



### Leluje

Leluje (*lilies*) are cut-outs in the form of trees rising from a base. The base is smaller and the larger upper part is referred to as a crown due to its richness and size.

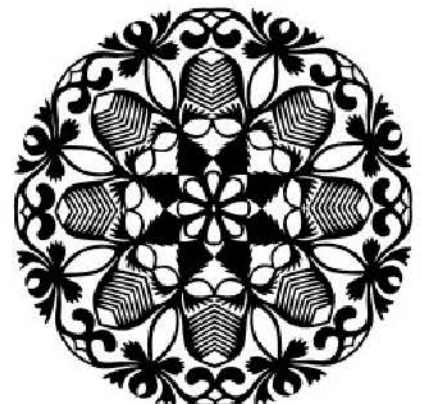
### Las

These forest style cuttings are symmetrical with rows of trees, forest creatures and birds. These tend to be more unique to the individual artist.



### Gwiazdy

Gwiazdy (*stars*) are one-color cut-outs in the shape of a circle with motifs radiating from the center. If the star is open-work, it is traditionally glued under a paper in a contrasting color.



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## Kurpie Cuts (CONTINUED)



### **Kogutki, pawie, konie z jeźdźcami**

Roosters, peacocks, and horses with riders. These eye-catching

## Send Your Cuts Packing!

TO THE BROOKLYN ART LIBRARY

Sketchbooks aren't just for sketches! Order a kit, cut one up or glue your cuts to it, and be part of the world's largest collection of artists' sketchbooks. This international collection lives at The Brooklyn Art Library when it's not globe trotting, and is open to all. You have the option of adding digitization. This allows your work to be viewed online, and you can opt in for text messages that will let you know anytime your work has been viewed and from what corner of the globe! Add your own tags to your work so viewers can search for the themes and styles that interest them.

<https://www.brooklynartlibrary.com/participate/>



Thanks to GAP member Kathryn White for sharing this tip!

If you do create a book, make sure to let us know. We want to see all that you create!



## You're Invited...To Xi'an China!

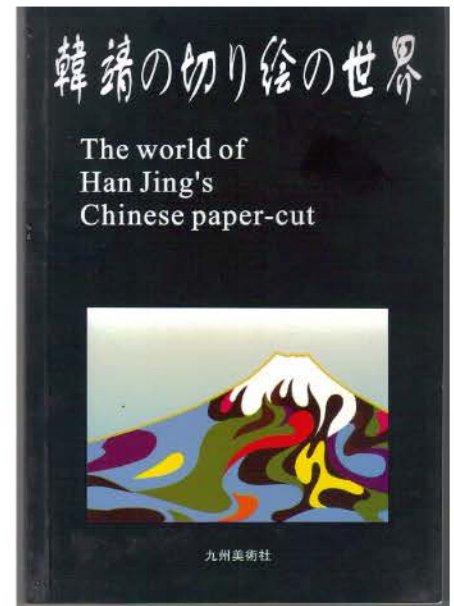
BY ALICE HELEN MASEK

Alice Helen Masek here, and longtime GAP members may remember that I was a key organizer of "Collection 2004" at Asilomar, on the coast of the Pacific Ocean near Monterey, CA. Several of our International GAP members came to that Collection, and not wanting them to suffer from jet lag, I invited those traveling a long way to spend the week before in our home.

Five GAP friends took me up on this offer, and one, Fan Pu from Nanjing, China, was in and out of our home several times over the next two months as she visited various friends and family members in different parts of the state. Back in Nanjing, Fan Pu told Professor of Folk Art at the Nanjing University, Chen Jing, about my large scale papercuttings. Professor Chen invited me, with my husband Mike, to attend the "Second International Festival of the Art of Papercutting" in Huhhot, Inner Mongolia, a Province of China, in 2006. Professor Chen later attended our GAP "Collection 2008" in PA! It was at this amazing 2006 Papercutting Festival, attended by about 200 Chinese cutters and about 30 from other countries, including GAP member Jupi Das, that we met Han Jing. Han Jing, from Xi'an, China, was a young man with large, expressive eyes, who did wonderful multi-layered colored papercuttings, many of human figures and their totem animals. At that event, Han Jing invited us to contact him when we arrived at Xi'an, where we were going after a group bus tour of many artist's studios and homes in central China.

In Xi'an in 2006, Han Jing invited us to meet him for Tea at the Wild Goose Pavilion, where he introduced us to another Xi'an artist who tears paper for his energetic depictions of rural life. While we visited, the Mayor of the city of Xi'an, a friend of Han Jing, came by to meet us and see photos of my work. Wow.

Back home, we stayed in touch with Han Jing by e-mail. He has a translation program on his e-mail that helps us communicate fairly well despite the challenge of language. I do not speak Mandarin and he has only a little English. He sent me some of his books (see photo), and we exchanged many images. Several times he invited me to participate in exhibits in Xi'an, but we were not able to travel at those times.





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## *You're Invited...To Xi'an China!*

(CONTINUED)



HAN JING VISITS WITH THE MASEKS

Then in late 2015, Han Jing invited me to a special exhibit in Xi'an in June 2016, with a focus on building friendship between China, America and Japan through papercutting. This caught my imagination. I began to think about a design that would have elements of the East and the West and of the three countries, somehow unified... What came to me was a Yin Yang of Nature and Technology, and of course, cut from black paper, the dark side would be cut in the negative, and the light side cut in the positive. On the positive side, I needed a way to hold the images together, and from other experiences, I knew a "web of life" would work, and before I knew it, my Yin Yang was on its way to becoming a Dreamcatcher! I worked hard on this design and would have had to struggle to finish it in time for the June 2016 exhibit. --But I was given extra time, because a key Japanese papercutter had a heart attack, and in that culture, when an esteemed elder becomes ill, the event is postponed so that person has a chance to recover and participate.

So Han Jing let me know the exhibit was delayed, and when he wanted to reschedule it in August of 2017. It conflicted with my 50th High School Reunion, and I let him know I could not come then. We were in limbo on a date for a while, during which time Han Jing came to America on a tour, and we saw him briefly when he was in the San Francisco area. It was great to see him again, but even in person, a date was not set.

Mike and I through the years have made other friends who came to America for different programs, who were in our home for holiday celebrations, and who want to share their home towns (Nanjing and Shanghai) with us. We kept putting them off, and finally decided we wanted to visit them. So we chose a time that would work for us, with good weather (not the peak of summer heat) in China and before our Boysenberries and Santa Rosa Plums come ripe at home, and we made reservations to fly to China in May of 2019, for the whole month. I let Han Jing know we could come to Xi'an in the middle of May, and he has arranged this exhibit for the time we would be there!



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## You're Invited...To Xi'an China!

(CONTINUED)

--Thus it will likely not be a large exhibit, just a small one, in a room with only 8 foot ceilings and no windows. Maybe some Japanese cutters will participate, and surely some Chinese cutters. I have been asked to bring 5 pieces of my work, a challenge to fit in our luggage.

Han Jing is open to other Americans representing the papercut art of our country, but he writes that their Xi'an Association of papercutters is small and cannot afford to pay the expenses of people coming from overseas.

--So knowing that we will be paying our own

way, if anyone is interested in showing their art in Xi'an (The city of the Terra Cotta Warriors) May 16 - 20, 2019, with the "Opening Reception and Banquet" on Friday, May 17th, let me know, and I will facilitate your communication with Han Jing. If two or three GAP members want to attend, maybe they could travel together! I suppose the option may be available of sending art by mail, but that is up to Han Jing, and may depend on the space he has available. I'm glad to make the connection for you.

For more information about this opportunity please email Alice Helen Masek at [alicehelenpapercut@gmail.com](mailto:alicehelenpapercut@gmail.com).



A last round of pots and tops on zeilki papercuttings.