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# the PAPER

The Magazine of OrigamiUSA

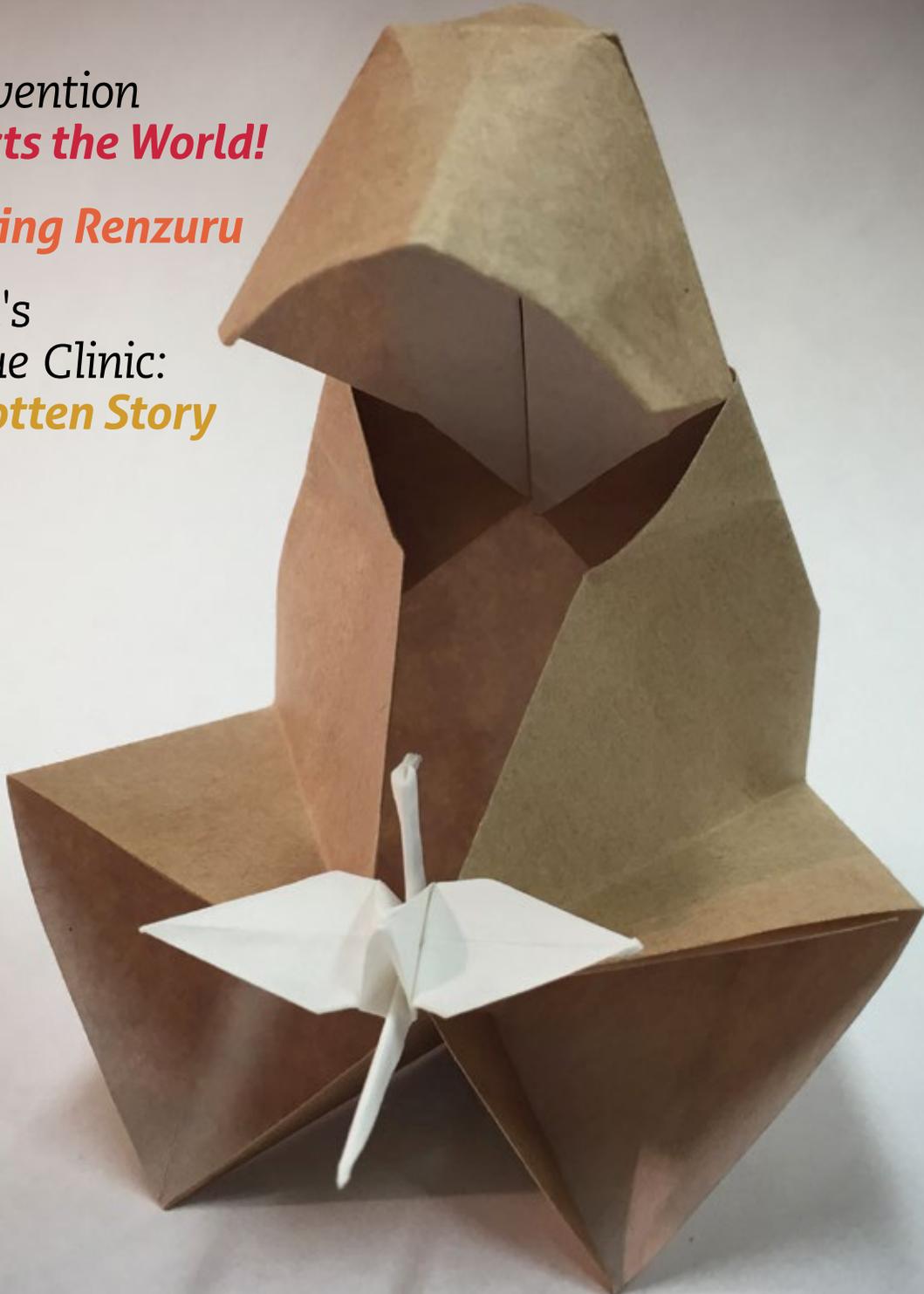


OrigamiUSA 2020  
40th Anniversary

UnConvention  
*Connects the World!*

*Mastering Renzuru*

Harlem's  
Lafargue Clinic:  
*A Forgotten Story*



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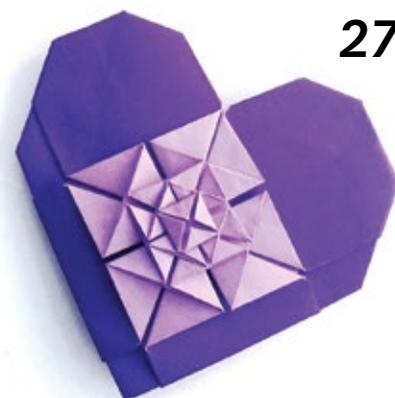
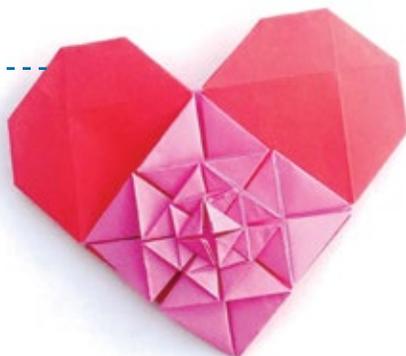
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## DIAGRAMS

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**27** Andrea's Rose on the Heart,  
by *Meenakshi Mukerji*

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by *Rob Snyder*



## On the cover

"Contemplation", a meditative figure that embodies an attitude to overcome difficult times, looking for peace in small things., was taught free by Rob Snyder in March, during a Zoom meeting via Origami Connect. About this model, Rob says: "I designed *Contemplation* in 2016, and it has remained one of my favorite designs. I hope everyone enjoys spending a few peaceful minutes during their day to fold and reflect on the gift of community that we gain from our shared love of origami." For a diagram of Contemplation, please go to pages 28-29. Also on the cover, our T-shirt design logo, celebrated our 40th Anniversary with 40 models. Design by Adrienne Sack. The list of models and a bibliography is available here: [https://origamiusa.org/files/uncon2020\\_tshirt\\_bibliography.pdf](https://origamiusa.org/files/uncon2020_tshirt_bibliography.pdf)



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*Seashell*, designed by Davor Vinko.  
Exhibited by Rukmini Roychoudhury

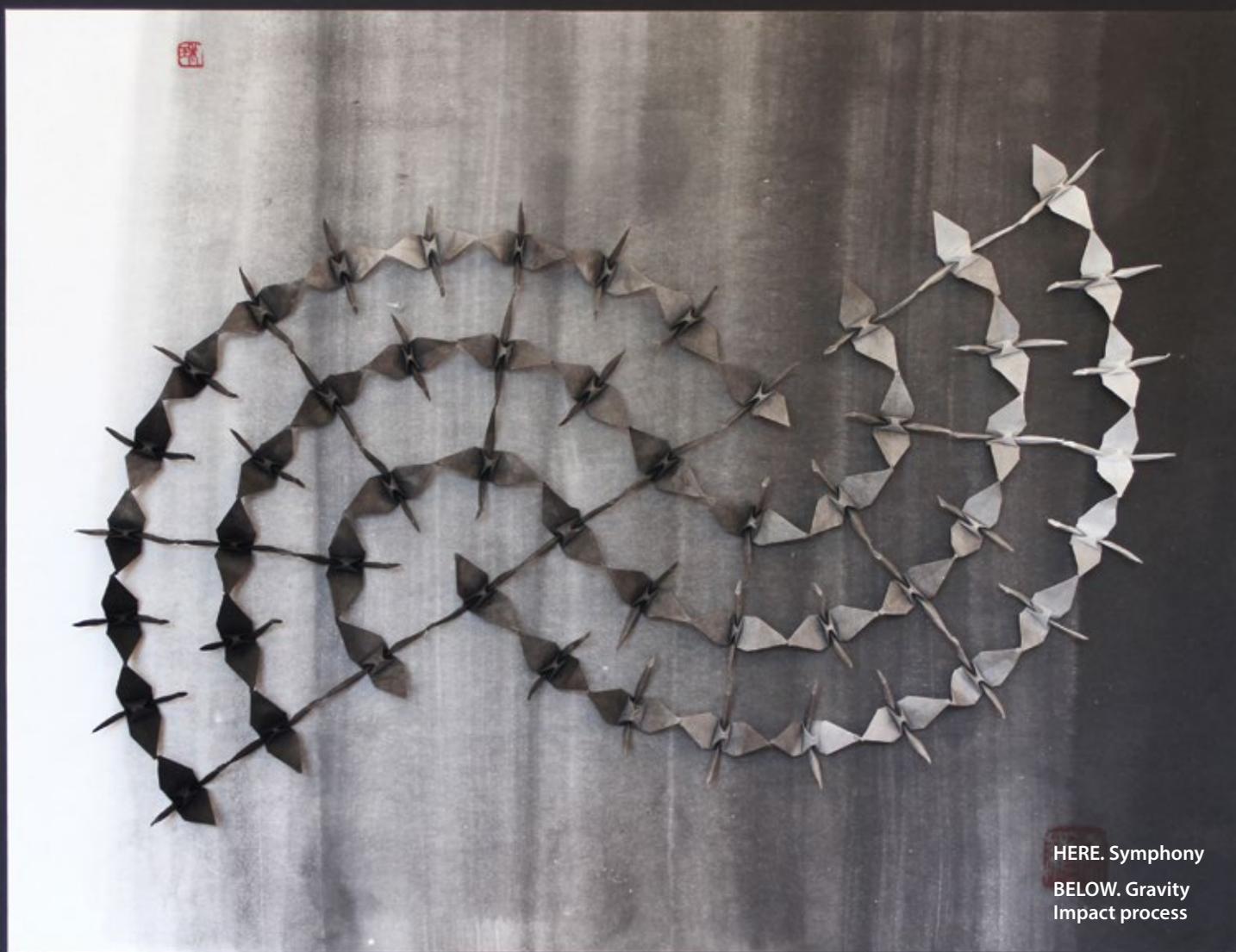


OrigamiUSA  
UnConvention 2020  
ONLINE: June 26-27

15



27



HERE. Symphony  
BELOW. Gravity  
Impact process

# *The Wish Collector*



By Paula Pietranera

*Living a Zen life, Paula Pietranera delves in the richness and limitations of a single piece of paper to interpret the lights and shadows of the current times. An artist interested in origami techniques, Paula finds inspiration in the reductive approach of an ancient Japanese craft called renzuru, using cranes as a subtle language akin to Phillip Glass' minimalist musical compositions. Every day she lays many cranes on a flat surface for a purpose. They are all interconnected and carry a wish hidden in their folds. In this story, Paula reflects on the meaning of her art in the context of the pandemic.*

I have always been interested in origami techniques that develop geometric shapes, such as tessellations or corrugated surfaces. Even though renzuru works with the crane as its unit, one of the best known and traditional animal shapes, the final set of joined cranes brings with it an infinite possibility of geometric combinations. I like the way it allows me to combine tradition with an endless opportunity for innovation. Working while sheltering in place also relates to renzuru: patience is required, as well as perseverance and regularity. While creating some renzuru models, I find myself facing the same landscape for days or weeks. This is one of the things that is happening to many people around the world today. We are all folding our lives in a similar way day after day, inside the same landscape. I find in my art the paradoxical “movement in stillness” that I perceive in the outer world during this pandemic. Everything is in constant flux, and at the same time there is a quietness, a lack of movement that influences the way I am creating these days.

San Francisco Zen Center, the place I currently live in, was funded by Shunryu Suzuki Roshi in the late 60's, and nowadays has three temples which provide a very different “Zen training” environment. The Urban Temple in the middle of the City of San Francisco, where I



**LEFT. DAWN** – 32”x17” – 2019  
130 paper cranes, 107 of them folded out of a single sheet of paper.

**BELOW. EXTRA II** – 20”x20” – 2019  
145 connected cranes.

**BELOW LEFT. FRACTAL** – 20”x20” – 2020  
70 connected cranes.

currently live as a Zen student and artist is different from the one you might experience in the Farm or Mountain Monastery. The walls of this temple are really porous, and different people from the area and around the world come for sitting meditation, service and ceremonies, talks or workshops. Also, many people volunteer in the kitchen, in the gardens, library, bookstore, etc. Life at San Francisco Zen Center's City Center is very dynamic. There is formal practice that you follow (this includes meditations, ceremonies, talks, etc), and this practice is also in relation and not separate from life in the City. For two years now I have been in a position in this temple where I can both deeply engage in formal Zen practice and spiritual growth, and at the same time devote most of my time to my activity as an artist.

I became interested in Japanese design and aesthetics during my formative years as an architect in Buenos Aires: the simplicity of the shapes, the rawness of the materials, the beauty that comes with the passing of time and the appreciation for nature's elements. It was during that time that I had my first approach to origami. The combination of geometric simplicity, paper as a medium and the precision and dexterity needed to create a shape, deeply resonated with my spirit. My interest



in Japanese arts later took me on the path of other techniques such as Sumié (Japanese ink painting), which I studied with teachers from Argentina, Japan and United States. In 2015 I lived in Japan, mainly in Kyoto, for six months. While there, I studied with Tomita Mizuho, a renzuru master and teacher. I am currently using this technique as a medium of expression for my artwork. I find that my background as an architect is a great asset when visualizing the geometric tri-dimensional shapes and then developing the diagrams I will use to create the designs I am envisioning. Lately I started merging both the Sumié and Origami techniques, creating works that are folded from previously painted rice paper, or using painted rice-paper backgrounds.



## THE WISH COLLECTOR

There are a number of Japanese Arts that are considered to be related to spiritual practice. These are usually referred to as zen arts, such as calligraphy, the tea ceremony and ikebana. Even though origami is not “officially” considered a zen art, my experience is that it can create a deep connection with the inner self and the unity of all things. All these arts have an aesthetic purpose, of creating simple and profound beauty while being a path for exploration of the self. From the artistic point of view, I relate to origami the same way an artist relates to its medium in order to create a piece of art, transcending the medium itself to become whatever will be expressed in the final art piece.

There are endless recommendations regarding the type of paper needed for a particular origami model, and many essays have been written on the balanced combination of shape and color.

I believe that the real beauty of an art piece comes from a subtle combination of shape, color, texture, material, composition and expression that can't be summarized in a mathematical formula or logical equation. It is this combination that evokes the viewer's different emotions and inner transformation, and that separates a



LEFT. THE DANCE – 2019.

RIGHT. THE PATH – 20" x 20" – 2019  
79 connected cranes.

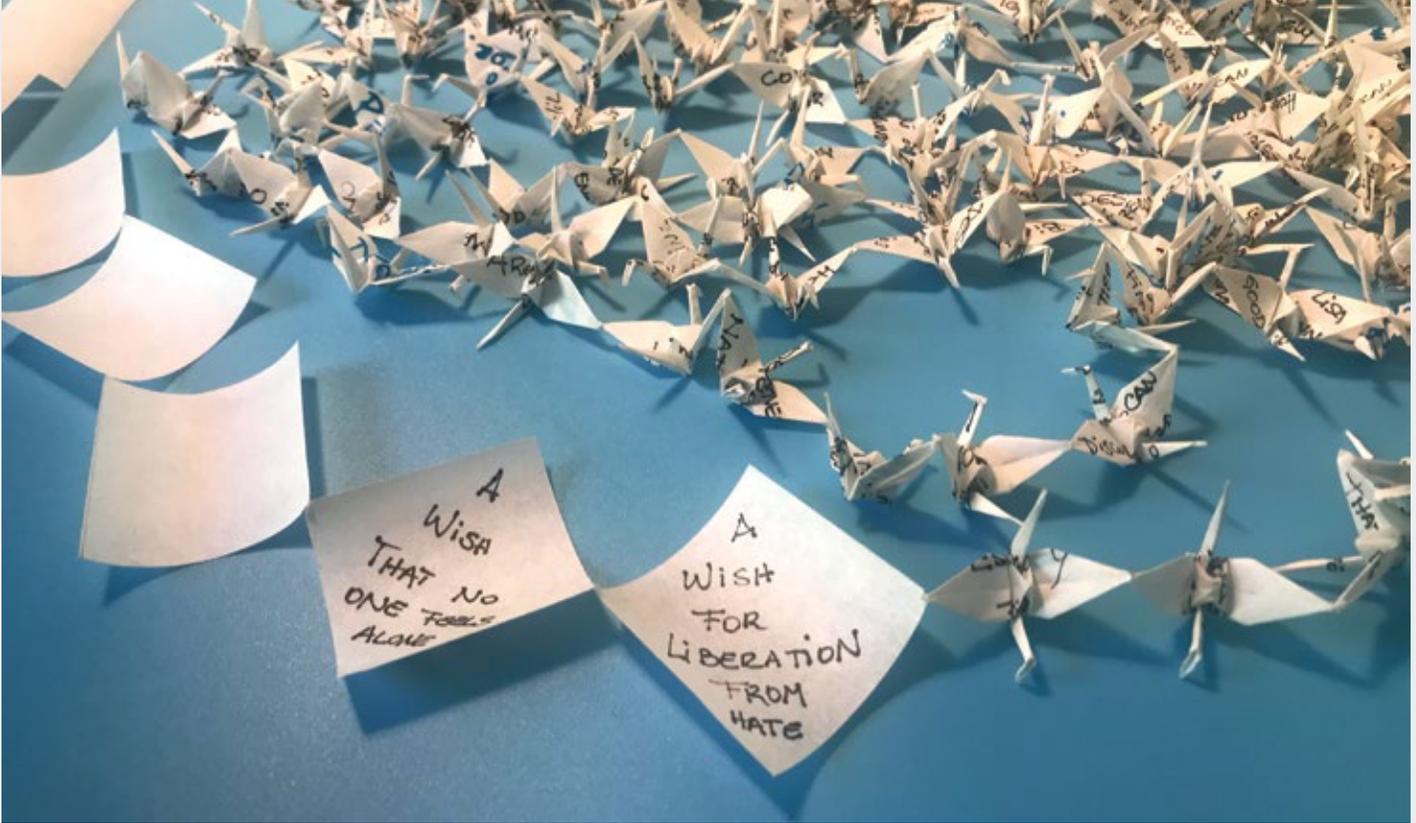
BELOW. NO OTHER WORLD – 2019  
70 connected cranes.



piece of art from what can be considered a well-executed craft. Sometimes I visualize the art piece first through its shape or movement, and then I procure the materials and textures that would best express what I envision. On other occasions, I come across and fall in love with a specific piece of paper, and my job is to bring this paper to life in a new art piece.

As it usually happens, things that seem so different at one point eventually become everyday life. New routines and habits become normal, and things are not that different than how they looked before. Living in community is a deeply nourishing experience and a real opportunity for emotional and spiritual growth.

In the future, I hope to be able to keep deepening the inquiry on how art can transform people's lives through subtle and profound beauty and meaning, and making this an expression of my work. 🏮



# Connecting the World, **One Crane at a Time**

*"I will be folding 1000 cranes out of a single piece of paper. Each crane will have one wish", Paula Pietranera wrote a few months ago in her Facebook account. "Leave a comment with your wish and I'll fold it into one of the paper cranes." She was soon flooded with wishes from all corners of the world and in every language. She then set to work. When she finishes, she will create a work of art, framed, to have it shown around the world.*



"I have been reflecting deeply on how this moment can be expressed through art in a way that is meaningful, and that would bring people together during these complex times. I was inspired in the Japanese tale that promises to make a wish come true to anyone who folds one thousand cranes, so I started developing the "1000 Wishes, 1000 Cranes" project. I am using social media to ask people to send me their wishes, writing down each one on one of the square pieces of a 1000 cranes renzuru model made with white washi paper. Once I have the 1000 wishes written on 1000 folded joined cranes, I will develop the final art piece."

*Paula Pietranera's website:*  
[www.paulapietranera.com](http://www.paulapietranera.com)