



KYOKO IBE (b. 1941)

Akebono

2 panel

Hogosho, pre-industrial time old paper, sumi ink for calligraphy, mica, natural indigo dye
30 x 36 in. ea.

1993

5182

Born in Nagoya, Japan in 1941, Kyoko Ibe earned both her undergraduate and Masters degrees from the Kyoto Institute of Technology. One of the first artists to begin incorporating traditional Japanese paper in the 1960s, Ibe's work began to garner acclaim in the 1970s and today her paper-installations reach monumental scales. While her paper-based works have been extensively exhibited across the world, Ibe is also renowned for her stage, costume and lighting designs.

Kyoko Ibe has earned a reputation as one of Japan's leading artists with her large-scale installations of washi, or traditional Japanese paper. Combining conventional materials with modern techniques, Ibe's work has brought washi from the sphere of arts and crafts to that of contemporary art. Though in keeping with Japanese custom, the sanctity of the paper itself is fundamental to her work. The ancient Japanese believed divine spirits resided in the paper and Ibe maintains such veneration, stating that while the functional role of paper has diminished, the aesthetic role of paper as a spiritual medium is more apparent and has succeeded today in reemerging as an art media. Appropriating old handmade paper and handwritten documents, Ibe recycles them into new forms of washi. The ink of the original sources remains embedded in the fibers of the paper, such that the new paper is uniquely variegated with shades of gray and intrinsically connected to the past. Ibe states, "I attempt to evoke the feeling of [washi] through my own techniques, while at the same time visualizing the rebirth of a past era. In this way, old paper and documents, asleep for years; secure a place along the axis of time for perpetual life of art."

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