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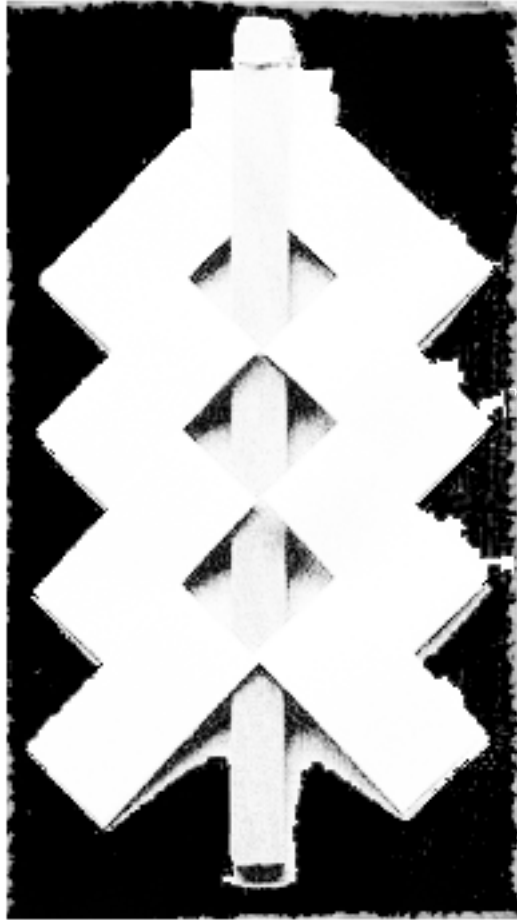
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Kire tsuzuki, cut continuity

Origami

The square finds itself as the epitome of the immutable: its edges steadfast and stark refusing to surrender to obscurity. It is the chipped cornerstone rugged and beaten from the millennia, an embodiment of Atlas upholding an empire. Yet this is the form chosen by the Japanese for *origami*, an art reliant upon the absolute transformation of the medium whose contradicting elements coalesce to form an esoteric harmony. Duality is fundamental to its very essence suffusing every facet of the art. The first inklings of this double nature are expressed through *origami*'s utilization of a paradoxical amalgamation of curvaceous pliability wrought upon by a rigid mode of design. The unbroken folds mock the paper's innate tendency to furl and bend leaving scars as a record of their conflict. With a capricious delight, the creases dance across the surface like infinitesimal strings of silk orchestrating the movements of a marionette. But it is only in chains that paper's intrinsic beauty manifests. The *chocho* (in this case the *origami* butterfly) casts off its shackles and takes flight, its sloping wings bursting forth from the stark outline lending it a stunning balance between the fold and curve. As the *chocho* is born into empyrean, it glides over a field of *kozo* whose leaves tremble in the breeze. There the fibers are reaped prior to the onset of winter to begin the annual genesis of *washi*. Following months of intricate, arduous labor, the paper is born from the frost. Filaments of the mulberry extend across the surface as if the paper had bloomed and ripened to be cultivated rather than manufactured. Here exists an enigmatic unity between the biological and the synthetic that characterizes the core of *origami*. Folds expand across the plane interlacing to assemble a tectonic medley of mountains and valleys whose slopes weather and degrade over the passage of time. The paper is a thriving ecosystem evolving and developing in accordance with some higher purpose (the deific will of the artist?) forming a veritable microcosm among the folds. Yet *origami* is artificial and destined to fall from this new Eden. The same folds that raised continents ordain the grand scheme of a vast metropolis where mountains surrender to avenues and valleys cave to subways. Creases meet, forging skyscrapers and city blocks conveying the vision of a supreme architect. It is an urban sprawl yet



The *shide* act as gatekeepers standing resolute at the boundary between the realms of the sacred and the profane. A flimsy, lightning scar of folds is the sole barrier from the influence of evil spirits. No great wall, no arcane ritual, merely a sweep of the wand followed by a rustle hanging in the silence.

beautiful in its overwhelming structural complexity. Every fold and curve is rigorously constructed yet organic; the creases disperse throughout the piece sustaining it with a sanguine nature. Each individual arrangement of folds spawns a unique vitality, which at heart is elementary in form. *Origami* surpasses a need for manifold materials instead relying on an atomic composition. Each miniscule step is of no technical difficulty but a crucial fragment of the ultimate design whose folds shatter the paper macadamizing a course to the final product. The work of the aesthetic cartographer is laid bare for all to see but the significance of origami reaches beyond the end itself. It is unlike Western art where from an emotional outpour stems a composition steeped in profound implications. *Origami* is meditative and calm, a process focused on the integration of a multitude of fractures to create a whole. It is the progression of thought and design, which defines the beauty of the conclusion. The *senbazaru* is the glorious embodiment of this methodology where each *orizuru* is but one tale in the odyssey of the creation. Every fold carries a history of efforts, emotions, and dreams the equivalent of the most legendary epics of antiquity. The entirety of the *senbazaru* is a chronicle of an individual's collective desire for a single, transcendent wish. Yet, *origami* is devoid of any true content or significance. It is empty and irrelevant, nothing more than a neat vessel containing absolutely nothing. However, *origami* hangs suspended above this void emanating simultaneously a sense of the mythic and the worthless. *In* and *yo* (the dual natures of Japanese philosophy stemming from the better-known *yin* and *yang*) intertwine perpetually conceiving *origami*—their sublime child depicting but the briefest notion of the *taiji* (the great union). Inseparability of conflicting natures is at the root of *origami* and in turn, all of Japan as a culture and philosophy. This universal harmony is ever-present and radiates from all of creation, echoing (to me) from this haiku (written by Baransu Arimasu in the 1800s):

*Infinite beauty:
Two koi circle, black and white,
Black shines, white darkens.*