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Origami: Inspired By Japanese Prints From The Metropolitan Museum Of Art



Synopsis

Discover the secrets of the art of origami. The magic of this unique and handsome book begins with the cover, which unfolds to reveal 48 brightly colored sheets of origami paper. Inside are reproductions of color woodblock prints by Japanese masters, which inspired the authors to create flowers, animals, kimonos, and much more, all out of paper. The covered spiral binding allows the book to lie flat, making it easy to follow the clearly illustrated instructions for each of the thirty-four origami projects. There is also historical information about each print written by a curator of Japanese art from the Metropolitan Museum. With a package this unique, you can tell a book by its cover! Steve and Megumi Biddle are well-known origami experts who have written numerous books on the subject and who have hosted a weekly origami program on cable television.

Book Information

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Age Range: 6 and up

Grade Level: 1 and up

Customer Reviews

This origami book is particularly wonderful in its originality. It not only has diagrams for 34 designs, but also comes with 48 sheets of origami paper that can be stored in the cover. The book presents the origami designs in an interesting way: They are featured alongside beautiful Japanese art prints from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, with detailed descriptions of the origami folds and the paintings. The book also contains a brief introduction and history of origami, and gives an interesting

glimpse into Japanese culture and art. It is a great book for beginners; it begins with the most simple folds and progresses to more and more advanced folds along the way. This added with the information about origami and included paper make it a great start for those interested in the art. Those that already practice origami may also be interested; the book includes several unique and interesting folds. For example, the book includes an umbrella that is more of an 'origami project' that involves two pieces of paper, paper strips, glue, and a chopstick/toothpick. This umbrella actually opens and closes, and is also the 'drink umbrella' often placed in poolside drinks. This is rather interesting to know how to make. My only complaint concerns a few designs that are, to put it plainly, pretty ugly. These ugly designs include a coat, kimono, figure, and the only other 'origami project' (involves six pieces of paper and glue) entitled 'Lion Dance.' However, these four designs could interest others, and there are thirty other designs that I really like. Another small complaint: A 'Mount Fuji' design that involves five folds is not ugly, but really too simple for anyone other than small children to want to make.

This is a beautiful book. Although it is certainly designed with the beginner in mind, it has much for the collector, certainly a collector familiar with the Met's collections of oriental art--something worth the trip to NYC just to see. For the beginner, there is the obligatory introduction to origami. This includes a survey of the history of the artform, a description of the standard method of illustrating folds, and the basic folds themselves. A brief overview of all the models in pictorial form is part of the table of contents, and it is easy to see that the beginning folder is well supplied with easy objects to try. The first four of the 34 designs are dedicated to folded projects that even a preschool child might be able to perform, even memorize. The first 11 would be easily folded by K to 3rd graders. Those models 12 to 34 might be a bit more challenging. They certainly require a bit more grasp of three dimensional forms. They would be a superb method for introducing solid geometry to individuals who have difficulty thinking in terms of x-y-z directional planes. Just familiarity with manipulating the designs might help develop that type of spatial thinking that can be difficult for some individuals to grasp when it's introduced in the cold, dry principles of textbook solid geometry. The most difficult design is probably the last in the book, the umbrella. Although an experienced folder should have no difficulty, it is rather involved, and may pose a challenge for the novice. It is, however, quite clever and well worth a try. Done successfully once, it should be easy to repeat. I think a perseverant 6th grader, especially one familiar with the art, would be more than capable of mastering it.

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