



JAPAN INFORMATION
AND CULTURE CENTER
在米国日本大使館広報文化センター

TEACHING TUESDAY

KIRIGAMI

Kirigami (切り紙) is a form of origami which involves cutting paper to make art. The kanji for kirigami mean “to cut” and “paper.” It is also known as kirie (切り絵) or “cut picture”.

It is believed that kirigami was first used in temples to create small offerings and wards. Kirigami first began to be used as an art form during the Nara period, and then flourished alongside origami during the Heian period, when it was widely used through Japan to create artists designs exemplifying wealth, grace, elegance, and more. Typically, kirigami starts with a folded up paper that is then cut, and opened up to reveal a design. Snowflakes, blossoms, and other shapes are typical themes.

A more modern form of kirigami is “pop-up” kirigami, which can involve many sheets of paper glued together to make 3D design, as compared to a single sheet kirigami. Additionally, much like origami, the use and applications of kirigami have expanded beyond paper, from batteries that can stretch to over 150 times their size to more productive solar panels.