

Leiko Ikemura: Usagi in Wonderland

Information, ideas and activities
for student groups



This pack is for...

- Teachers and tutors who are planning a student group visit to Leiko Ikemura: Usagi in Wonderland
- Teachers and tutors designing a unit of work around the artist, or themes from the exhibition

This pack contains...

- Information on group bookings to the exhibition, including artist-led workshops
- Press release, images of Leiko Ikemura's work and links to websites and interviews
- Introduction to artist Genevieve Rudd and a series of activities she has devised for students inspired by the exhibition

Dream-like Nature
soft warm
natural sensual
mother jelly
change tree cat
blurred moving water
sea dark fantasy
female living growing
big pink patch

Moving through
emotion like jelly,
in a living female
fantasy,
soft and dream-like
nature.

“My message is a visual and sensual one, so the viewer could feel it’s very open to interpretation... The exhibition is not just about the works but making space so people can breathe and be with art”

Leiko Ikemura



Visiting the Leiko Ikemura exhibition

We are happy to book in student groups to visit the exhibition, which is displayed on our Mezzanine Gallery*. Group tickets are £2.50 per person.

Due to current capacity limits, we can only welcome 15 students at a time into the exhibition. We are happy to stagger entry to the show if you are bringing more than this number, our maximum capacity for groups visiting the Sainsbury Centre is currently 30.

*Due to fire safety regulations, we regret we are unable to allow visitors access to the Mezzanine Gallery who are unable to independently navigate the steep spiral staircase in the event of an evacuation. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Booking a Leiko Ikemura inspired workshop

Artist, Genevieve Rudd, has planned an exciting Leiko Ikemura schools workshop. Inspired by Ikemura's dreamy scenes featuring natural forms, and Genevieve's own plant-photography practice, this workshop explores the art of Anthotype image making. The artist will set you up to continue this practice at school, and will analyse your at-school experiments during the follow-up session online.

2 x repeated one hour sessions: £150

OR

2 x repeated two hour sessions: £300

PLUS

1 hour follow up session online £75

Each session accommodates up to 15 and is suitable for KS1-5
Sessions run from 10-12 and 1230-1430 Tues-Friday

To book a group visit or a workshop for your school email the Schools Team:
scvagroupvisits@uea.ac.uk



Press Release

Japanese-Swiss artist, Leiko Ikemura, presents a selection of paintings, sculptures, drawings and photography in her first UK exhibition. Ikemura has selected 50 works that span three decades of her career. Her art appeals to our imagination with its childlike purity.

The exhibition's dominant theme is the connectivity of all aspects of nature, be it human, animal, plant or mineral, in an eternal circle of life.

Through her fantastical figures and primeval landscapes, Ikemura explores fragility, transience and slow evolutionary change – choosing to address environmental issues from an empathetic, global perspective.

Usagi, meaning 'rabbit' in Japanese, is a recurrent mystical motif in Ikemura's work, representing rebirth, fertility and renewal.

Her bronze sculpture, Usagi Kannon (Rabbit Bodhisattva of Mercy), will stand in the Sainsbury Centre Sculpture Park from autumn 2021, providing a place of refuge to visitors wishing to shelter beneath its generous skirt.

The exhibition has been developed in collaboration with the Sainsbury Institute to coincide with the Japan-UK Season of Culture.



[Leiko Ikemura's website](#)

[Interview with Leiko Ikemura and curator Tania Moore](#) sharing how they planned the exhibition remotely

[Interview with Leiko Ikemura and Studio International](#) on grief, rabbits and travel

[Usagi Kannon at Yorkshire Sculpture Park](#) and Leiko Ikemura's thoughts on sculpture and the female figure

[Interview with Leiko Ikemura and CoBo Social](#) on poetry and the significance of girls



The model of the Sainsbury Centre's mezzanine gallery Ikemura and von Matt created for the show. Photo: Stefano Tiracchia © Atelier Philipp von Matt

Genevieve Rudd

I'm inspired by how Leiko Ikemura connects with themes of nature and seasons.

In my own arts practice, I use slow photography techniques that develop over several weeks or months, and work directly with plants that are in season.

Like Leiko Ikemura, I'm interested in the concept of 'change' and remembering that nature isn't something 'out there', but as humans, we are part of natural ecosystems. Leiko Ikemura shows this best with her human-plant/animal forms.

[Genevieve's website](#)



Activity 1 Finding Miko

Ikemura loved animals and often featured her cat and spiritual medium, Miko, in her artwork. You'll see Miko and other animals throughout Ikemura's pottery, drawings and paintings. In this activity, you'll find and draw the animals in the exhibition

Part A: During a visit to the exhibition

Materials –

A4 paper and a pencil

1: Fold a piece of A4 so that it makes a grid of 3 x 2

2: Fill each square with a drawing of an animal you've found by looking closely at Ikemura's work

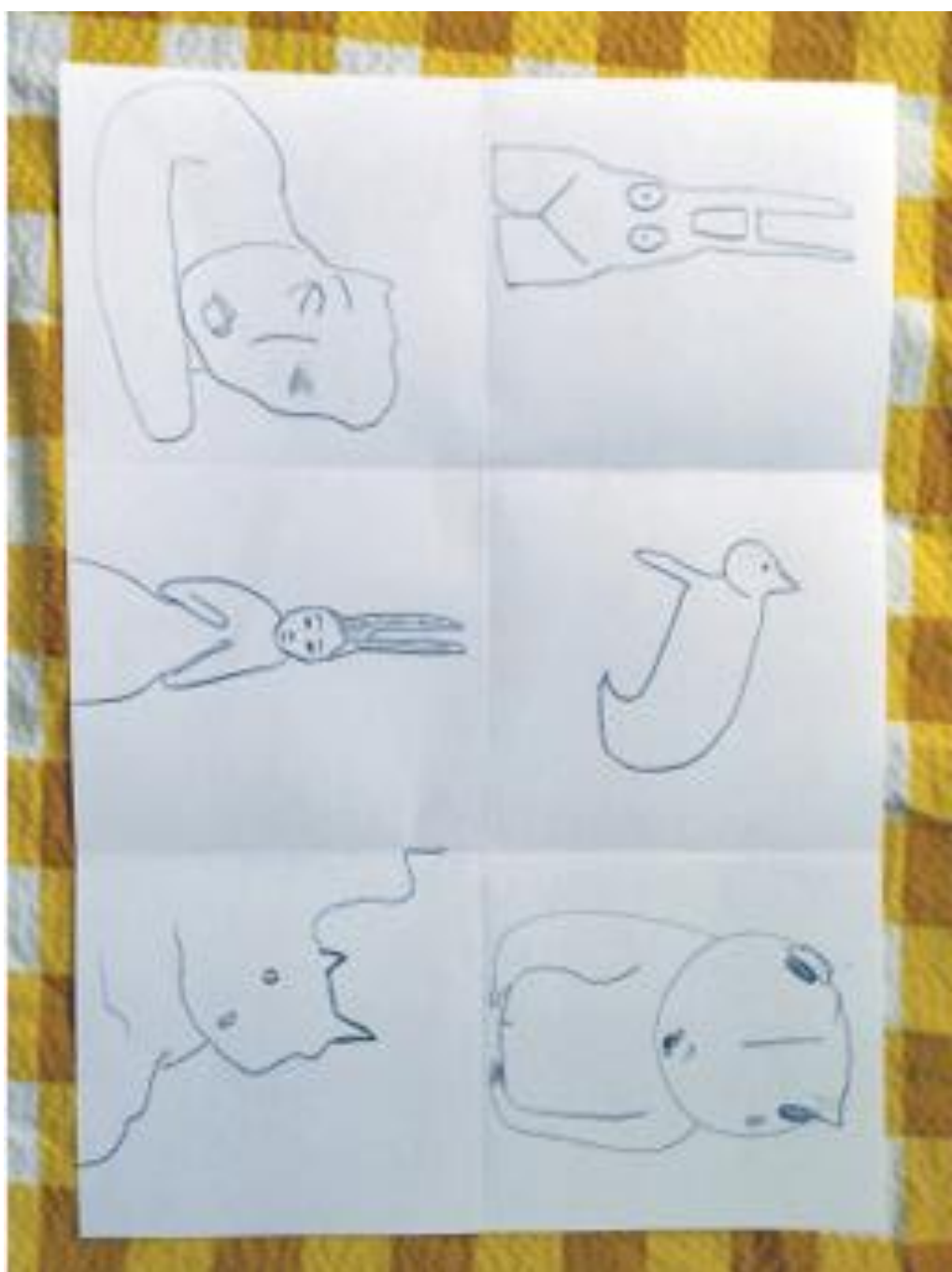
Discussion ideas:

Why do you think animals were important to Ikemura?

Do you have a pet animal?

What do you think the animals would make of this artwork?





PART B: Back at school or college

Materials –

Animal drawings from the Ikemura exhibition, cardboard paint (including natural pigments like mud, clay, or colourful vegetables, such as turmeric, beetroot or spinach), brushes

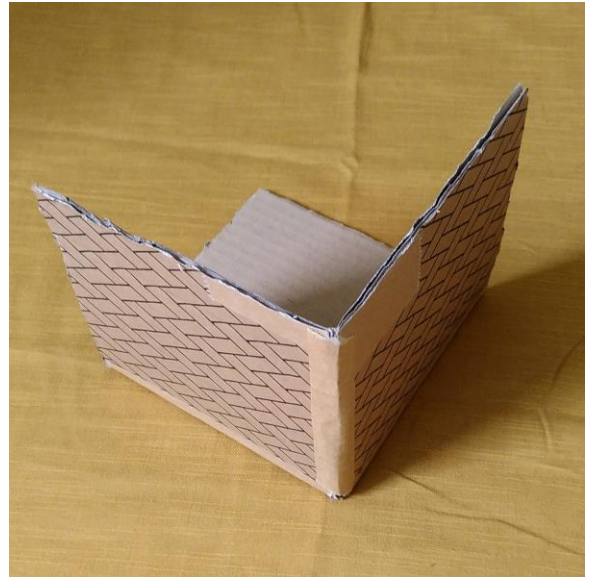
1: Use the animal drawings from the Ikemura exhibition as a starting point for this activity

Option a: re-create the drawings onto thick card



Option b: use the drawings as design inspiration to make a 3D model like Ikemura's pottery (e.g. using air dry clay)

2: Create a 3-sided cube from cardboard. This will become a backdrop for a dreamy world that the drawn or sculpted animal sit within



3: Paint a backdrop within the cube



4: Finally, add in your animal drawing or model into the scene and take close-up photographs of the final piece



Discussion and extension ideas:

The colours in Ikemura's paintings are warm and earthy. In my own arts practice, I often work outdoors in response to the seasons and use plants to create natural pigments. In both of our artworks, we use natural materials to express our ideas and relationships to nature. Can you use natural pigments to paint your scene?

Just like in Ikemura's work, there doesn't need to have an exact horizon-line between the sky and land, and the scale can be distorted.

Ikemura thought that the exhibition is not just about the artworks, but how they make you feel and what space they make. What emotions can you express in the backdrop? Is it calm or frantic, soothing or energetic? How can you show this using colours and brush strokes?

Think about the natural habitat the chosen animal would typically live in and the habitats in your local area. Feel free to blend them together! Your school playground might not have thick jungle foliage, but you can make it happen in your painting.



Activity 2 Collecting/ Projecting Words

Whilst you're walking around the gallery you might notice there are poems on the walls written by Ikemura. In this activity, you will create your own poem in response.

Part A: During a visit to the exhibition

Materials –

Paper and a pencil

1: When you're in the gallery, make a note of words that come to mind when you're looking at Ikemura's artwork

- How does the work make you feel?
- What shapes and forms can you see?
- What do the colours remind you of?

2: Once you've collected a list of words, start to put them together as short sentences to form a poem

Dream-like Nature
soft warm
natural sensual
mother jelly
change tree cat
blurry moving water
sea dark fantasy
female living growing
big pink patch
colourful.

Moving through
emotion like jelly,
in a living female
fantasy,
soft and dream-like
nature.

The calmness at twilight:
Things slowly lose their
Function in its light and
Simply begin to exist

Part B: Back at school or college

Inspired by the soft and distorted layers in Ikemura's paintings, use your whiteboard projector to create a layered image in real life. In Ikemura's work, the human forms merged into animals and plants, and in this activity, you'll merge into a living poem!

1: Upload your poem to the computer

Option a: digitally design a Ikemura-inspired artwork featuring the typed poem

Option b: create a Ikemura-inspired poetry painting, drawing or collage, then upload/scan it to the computer

2: Project the poem onto the whiteboard

3: Stand in front of the projected poem whilst you read it, creating layers, shadows and distortion as your words are both seen and heard out loud



Activity 3 Noticing Nature in the Gallery

Museums and galleries sometimes extract objects from their original context and place them in new locations, or they give them new contexts by highlighting their presence. An Ancient Oak is part of the Sainsbury Centre's Sculpture Park, for example.

In Ikemura's work, trees can be seen through the jelly-like glass works on plinths and water is projected onto one of her sculptures. In this activity, you'll be taking notice of the nature found in the gallery.

Part A: During a visit to the exhibition

Materials –

Paper and a pencil

- 1: Sit or stand in the gallery and take a good look around you
- 2: Talk to your classmates about what you can see and whether you would define it as "nature"?
- 3: Draw all the things you would call "nature"
- 4: Then, draw all the things, standing or sitting in the same spot, that you don't define "nature"
- 5: Compare the difference between the 2 drawings and share with your classmate about why you made those choice



Discussion ideas:

What does “nature” mean to you?

Is it the things that are living? Such as trees or people

Is it the things that have been made out of things extracted from the outdoors? Such as clay sculptures or wood carvings

There is no right or wrong answer!

Part B: Back at school or college

'Change' in relation to nature is something that Ikemura explores often in her artwork. Inspired by her series of photographs documenting a bouquet of flowers fading, set-up your own natural arrangement to change and document the process in this activity.

Materials -

A bouquet of flowers, place to keep the flowers for a series of weeks, a camera

1: Go on a foraging walk around the school grounds to find flowers, leaves or other natural materials to make a bouquet

2: Arrange them so they can stand in a vase in a place where they won't be disturbed for a few days

3: At regular intervals, take photos of the bouquet changing and fading

In what ways does the bouquet change?

Why do you think Ikemura documented the flowers when they were fading and not fresh?

You could repeat this at different times of the year, depending on what plants are in season

Tip:

Try and keep the same location each time you take the photo. It might be useful to mark off an area and make notes, or use a tripod to stand the camera on



List of works/ photographs included in pack:

Leiko Ikemura, **Trees out of Head**,
2015/2020, patinated bronze © Leiko Ikemura

Collected Words, Genevieve Rudd

Leiko Ikemura, **Girl**, 1995, charcoal and pastel on paper © Leiko Ikemura

Leiko Ikemura, **Single-Eyed Baby**, 1994, glazed terracotta © Leiko Ikemura

Leiko Ikemura, **Usagi Kannon**, 2012-19, patinated bronze © Leiko Ikemura

Model of the Sainsbury Centre Mezzanine Gallery Photo: Stefano Tiracchia
© Atelier Philip Von Matt

Genevieve Rudd at the Sainsbury Centre

Leiko Ikemura, **With Blue Miko in Black**, 1997, oil on
canvas © Leiko Ikemura. Collection of the artist.

Genevieve Rudd, drawings from the exhibition, developing drawings in the
classroom, creating box, final outcome

Collected Words, Genevieve Rudd

Poem by Leiko Ikemura

Leiko Ikemura, **Memento Mori**, 2013/18. Patinated bronze
sculpture © Leiko Ikemura

Leiko Ikemura, **Yellow Figure with Hummingbird**, 2020, cast
glass © Leiko Ikemura

Leiko Ikemura, **Flower**, 2009/2021, black and white photograph
on baryta paper © Leiko Ikemura.