

# An excerpt from *How Art Heals : Exploring Your Deep Feelings Using Collage* by Andra F. Stanton

## 39. Junco Sato Pollack

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“Born and raised in Japan, I was introduced to Buddhism early in my life. More or less, Buddhism formed my cultural and spiritual background. I was also a dancer at a young age (six to fifteen years of age), studying modern dance under a Buddhist monk and his wife who inherited an old Buddhist temple and built in it a dance studio near my hometown. They had been professional dancers in Tokyo and returned to this town to continue operating the studio.

“I traveled weekly by train to the studio, and soon I was selected to join the dance troupe that presented performances in art centers in the region. I enjoyed traveling on the train and dancing, which gave me an eye and perception for kinetic movements inspired by nature—trees, grass, birds, air, and so on.

“I moved to the United States in 1973 and eventually moved to Atlanta, Georgia, in 1992. I was awestruck by the southern sun and blue sky. I began photographing the sky and, after capturing more than 2,000 images, contemplated the paradox that to photograph blue sky as an image, I had to include a cloud formation within the view. This realization came like a moment of a new Zen Koan: Can you photograph Emptiness? The answer is yes, but there has to be a Void in the Emptiness to distinguish the two.

“The philosophy of Zen, the teaching set forth by Zen master D. T. Suzuki during the 1950s in New York, greatly influenced American abstract painters who integrated the phenomenon of accident and chance into the process of making art. I met and studied with Zen master Keido Fukushima in Atlanta and in Kyoto around this time. Zen master Keido Fukushima, who was a master calligrapher as well, studied under Suzuki as a student in Kyoto.

“It all made perfect sense to me and informed my vision for the next series that I produced between 1995 and 2006: the Sky/Cloud series. In that body of work, I expressed Heart Sutra chanting in terms of kinetic shapes, color blocks, and vibrations. The premise of this work is that the idea of color is an illusion, just as the sky is an emptiness that appears as if it exists but is only a construct of the mind.

“These works were produced by integrating handwork, machine work, modern technology, and chance and include a large-scale, fabric-based sculptural kinetic installation. I frequented a digital print studio in Canada to use an industrial roller heat-transfer printing machine and wide-format digital printer.

“Having built my art studio by the lake in the foothills of the mountains, I was surrounded by beautiful and pure nature while creating the series, allowing me to contemplate the meaning of art and living, and to be one with art and nature. It was a most rewarding period of my creative life, and spiritually nurturing.”

“I was taking a walk on the beach at sunset, my usual daily afternoon walk, and on the third consecutive day, on the same section of the beach, I encountered a gray heron. I would walk toward it, come close, and then it would fly farther down the beach. This gently paced chase went on for three days. I wondered why. Then I realized that the heron must be waiting for something or someone. There was a sense of longing and persistence in the bird’s demeanor.

“The next day at sunset, sure enough, I saw two gray herons enjoying the serene beach. The newly arrived heron was slightly smaller, and together they provided the yin and yang, the perfect balance of energy.”



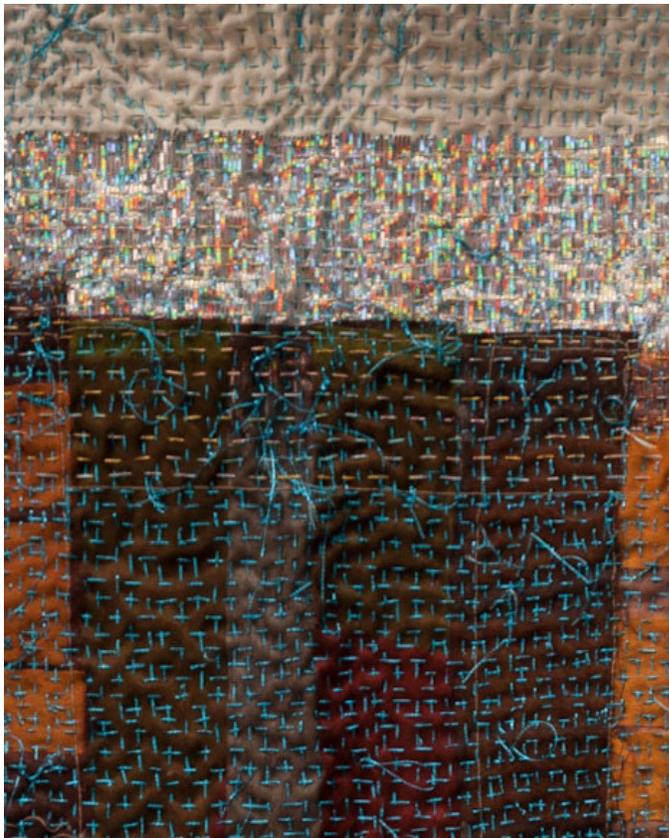
Junco Sato Pollack . *Rimpa Gold and Silver*, 1995, revised in 2017.

**Diptych:** 120" × 60" (each)

**Materials: first layer:** woven silver / silk organza fabric with dye sublimation applied by heat-compression printing, embellished with applied gold and silver leaf;

**second layer:** woven aluminum / polyester organza fabric with holography applied on the aluminum coating

**Techniques:** applying gold and silver leaf, dye-sublimating, heat-transfer printing, hand-creasing, heat-compressing, stitching, heat-fusing holographic etching Photo courtesy of the artist



Junco Sato Pollack . *Kinhin Series #1: Auspicious Beginning* 観自在, 2013. 28" x 36" .

**Materials:** metallic threads and disperse dyes on pleated polyester organza and polyester taffeta

**Techniques:** stitching, heat-compressing, heat-transfer printing

Photo courtesy of the artist

*This incident inspired me to depict ocean waves, the heron's flight, my footsteps on the beach, the sunset, a sense of calm, and how nature heals and inspires. All my work expresses an awakening moment, or realization.*

“Between 2006 and 2019, I grieved the loss of many significant others, including my father and my guru of Kriya Yoga. When faced with so much deep loss, I found my work reverting to stitching, making kesa, which are monk's robes and mandalas—forms of Buddhist art made for an offering at temple or as meditation aids.

“Also during this time, I turned sixty years old. In the Eastern astrological calendar, this milestone is known as Kanreki, in which your zodiac calendar returns to the beginning point of a sixty-year cycle. I am living the cycle for the second time, therefore, and hopefully ascending the spiral of space and time with wisdom.

“The Kinhin series (walking meditation) comprises seven works that I executed during the years I was immersed in my healing meditation and simultaneously working in my studio, using stitching as my healing practice. Art making, meditation on the work, and stitching become an act of art, realization, and healing.”

*Action with time is the key in healing pain that clings to your heart. I found that stitching was the right medium for this period in my life.*