EXTRAORDINARY ORIGAMI
20 Projects from Contemporary North American Masters

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America might conjure up things like baseball and apple pie, but origami? Yes, it is true that decorative paper folding has roots in Japan, but as an art form origami grew rapidly in the West. The USA in particular was a catalyst for the exchange of origami ideas and development, and is the home of some of the most prominent origami masters in the world. In the 1950s Lillian Oppenheimer of New York City traveled around the world connecting origami artists who had been working independently. The subsequent exchange of ideas certainly helped push the sophistication and polish that origami was experiencing. An origami center was founded in 1958, and in 1980 this spawned off into a full-fledged organization known today as OrigamiUSA, largely from the efforts of fellow New Yorker Michael Shall. Alice Gray, an entomologist at the American Museum of Natural History, provided the organization a home base in the museum. Gray, a respected origami artist herself, also created diagrams for now classic origami pieces, and became the editor of the organization’s magazine.

This book showcases the works of eighteen origami artists, some who were prominent back in the early days of this paper-folding renaissance, as well as a few people who are relatively new to the art. As you can see from their biographies, these are all very accomplished artists. There is certainly a tremendous amount of paper-folding talent in America.

An exciting part of this showcase is how varied the approaches are, and there is certainly a wide variety of subjects tackled. You can recreate their masterworks through the clear instructions. There are also links to see videos of the pieces being folded. Throughout the course of these projects, there are plenty of folds to keep fingers busy for hours. Enjoy!
Symbols and Terminology

Types of Folds

Valley fold

Mountain fold

Crease line

Hidden/X-ray line

Arrows
Fold forward

Fold behind

Fold and unfold

Sink/Reverse/Push in/Closed Sink

Turn over
Turn 90 degrees, half turn, etc.

Unsink/Pull out

**Techniques**

Reverse fold
Crimp

Rabbit ear

Squash fold
Pleat

Swivel/pivot
Swan Couple Card

Sy Chen
To learn more about Sy and his journey to origami master, see his bio here.

video: youtu.be/dltk9XKmbfl

Precrease along the diagonals.
Pinch the lower edge in half.

Form a precrease from the corner to the crease.
Valley fold toward the dotted intersection.

Mountain fold the corner to lie along the center crease. Valley fold the lower section up.

Mountain fold the sides along the angle bisectors.
Valley fold along the widest point.

Rabbit ear the flap up.

**Variation:** As a variation, you can shift the rabbit ear location to make the swans closer to each other.

Repeat steps 7–9 in mirror image.
Mountain fold.

Open sink along the angle bisector.
Pull out the trapped layer. Repeat behind.

Reverse fold the sides inward. Crimp the flap down.
Outside reverse fold.

Outside reverse fold.
Crimp to form the head.

Repeat steps 11–16 in mirror image.
Flip the flap from behind over to close the card.

Open out the card to reveal the two swans.

Completed Swan Couple Card shown open, with variation, and in closed position.
Doghouse

Patricia Crawford
To find out what Patricia’s favorite origami subject was, see her bio here.

video: youtu.be/linF8D4ytlA

Valley fold in half.

Precrease the right side.
Precrease along the angle bisector.

Precrease in half.

Precrease toward the dotted intersection.

Reverse fold, starting from the indicated point.
Precrease the flap in half.

Precrease along the angle bisector.

Reverse fold in and then out along the existing creases.
Repeat steps 7–9 behind.

Valley fold down.

Precrease through all layers.

Unfold the flap.
Precrease by continuing along an existing crease.

Reverse fold the center flap up as far as possible.

Outside reverse fold.
Precrease starting from the indicated point.

Rabbit ear the flap outward.
Mountain fold along the existing crease.

Repeat steps 17–19 behind.
Reverse fold along the existing crease.

Reverse fold to lie above the hidden flaps.

Tuck the edges inside.
Outside reverse fold.

Squash fold. Repeat behind.

Shape with reverse folds and mountain folds.
Spread squash the flap down.

Spread squash the flap up.

Mountain fold the tip.
Open out the flap.

Repeat steps 27–30 behind.

Tuck the center flap in.
Tuck the side flaps in along the existing creases.

Completed Doghouse.
Harlequin

Neal Elias
One of the few origami masters to have a folding technique named after him. Check out Neal’s story here.

video: youtu.be/BXbmBIRhuW0

1

Precrease the top edge in half with a mountain fold.

2

Valley fold the corner to meet the crease.
Turn over.

Valley fold the indicated section in half.

Unfold completely to the colored side.

Precrease the lower section in half.
Form a pinch through the crease along the angle bisector.

Precrease to the indicated intersection.

Precrease the left section in half.

Precrease each section in half, both horizontally and vertically.
Valley fold at the top and precrease at the bottom with a mountain fold.

Pleat the model like a fan, by inserting mountain folds.

Open out three sets of pleats.
Pull the corner down while pleating inward (Elias Stretch).

Repeat steps 13–14 behind.
Spread apart the pleats at the bottom.

Pull the corners down while pleating inward (Elias Stretch).
Fold the sides in while inserting reverse folds.

Turn over.
Precrease in half.
Valley fold the center flap up.
Turn over.
Valley fold at the left and mountain fold at the right.
Swing both flaps up.
Rabbit ear the flap over. The folds should meet at the center of the flap.
Lightly swing the flap over.
Valley fold over a single layer while bringing the flap back down. Allow a swivel to form.
Rabbit ear the flap over.
Lightly swing the flap over.
Pleat along the existing creases, pulling the single layer inward with a swivel fold.
Swivel a single layer over, allowing a squash to form at the bottom.
Squash the flap over.
Outside reverse fold.
Mountain fold the sides in half.

Turn over.
36

Squash the flap down.

37

Rabbit ear the flap.
Reverse fold up.

Turn over.
Spread squash the corners.

Loosen the pleats at the midsection and slide out a layer at each side.
Valley fold the bottom flaps up.

Valley fold the flaps up.
Slide the side layers outward.

Valley folds the flaps down as far as possible.
Valley fold the bottom flaps down.

Turn over.
Outside reverse fold.

Swivel fold.

Valley fold down.
Mountain fold.

Pleat the triangular sections.
AWARD-WINNING ARTISTS SHOW HOW TO FOLD THEIR MOST REMARKABLE CREATIONS!

Extraordinary Origami features 20 outstanding showpieces from contemporary American Grand Masters, including Neal Elias, Peter Engel, Michael LaFosse, Robert J. Lang, Jeremy Shafer, and others. Discover how to create impressive paper-folding sculptures including frogs, birds, butterflies, pandas, and more. Step-by-step folding sequences, specific instructions, and vivid color photographs are provided for each project. Illustrating a wide variety of artistic approaches and covering a wide range of topics, each masterpiece includes a QR code linking to a video tutorial with the artist.

“New materials, new methods, and new ideas have transformed the traditional world of origami on both sides of the Pacific”
—EXPLORATORIUM MAGAZINE ONLINE

“Why should the Japanese have all the fun?”
—LILLIAN OPPENHEIMER, the founder of organized origami in America

“Marc Kirschenbaum, a leading American origami artist, is known for his wide range of subject matter and for utilizing a variety of folding mediums”
—ORIGAMI MASTERS: BUGS: HOW THE BUG WARS CHANGED THE ART OF ORIGAMI

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