East Asian Studies Center’s Arts Initiative
Brings Renowned Japanese Artist Migiwa Orimo to Columbus Preparatory Academy

Project Description
In Autumn 2012, EASC’s arts initiative continued with a large-scale project which brought renowned Japanese artist Migiwa Orimo to Columbus to work on Japan-themed art projects with school children and to share her work with the larger community through an exhibition at a municipal building. EASC Program Manager Michelle Attias-Goldstein led the project which secured external funding from both the Greater Columbus Arts Council and the Ohio Arts Council.

EASC selected a local charter school, Columbus Preparatory Academy, as its partner school and worked closely with Orimo and art teacher Kristen Pyshora to design the Japan-themed program for the 800+ students. Programming began with elementary school and middle school assemblies at which Orimo presented on her work as an installation artist while contextualizing it through introductions of elements of Japanese culture, such as traditional festivals and the connection with nature. Students then spent the next three weeks working on Japan-themed projects in art class, such as writing their name in Japanese, origami, kirigami, fans, kimono patterns, haiku, brush painting, wish boards, and more. Orimo then returned to the school and used the student projects to construct a large installation in a hallway off of the school lobby. The space was transformed into a personal, reflective space containing the collective contributions of the entire school.

Impact
800+ students at Columbus Preparatory Academy were given a presentation by artist Migiwa Orimo, introducing students to a working installation artist and contextualizing common cultural elements of Japan. For four weeks, they participated in a series of Japanese-themed art lessons and produced their own Japanese inspired artifacts. After, Orimo completed a separate installation at the school using the artifacts made by the students. Students were witness to the artist’s process in assembling the materials and transforming the school’s lobby into a gateway to Japanese culture.

Ohio State Colleges/Units
East Asian Studies Center
Office of International Affairs & the College of Arts and Sciences

Community Partners
Ohio Arts Council, Greater Columbus Arts Council (Franklin County Neighborhood Arts Program), Columbus Preparatory Academy, Upper Arlington Concourse Gallery and artist Migiwa Orimo.