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Write a Picture, Paint a Poem

Vocabulary

Edo Period	Haiku
Sumi-e	Haiga
Collaboration	Chop

Create a Haiga

Imagine what the image says – and what the words imagine

A long time ago, in what is now know as the Edo period in Japan, friends would gather and share their brush painting and poetry as an entertaining pastime. One artist would present his poem, typically a Haiku, to a friend and that person would create a brush painting to go with it. Another artist might create a brush painting and ask her friend to write a verse to accompany it. This exchange and collaboration of written verse and painted image became known as Haiga.

Look at the Sumi-e paintings here.



Choose one. What do you see? Write what you see on a sheet of paper. Ask yourself again, “What else do you see?” and record your answers on your sheet. Now, close your eyes and imagine the sumi-e painting in your mind’s eye without looking at it. Do any other images or words float into your mind? Even if they do not seem connected to the painting, open your eyes and write down what has come to mind.

Now that you have done some looking, imagining, and brainstorming, lets take your ideas and create a Haiku from them to go with the brush painting. Follow this structure for your verse:

First Line 5 syllables

Second Line 7 syllables

Third Line 5 syllables

What did you come up with?



Congratulations! You have just participated in the ancient collaborative artistic process of Haiga. Have fun exploring the art of combining paintings and poetry with your friends! Take the verse you have written and present it to a friend for her to illustrate with a painting – Have a party and invite your guests to choose to create a Haiku or Sumi-e painting and then exchange them! Enjoy exploring your creativity.

