

Taro Takizawa • Okonomiyaki

Okonomiyaki is a savory pancake with a variety of ingredients, and often available as street food in Japan. There are few different styles, depending on which region you live in. Two popular styles are Osaka style and Hiroshima style. I personally grew up eating Osaka style, but my Okonomiyaki has turned into a kind of hybrid. This is one of my favorite comfort foods from home. It's easy to make at home, and also a great street food I could get at summer festivals while I was in Japan.

After experiencing Hiroshima style okonomiyaki, I made a small change in my recipe. While Osaka style okonomiyaki is mostly all ingredients mixed in the batter, Hiroshima style is in separate layers with the pancake, resembling a tortilla with shredded cabbage, fried egg, fried noodles, and meat. It's a great comfort food. Invite some friends over and enjoy it with beer.

This dish grew on me after leaving my home country. Okonomiyaki became my one of my "repeating menus" of Japanese dishes I cook at home. There were a lot of tough times in my life, but cooking is one of the few things that's consistent. The preparation, the aspect of performing, is my daily routine that brings order to my life. It is comforting, and I find more joy in cooking now during quarantine life. When it's time to cook, I can stop either working or stop trying to find tasks to do and go to the kitchen and cook something good.



Jave Yoshimoto, *Taro Takizawa's Okonomiyaki*, 2021, ink, watercolor and gouache on paper, 9" x 12".

Okonomiyaki Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon hondashi
- 5 ounces water
- sliced pork belly (I used squid for mine, shrimp goes well with this as well)
- a pinch of black pepper
- 1/4 head cabbage, shredded (diced if you like more crunch)
- 1 scallion
- 2 eggs
- nagaimo/yamaimo: about 3 inches, grated
- 5.3 ounces chijimi powder (or all-purpose flour)
- katsuobushi (bonito flakes)
- dried seaweed flakes
- okonomiyaki sauce
- Japanese mayonnaise

Directions:

1. Cut the pork belly in half (a small enough size to make it easier to eat). Salt and pepper lightly.
2. Mix water and hondashi in a bowl, add eggs, then nagaimo and mix well. Slowly add the chijimi powder to make the batter, then add cabbage.
3. Add vegetable oil into a frying pan or a skillet, drop an egg, and pour 1 serving of the mixed batter into a pancake shape. Lay a few pork belly slices on top and cook it on medium heat.
4. Flip the pancake after one side is cooked. Put the cover on the pan, turn it into low heat and cook it for another few minutes to make sure the pancake is cooked. Do the same to the rest of the pancakes.
5. Serve it on a plate, with okonomiyaki sauce, Japanese mayonnaise, katsuobushi, and some dried seaweed flakes.

Serves 3–4



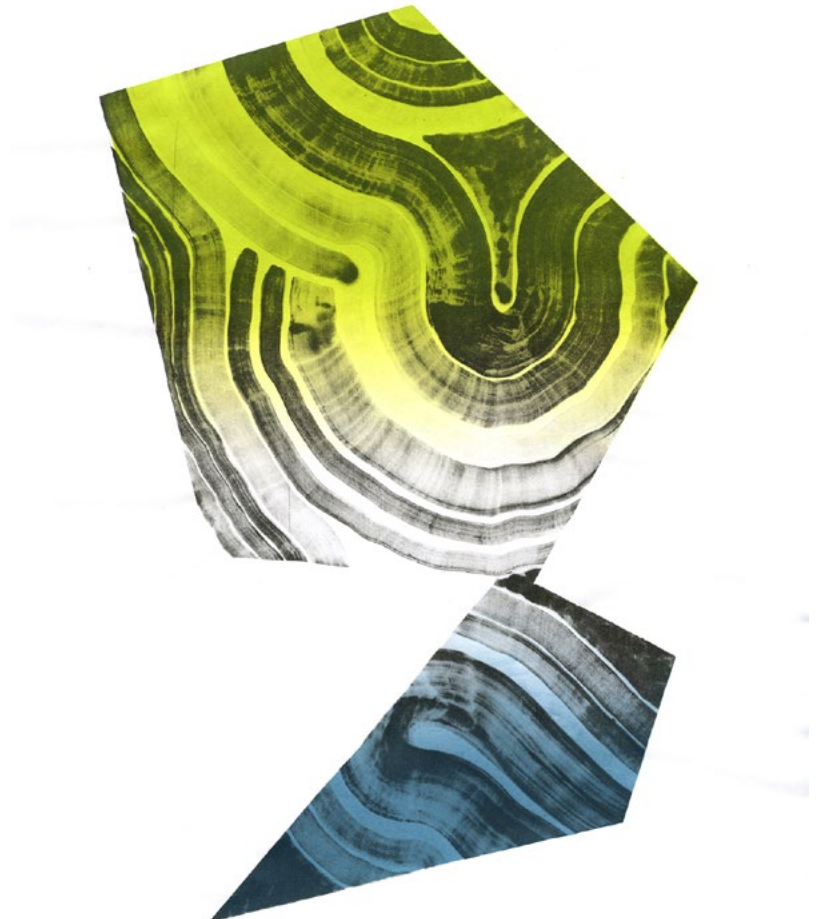
Taro Takizawa



Taro Takizawa is an artist who focuses on printmaking, wall vinyl installations, drawings, and 2D designs. Born in Japan, he has been making images connecting what he has experienced in Japan, where he grew up, and the U.S., where he moved in 2002 and currently resides. His works contain both Western and Eastern aesthetics with an appreciation of traditional printmaking processes and mark making. He is fascinated with blending the boundaries of contemporary studio practice and traditional processes, printmaking, and installations, influenced by traditional Japanese patterns from textile designs, architecture, and crafts.

He received his BFA with an concentration in printmaking from Central Michigan University in 2011, and an MFA in printmaking from Syracuse University College of Visual and Performing Arts in 2017. While working on his master's degree, Takizawa has exhibited nationally and internationally including at Fowler-Kellogg Art Center, PARADOX European Fine Art Forum and its exhibition at CK Zamek in Poznan, Poland; ArtPrize 10 at Grand Rapids Public Museum; LUX Center for the Arts; Ty Pawb in Wales; and China Printmaking Museum. Recently he held artist residencies at Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts in Ithaca, NY; Morgan Conservatory in Cleveland, OH; and GoggleWorks in Reading, PA.

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Taro Takizawa, *Ikasumi Pasta*, 2019, stone lithograph, 16" x 11"