

*HPA, Stressed out.*

*Scrolls of stress and balance by Kanani Miyamoto*

When approached by Jeff Leake and Bill Griesar of NW Noggin to work with Neuroscience graduate student Tamasen Hayward on the topic of stress, I was immediately transported to one of the most stressful experiences in my life, my graduate studies. While working on my thesis project it seemed as if everything was piling on all at once, and I felt incredibly stressed. Coincidentally during this time I was introduced to Eastern art practices. I was really intrigued by the practice of sumi-e, Japanese ink wash painting. The quick permanence of the medium is intimidating, but the resulting brush strokes and line qualities produce energy and feeling. Sumi-e was also used by zen monks as a form of meditation. I felt it was important to offer our audience a few examples on how to manage stress and this way of painting really helped me focus and relax during a time of high stress.

After meeting with Tamasen, learning about her research and spending time with her in the lab I got to work on the scrolls. I was shocked but interested in learning how chronic stress could actually change the physical structure of the brain, the process of the negative feed back loop on further release of stress hormones, and the chemicals that regulate the body while stressed. I loosely used inks to create my interpretation of chronic and acute stress. With Eastern aesthetics and processes I illustrate the brain, neurons, nerves, and the critical stress hormones cortisol and epinephrine.

Most of us don't think about the connection between art and the sciences, but artists and scientists are both creative thinkers, and have much to share. NW Noggin puts together artists and scientists and it's given me the opportunity to meet, talk, and work with many of them. I am inspired by the research and work they do and honored to work and teach side by side along with them.

Kanani Miyamoto is a recent MFA graduate and a Portland based artist. Her practice is rooted in traditional printmaking and Eastern art thought and techniques. Miyamoto uses traditional techniques and materials to focus on contemporary issues and topics.