

Takah Sushi



Takah Sushi's lounge is hopping as customers wait for a table at the restaurant's new location. Aspen Times photo/Paul Conrad.



Takah Sushi owner Casey Coffman during renovation of her restaurant. Aspen Times photo/Erin Cady.

Visual Arts

Art Speak:

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A grand illusion

Artist Cami Thompson, known in the valley for her wearable art (clothing and jewelry), as well as her Western landscape paintings, has completed a commissioned mural as part of a major renovation of Takah Sushi restaurant in Aspen.

Takah Sushi owner Casey Coffman discovered Thompson's work at the Desert Sky restaurant in Carbondale (which the artist's husband co-owns).

Thompson spent a month consulting with Coffman and designer-builder Jim Colombo to design the mural, and spent another month applying the actual mural.

Thompson wrote an original fable called "The Land of Noh," which she then illustrated in the mural. Delicate geishas; the wind, carrying a prayer card over water and land; cherry blossoms; a fisherwoman; and authentic Japanese calligraphy make up the mural, which glows with a predominant gold color that warms the entire room.

Thompson created 23 custom colors for the mural, which she painted with common latex house paint so it would be washable. It was Colombo's idea to incorporate a mirror in a recessed portion of the wall, right in the middle of the mural, that causes people to become part of the pic-

ture themselves.

Using backlit Japanese shoji screens, lighting emanating from space between ceiling and column, parasols and neon, Colombo joined traditional and nontraditional elements to design new lighting for the entire restaurant.

The Japanese are masters of illusion, said Coffman, who loves the artful "tricks" used by Thompson and Colombo to give the illusion of space beyond what actually exists, and the mood created in the restaurant that opened in 1981.

"The preparation of sushi is a work of art. They can make a Christmas tree out of a cucumber," said Thompson, who credits Coffman, as a small-business owner, with courage to commission art for the restaurant.

Takah Sushi celebrates its interior renovation with a special dinner open house Tuesday, Dec. 14, 420 E. Hyman Ave. (downstairs), Aspen.

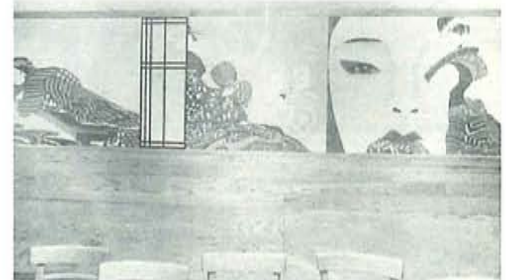
Museum open house

Aspen Historical Society's Wheeler-Stallard House Museum hosts a holiday open house and gift bazaar Wednesday, Dec. 15.

On exhibit will be "Portrait of an Era," a limited edition of 12 photographs from the society's noted glass plate negative collection. The edition sells for \$500, but holiday shoppers will find a variety of Aspen gifts, some starting at just a dollar for bookmarks with selected photographs from the society's archives.

Also on hand will be gingerbread Victorian houses, culinary creations donated by celebrated Aspen pastry chefs, book bags with the words "I saw the ghost at Ashcroft," handmade aprons and Western vests, T-shirts with the society's Holden-Marolt museum-in-progress logo, and more.

Children will be able to whisper their wishes to Santa,



Cami Thompson painted a Japanese style mural for the renovated Takah Sushi.

and listen to storyteller Jane Jenkins. Holiday punch and caroling complete the festivities.

Aspen Historical Society holds a holiday open house Dec. 15, 5 to 7 p.m., 620 West Bleeker St., Aspen.

Callahan wins contest

Aspen artist Cynthia Callahan won an art contest in Vail. Sponsored by the Mountain Haus, lodging at Vail's Covered Bridge, the striking watercolor will be on display at the Mountain Haus lobby, and is also being made into a postcard.

A 29-year resident of Aspen, Callahan was a college art major and also took classes at Chicago Art Institute and the University of Hawaii before taking a 25-year break from painting to raise a family.

Picking up her brushes again five years ago, she now works in both oil and watercolor and has enjoyed ribbon awards from several area competitions.

The Land of Noh

Once there was a land with the letter n in its landscape. To some, the letter n meant nothing. The people became tired of living in a land with nothing...they wanted something, but no one knew what.

One of the people decided to tie a prayer card to a cherry tree — the card said "PLACE: Special Celebration!"

The wind blew the card and the cherry blossoms out over the land and into the sea beyond — where TAKAH SUKHI was born.

A fisherwoman was lucky enough to catch it one day. A friend and neighbor was spying on her, only to discover all was well.

God was pleased. From now on, joy, laughter and full belly will be one with TAKAH SUKHI!