

# Artist Spotlight: Fishing inspires biologist to practice art of Gyotaku

Adam Mankoski, contributing writer  
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See Andrew's Gyotaku in Redding at Art in City this summer during the annual 30/30 Show at the Studio Experience and through April 9 at Backyard Destinations.

Andrew Jensen's work as a fisheries biologist for the State of California combined with a surf perch catch at age 3 and a long family history of fishing have influenced him to learn and practice the art of Gyotaku, or Japanese Fish Prints. His business, One 4 Fish Prints, is dedicated to education about fisheries resources, conservation of existing fish populations and the advancement of the Gyotaku art form.

## Please describe Gyotaku and its history.

Gyotaku originated in Japan in the early 1800s as a way of recording trophy catches. In the United States, it has been practiced as an art form for about 35 years. Gyotaku prints are said to bring good luck to fishermen. There are two Gyotaku methods: the direct method, Chokusetsu-ho, and the indirect method, Kansetsu-ho. I use the direct method, in which non-toxic water based inks or oil paints are applied directly onto the side of a real fish. Acid free archival paper or fabric is carefully pressed on to the painted fish, and when lifted, a detailed mirror-image Gyotaku is revealed. Each print is an original.

## What is your arts background? School or self-taught?

In 1997, I took a Gyotaku class taught by Bill Twibell through Humboldt State University's community courses. During my years in Humboldt County, I spent a great deal of time fishing for trout, steelhead, king salmon and the many marine species that existed off the coast, like ling cod, various rock fish and the occasional halibut. When I was introduced to Gyotaku, I found it to be an art form that truly captures the unique beauty of each species and the perfect combination of fisheries and art. I enjoy fish printing almost as much as I enjoy fishing.

## What was your inspiration to be an artist?

My wife is an artist and has inspired me and supported my growth as a Gyotaku artist. Her experience with the use of colors and blending various colors to achieve desired results has been instrumental to my growth as an artist. My sister is also an artist, studied art at Humboldt State University and taught art at the junior high school and high school levels. She is an amazing artist and has always inspired me.

## Name a few other artists that you admire and why.

Mineo Yamamoto is an artist who teaches art around the world and creates amazing works of art. Bill Twibell, my Gyotaku teacher, creates beautiful prints. Christopher Dewees is an artist who has written books about Gyotaku, inspiring future Gyotaku artists and increasing public awareness of the art form. His art is inspiring and unique.

These artists are also members of the Nature Printing Society, an organization dedicated to the education, history and practice of the art of nature printing.



### Now showing:

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