



Opening Day

I wrote last week about my annual exhibition, and there was a reason that it was in my mind - January for me is exhibition time, and today is opening day of this year's show! This is the 18th time that I have held such an exhibition; the very earliest ones were in small galleries near my home, but from the fourth one, they have been in downtown Tokyo.

When most printmakers have an exhibition, they show recently finished work. Naturally, I do this too, but my exhibitions have one aspect that most other exhibitions don't; one corner of the display space is devoted to an announcement of prints that I haven't made yet! In that corner I explain what kind of project I will undertake over the next 12 months, and of course I hope that people will become interested and will order the prints.

Every year I have to arrange a careful plan for my work - I need to prepare a project that will suit three requirements: people will think it is interesting and thus order it, I myself will enjoy making it, and lastly, it must be within a technical range that I can handle. The first two are not so difficult to solve; the third is very difficult to calculate. Let me try to explain ...

We all know that modern computers are becoming steadily more powerful, and just when to buy a new one is a difficult question. If you wait a bit longer, the newer models available will be both cheaper and more powerful. People try to explain this by imagining that trains were similar to computers. While waiting on the platform for a train, what would you do? You could take the first train coming, or you could let it go and wait for the next one, which would be faster and cheaper. But of course, when that next train arrives, you still have the same problem, because the next one would be still faster and still cheaper! You might end up frozen in place, not getting anywhere!

It's a similar situation with my own work. There are many wonderful print designs that I would love to include in one of my projects, but for each one I have to ask the same question - do I try it now, or wait until later, when my skills have improved? The large scroll print that is featured at my exhibition this week had been on my list of possible projects for a long time. Many times in recent years I thought about trying it, but I always decided to 'wait for a later train'. Finally, just one year ago, I decided that I had waited long enough, and I announced that I would start work on it. The result is hanging in the gallery this morning ...

Did I make the right decision? I have no way to answer that question. Yes, the print is beautiful, but now that it is finished I can see many ways that it could have been improved. Perhaps if I had waited a few more years, it really would have become a spectacular print!

But to always wait for the next train means never to get anywhere. We can't always do things in the 'best' and 'most efficient' manner, no matter how carefully we make our plans. We just have to work with what we have available to us, and get on with the job.

Perhaps 'tomorrow', I'll be able to ride the 'better' train which hopefully will be coming along, but for today, I'll enjoy the one I'm on ... I'm having a pretty good ride!

David Bull
Seseragi Studio
Nagabuchi 8-4-5 Ome City
Tokyo Japan 198-0052
<http://astoryaweek.com>