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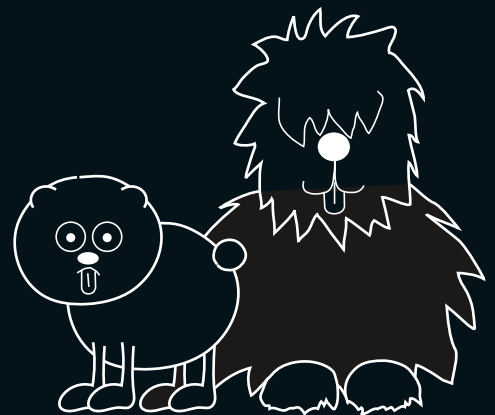
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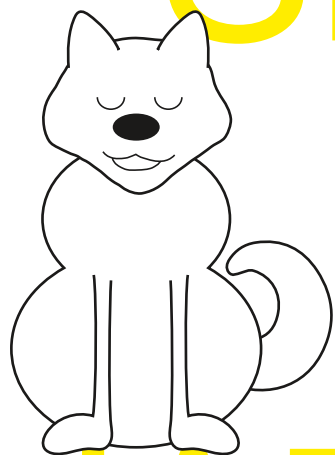
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KISHU KEN
JAPANESE
CHIN TOS
KAI KEN
SHIBA INU
SHIKO

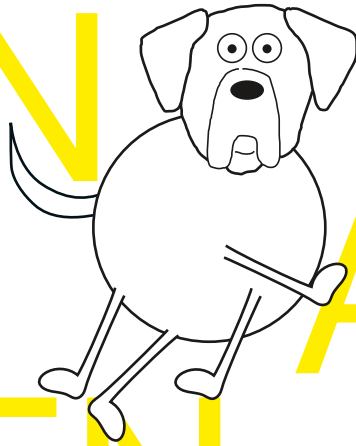


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JAPANESE
TERRIER

HOKKKAIDO

KEN



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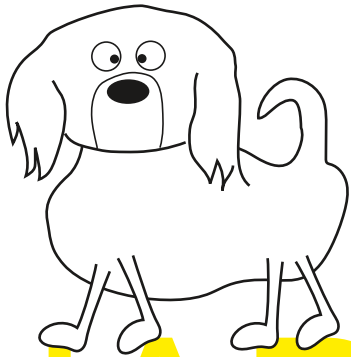
AKITA

J

JAPANESE

KU

DOG



BREEDS

JAPANESE

SPITZ

THE GENESIS OF JAPANESE DOGS

There are six native Japanese dog breeds (which usually have an 'Inu' or 'Ken' suffix attached to their name, both of which mean 'dog') as well as four imported breeds associated with the nation. All of the indigenous breeds are Spitz types typified by wolfish faces, pointed ears and sickle-shaped or curled tails. They are ancient breeds, making them closer to wild dogs than lap pooches, and are often thought of as independent – but hard to train. According to Isao Kawakami of the Hokkaido Dog Preservation Society, something they all have in common is 'a strong sense of loyalty; they are devoted to their master alone'.



A Kishu pup bred by CJ Hammond. He first found out about the breed on an online forum for fans of Japanese dogs.

Japanese dog breed expert Shigeru Kato (see page 146) describes the country's canines as having a temperament that is 'unique and singular'. He adds that, although they are primitive, 'they are refined, and are like little works of art. Once you own them, they are yours for life.' He thinks



Ken, a Shiba Inu who works at a sweet potato shop in Hokkaido.

that a certain degree of wariness is part of the dogs' temperament, explaining, 'Japanese dogs are good at working, but in a very particular way. The primitive dogs don't do so well with an extreme set of demands, as police dogs do.

They are independent thinkers. They get bored of being bossed around and just doing what *you* want. There has to be a lot more reward involved.'

Japanese dogs were historically used as hunting partners in mountainous regions, but the popularity of some breeds meant that their role evolved over time to that of attractive companions. During the Meiji era, they were rampantly crossbred to suit



A Hokkaido puppy raised by the Hokkaido Dog Preservation Society. While most people keep Japanese dogs as pets, there are also many dedicated enthusiasts who breed them in order to raise their dwindling numbers.

certain purposes. It wasn't until the late 1920s and early 1930s that preservation societies developed, marking the first serious and formal effort to maintain Japanese dogs. These societies led to the six native breeds being recognized, standardized and given National Treasure status. They also now keep registries of pedigree records and work to increase population numbers through careful propagation.



Two impressive Akitas owned by the Akita Inu Preservation Society management.

Despite this, their numbers are extremely low overall. In fact, during World War II, most Japanese breeds nearly went extinct.

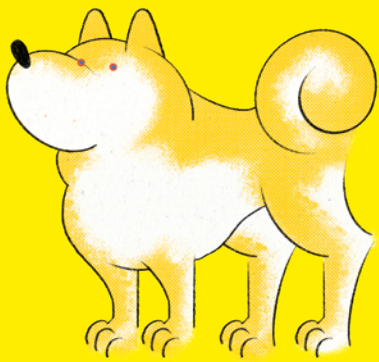
And while they generally recovered post-war, the popularity of foreign dog

breeds in Japan means that native breeds continue to be rare today. According to Kato, it is the passion for these dogs overseas (which often goes hand-in-hand with an interest

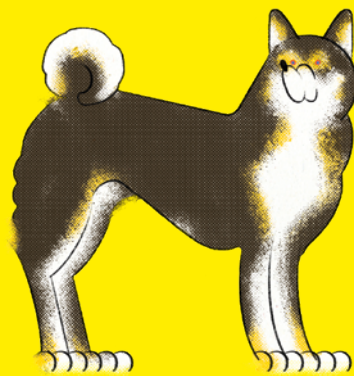
in Japanese pop culture) that is helping

30 to keep numbers afloat.

NATIVE DOGS



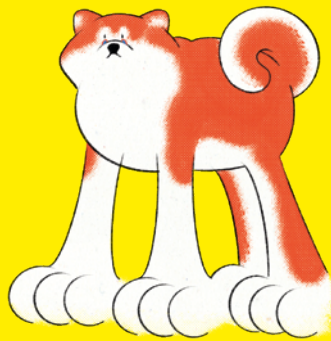
SHIBA INU



SHIKOKU KEN



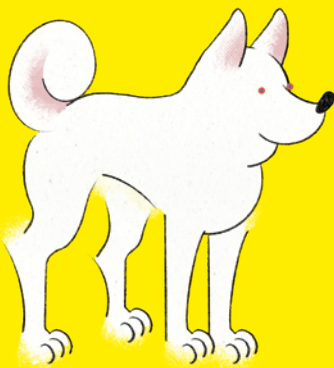
KAI KEN



AKITA INU



HOKKAIDO KEN



KISHU KEN

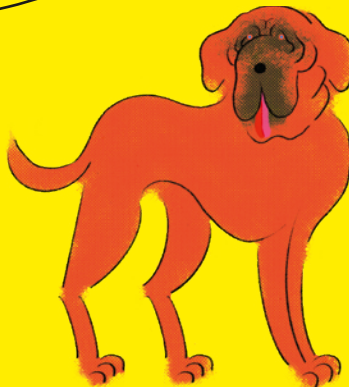
IMPORTED DOGS



JAPANESE CHIN



JAPANESE SPITZ



TOSA KEN



JAPANESE TERRIER

TEMPLES AND SHRINES



SASUKE INARI SHRINE

Sasuke Inari Shrine was established by the Kamakura-era warrior Minamoto no Yoritomo in a quiet residential area on the coast of Kanagawa prefecture. It is known for recognizing the bond people have with their pets. The shrine invites people to appreciate their living pets, as well as to pray and connect with pets who have passed away.

SANTAI SHRINE

Despite its remote location, people visit Santai Shrine in Maebashi, Gunma prefecture, to worship its principal deity Konohana Sakuya hime no Mikoto (who offers luck for the safe delivery of children and good health as they are growing). The shrine has a cute *inuhariko* statue that symbolizes smooth childbirth. It is customary for people who have baby boys to visit shrines 31 days after birth, and girls at 33 days – however, there are regional differences.



SUITENGU SHRINE

Suitengu Shrine in Nihonbashi was established in 1818 and is dedicated to Suijin, the god of water, who offers luck for fertility and safe childbirth. A huge number of expectant mothers and young couples visit the shrine, particularly around New Year's and on weekends. It is customary to rub the dog statue for luck. Suitengu also sells auspicious *inuhariko* folk toys with bamboo baskets on their heads. When joined together, the kanji letters for 'bamboo' and 'dog' look like the kanji for 'laugh', so the *inuhariko* is decorated in the hopes of a household filled with laughter.

ROKEN SHRINE

According to legend, a bear hunter in Akita named Sadaroku crossed territories into a neighbouring province with his dog Shiro. The hunter forgot his licence and was caught by the authorities, so he desperately asked Shiro to fetch it. Shiro ran all the way back to the hunter's home and finally returned to his master with the licence, but he had already been executed. Shiro howled endlessly and, soon after, a natural disaster occurred. Everyone involved in Sadaroku's death died and the area became cursed. This shrine was built to appease the spirit of Shiro (Roken literally means 'old dog'; he is depicted above). An annual festival is held here to pray for protection against disasters, and to ask for a plentiful harvest or safe travel.

FESTIVALS

Matsuri (festivals) are Shinto or Buddhist days of significance when, historically, rituals were performed. These might have been to pray for an abundant harvest, to worship nature or to ask for protection against calamities and bad luck. They are a much-loved custom, with around 300,000 celebrations taking place



across Japan over the course of a year. While festivals hold spiritual importance, they also serve as a form of community-building, as entire districts can take months to prepare for a single event. While some events (such as the Inukko and Amekko winter festivals in Akita prefecture and the Inumatsuri in Yamagata)

↑ Many people dress up their dogs for Sanja Matsuri, Tokyo's largest festival.

are specifically related to the worship of dog effigies, attendees also bring their pet dogs to a wide variety of *matsuri* to have them blessed.





It is customary for Japanese people to ring in the New Year at a shrine or temple. Religious sites that are related to pup-centric lore are particularly welcoming to dogs, and hordes of canine-lovers visit with their pets during this time.

New Year's is when many Japanese people wear luxurious kimonos, and a visit to a shrine or temple is visually quite spectacular. Some people dress their dogs in opulent kimonos as well.



ARCHITECTURE FOR THE BICHON
FRISE BY KAZUYO SEJIMA

Kazuyo Sejima is the co-founder of Pritzker Architecture Prize-winning architectural firm SANAA. Their architectural works include the Musée du Louvre-Lens, the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, the Christian Dior Building in Omotesando in Tokyo and

the Serpentine Pavilion in London. Sejima's spherical space is made to resemble the fluffy fur of the Bichon Frise, and the dog can settle inside it. The exterior knit design is by Keiichi Muramatsu.



MOUNT PUG BY KENGO KUMA

Kengo Kuma is a prominent Japanese architect known for his exquisite wooden structures, including the Japan National Stadium for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, the updated Kabukiza Theatre in Tokyo, the Nagasaki Prefectural Art Museum and the V&A Dundee in Scotland. For this project,

he designed a mountain of 60 centimetre (2 foot) plywood branches assembled without the use of nails or bonding materials. Each branch forms hexagonal and triangle shapes off which toys and snacks can dangle. A Pug can use this space as its sleep and play quarters.



↑ ERS-110, 1999, the first-generation AIBO, a robot that walks on four legs autonomously. It doesn't just perform, but can also learn and express emotions. AIBO, which means 'partner' in Japanese, is also an acronym for Artificial Intelligence Robot. The first-generation AIBO appeared in Janet Jackson's 'Doesn't Really Matter' music video.



↑ ERS-210, 2000. The second-generation AIBO. With an increase in the number of sensors and LEDs, it is more expressive of emotions such as joy. It also has voice recognition functions and the ability to take photos.



↑ ERS 311/312, 2001. 'Latte' and 'Macaron' are designed to be cute and adorable.



↑ ERS-220, 2001. This AIBO has a more futuristic sci-fi aesthetic. A set of LEDs express emotions: blue when it is happy and red if it is angry.

Yuko Giga, Lead Product Planner, SONY
Noriaki Takagi, aibo Designer

What are the inspirations behind AIBO's design?

[NT] AIBO's design, engineering and materials have all evolved, but the fundamental changes take into consideration how we can apply technology to the first-generation AIBO to enable communication with humans. The new aibo builds relationships to help people deepen close bonds. Our ultimate goal is to produce an object of affection, and the technology is only a means to do this.

Why did you choose a dog motif?

[NT] A future life with robots is often depicted in fantasy worlds, but no one has actually experienced it in reality. Sometimes it might seem accessible, but at other times it can feel threatening, as humans harbour various anxieties about the unknown. For this reason, it was necessary for us to use a dog as the motif because they are familiar and known to be obedient partners.

What is the difference between an aibo and a real dog?

[NT] aibo has functions that are not found in actual canines, such as the ability to connect to a network and security capabilities. And it is hygienic, making it more user-friendly. Also, it gets close to people autonomously. Even though it is a robot, we believe people accept it as an object of affection. The potential for aibo to be the first entity other than a life form with which people establish a deep emotional bond is fascinating.



↑ ERS-31L, 2002. This AIBO has a Pug-like design and improved artificial intelligence capabilities.



↑ ERS-7, 2003. This version of AIBO can connect wirelessly with other electronic devices and show a wide range of emotions through its lively LED-illuminated face. Masaya Matsuura, a musician and video game designer, composed sounds for this model.



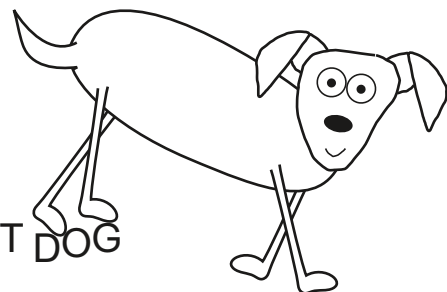
↑ ERS-1000, 2018. The current aibo model, which can be linked to the cloud, was designed by Noriaki Takagi (among other creators). It moves in incredibly lifelike, fluid ways that have earned it numerous design awards.

What is the main reason why people purchase AIBOs?

[YG] The concept of the AIBO is that it is adorable. From the outset, compared to regular robots, there was a wide range of clientele, starting with women. In the beginning, it was 50/50 tech lovers and people who got them as pets. Lately the proportion of people who get them as pets has been higher: I think more people get an AIBO for the emotional connection because it can imitate human emotions and react in ways close to humans. Japanese people have a connection with robots instilled in them since childhood through anime like *Astro Boy* and *Doraemon* and because of this, they aren't suspicious of them.

Why do you think the AIBO is so successful?

[YG] The AIBO is a robot that is equipped with artificial intelligence and can connect with humans emotionally: it is suited to contemporary human relationships. In Japan, there are people who want to own a dog but can't because of the housing situation and the ageing population. When an elderly person's dog dies, they might hesitate to get a new puppy when they think of its lifespan compared to their own.



SQUATTING DOG is a popular *sofubi* based on a Shiba made in vivid neon colours. It was funded on Kickstarter and shipped to over 26 countries. Project manager Tomonobu Shimizu sees *sofubis* as a form of artisan culture. He explains that the material 'doesn't deteriorate over time, and they remain malleable to the touch'.



TOSA KENTA is the unofficial mascot character of Kochi prefecture and was designed by artist Dehara Yukinori in 2007. The motif is a Tosa, the massive dog breed from the region. The *sofubi* version was made in more than 20 colours and coveted by collectors globally.



GINGA SOFUBI is based on the manga *Ginga: Nagareboshi Gin* by Yoshihiro Takahashi, which was serialized in *Weekly Shonen Jump* magazine from 1983 to 1987, and features a group of Akitas. According to its maker REDSHARK, 'Gin's facial expression is both cute and courageous.'



JINMENKEN, a *sofubi* by KK Factory, is based on a Japanese urban legend about a dog with a human face that is said to appear at night in urban areas. KK Factory aim to make nostalgic *sofubis* that wouldn't look out of place next to vintage toys.





SHIBARA is a Shiba Inu monster by Konatsu (see page 178), one of the most popular female artists making *sofubis*. She explains, 'I think that there are many Japanese character creators because there is that background, which gave birth to superhero toy culture. That in turn gave birth to the *sofubi* industry.'



INU-HARIGON is a *sofubi* designed by Teresa Chiba based on the Tokyo folk toy *inuhariko* (see page 111), which Chiba created as part of her Folk Toy *Kaiju* (Large Monster) Project. Chiba says her monsters are 'based on the folk toys that live relaxed lives across Japan. However, once crisis hits, they turn into monsters in order to protect the region and the people.'

BLÉ NATURE'S EMBELLISHED SWEETS



blé nature is a patisserie and a macaroon and cookie shop in Kyoto that specializes in gorgeously embellished sweets depicting flowers, fruit, cats and dogs in soft pastel colours. Many of Chef Naoko Furuta's creations are custom orders of pet portraits from dog owners, and she is featured regularly in pet-related media and magazines.



Furuta started out her career making natural yeast bread and other baked goods, but found she had an enormous number of egg whites left over from making custard. 'I realized throwing them away was wrong, so I started to make macaroons to use those whites,' she explains. 'I usually get inspiration from things that I have seen, or from an increasing number of customer requests.'

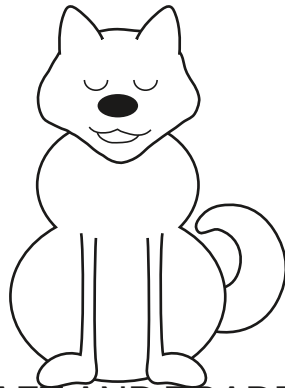


A dog lover and owner herself, Furuta says, 'There are so many cute aspects of dogs that I can't depict them all, but I particularly like it when they gaze at their owners. Originally I was baking cat- and wedding-themed goods, but when I started to post sweets decorated with pups on Instagram, interest started to spread among dog owners. Eventually, the orders became overwhelmingly dog-themed.'

↑ A huge number of Naoko Furuta's cookies and macaroons feature cats and dogs.

↑ Furuta says of her sweets, 'The colours fade after a while and the goods disappear when you eat them, but the memories of great times remain in your heart forever. I think our job is to create these kinds of moments.'

↑ French Bulldog portraits on a set of macaroons.



CRAFT AND TRADE



↑ Furuta uses homemade jams and chocolate inside the macaroons.

Atsuko Sato, Owner of Kabosu (aka Doge),
Pet Blogger and Rescue Advocate



Please describe Kabosu's past.

[AS] Kabosu was used for breeding and was left caged in an inadequate environment by an immoral breeder. She was never exercised and was obviously unloved. The breeder shut up shop, so Kabosu was brought to the pound to be put down alongside 19 other Shibas. She was rescued by an animal protection group.

I started a blog in June of 2009, posting about Kabosu's plight and the activities of rescue groups. At the time, there were few people who knew of these groups and it was considered normal to get a pet from a shop. Nowadays, more rescue organizations are featured by the media – yet, even so, the great majority of people still get puppies from a shop.

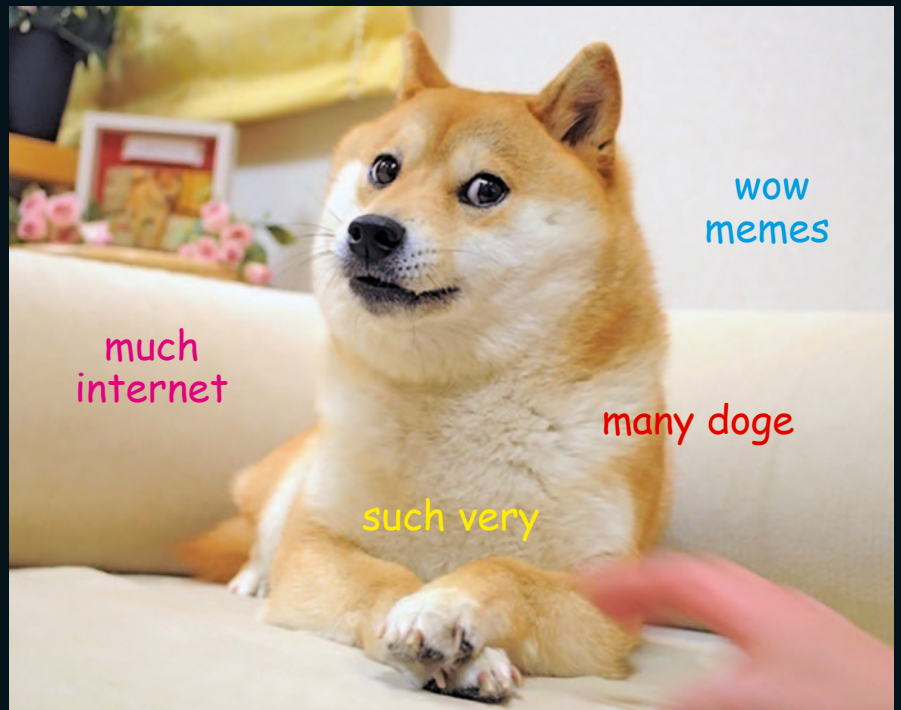


When did you find out that Kabosu was an Internet star?

[AS] My friend found out on a news site and told me. I was quite frightened knowing that a photo I casually posted on my blog had spread across the world without me knowing!

Why do you think so many people abroad were enamoured with Kabosu?

[AS] It is really strange! I think the photo that was used in the meme just happened to attract people. Also, most people might not know about Kabosu's gender, or the fact she was nearly put down but was rescued. However, via the meme, she became loved all over the world.



What is your relationship with her like?

[AS] We are a very regular dog owner and dog. When the family is at work, Kabosu takes care of the house with our three cats. When the family is home, she is affectionate and looks forward to daily meals and walks. Via the blog we've made so many dog-loving friends, and we take part in charity events for rescue dogs. When we go travelling there are people who want to meet Kabosu. Without her, my world would be much smaller.

↪ Kabosu was about to be culled at a pound but was fortunate enough to be rescued. Atsuko Sato found out about Kabosu from a rescue group's homepage and adopted her.

↪ Kabosu is well-known in Japan not only for the Doge meme, but also as a rescue dog.

↪ YouTube once briefly had a special feature wherein, if 'Doge meme' was typed into the search box, all the text would appear in multicoloured Comic Sans.

What are the characteristics of a Shiba?

[AS] They are smart, independent and patient but, on the other hand, stubborn. They are cautious around people they don't know but are very loyal to their owners. But Kabosu is quite different to regular Shibas: she is very calm, doesn't really bark much, is friendly and doesn't mind being petted by anyone.

DOG GROOMING

Yoriko Hamachiyo is a pet groomer and nutritionist with a salon named Yorikokoro in Mie prefecture. She manicures dogs to

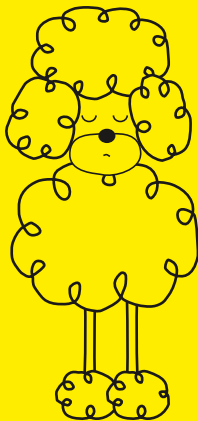


perfection, with cuts reminiscent of Harajuku street style that have garnered her a sizeable fan base. Hamachiyo was previously a dressmaker who participated in

fashion shows, as well as a lecturer at a fashion school. She infuses these sensibilities into her grooming ethos and aims to anticipate trends. She says she was bored with regular dog grooming salons and thus decided to open her private space, which aims to ‘recognize the individuality of each dog to make them shine’.

↑ Many of Yoriko Hamachiyo’s clients own dogs that are wary of strangers. She runs a one-on-one salon and maintains a close relationship with her clients, so the dogs feel comfortable in her space.

→ Hamachiyo’s stated aim is to make the dogs shine.





↑ Hamachiyo wants the dogs to enjoy the grooming experience and aims to create a warm rapport with her furry clients.

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DOG GROOMING

KONATSU



Konatsu is a popular Japanese illustrator and *sofubi* designer (see page 86) with a passionate fan base that she has garnered on social media over the course of a decade. Most of her work features animals, highlighting their cute behaviours and gestures through the comical use of anthropomorphism. She is inspired by traditional art such as *nihonga* (Japanese classical painting), and Edo-era *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints (such as those of Utagawa Kuniyoshi, who is known for his humanoid animals). Konatsu fuses these sensibilities in her work by utilizing traditional materials such as *washi* handmade paper and *sumi* ink.



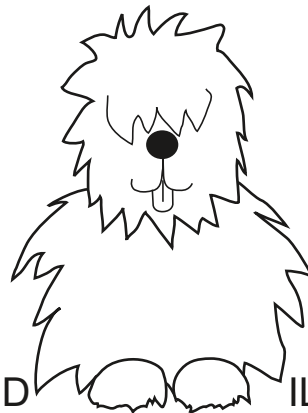
One of her main characters is Shibara, a Shiba Inu *kaiju* monster that was made to accompany another one of her popular characters, Negora, a cat monster. She says, 'Not only with dogs, but animals in general, when you observe them they have such abundant gestures and expressions. They have a cuteness that humans don't have.'



↑ Pastel Shibara, watercolour.

↑ Hachiko, watercolour.

↑ Mameshiba, watercolour.





↑ Ohanami, watercolour.