



DAVID  
GOOTNICK

CONTEMPORARY  
KUMIKO





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—  
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2020 – 2023

WASHINGTON, DC



## ABOUT KUMIKO

Kumiko is an intricate, and uniquely Japanese art form and woodworking technique. It was developed roughly 1400-years ago, as Buddhist-influenced architecture was brought from mainland Asia to Japan. Today kumiko is most commonly found on ornamental shoji screens and decorative features of traditional Japanese homes.

Kumiko uses narrow pieces of wood (often less than 2 mm in width) to create precise geometric patterns that were traditionally put together without nails, screws, or glue. Each piece of wood is cut to a tolerance of about 0.05 mm such that it can be held by pressure when assembled. The works in this book are each made of hundreds, in a few cases more than a thousand individual pieces of wood.

Kumiko patterns are generally built on a lattice (jigumi) that takes one of two basic forms. The first is constructed of horizontal and vertical kumiko strips to form simple squares. The patterns made within this lattice join individual pieces at 90, 67.5, 45 and 22.5 degree angles. The second and more challenging lattice uses a three-way (mitsu-kude) joint. These joints form lattices that make a series of hexagons which are each in turn sub-divided into 6 equilateral triangles.

The patterns inside these lattices rely on pieces joined at 75, 60, 30 or 15 degree angles.

The traditional woods used in kumiko are Japanese cedar and cypress. The works in this book primarily use Alaskan yellow cedar, one of the closest species that is native to North America.

Kumiko patterns are often named for objects in nature, commonly flowers, plants, or trees. In some instances, the translation of the pattern is opaque and subject to speculation. The works in this book are identified with the primary patterns in the piece. The translation of these names relies on the work of Desmond King. Des studied and lives in Japan and is one of the few — perhaps the only — modern scholar and practitioner of kumiko who has published in the English language.

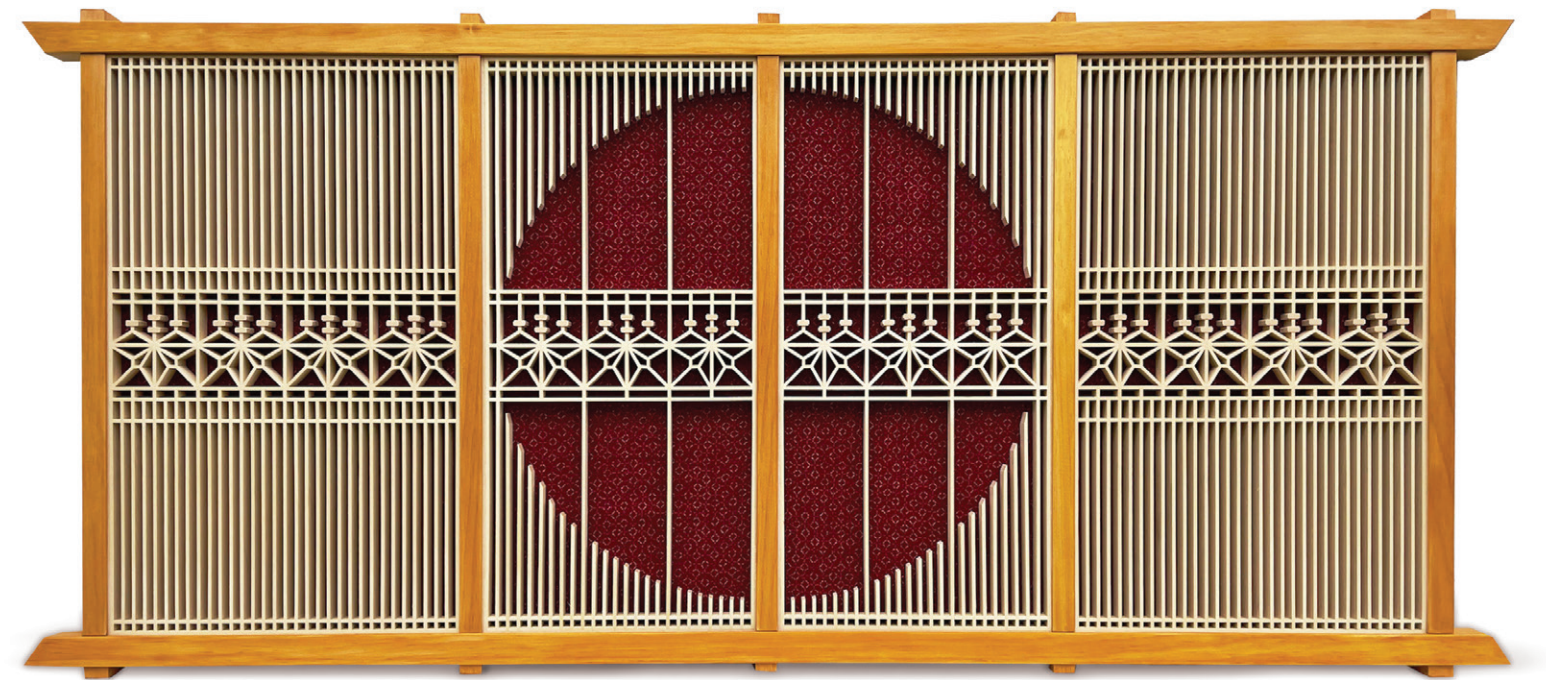
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*“It has been invaluable to study Des’ published work and to communicate with him on occasion. My work would not be possible without Des King’s commitment to sharing his knowledge and expertise.”*

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DAVID GOOTNICK

**Imperial Gates**  
Kiri (*Paulownia flower*)  
Alaskan cedar on cloth, 19 × 36 inches, 2022

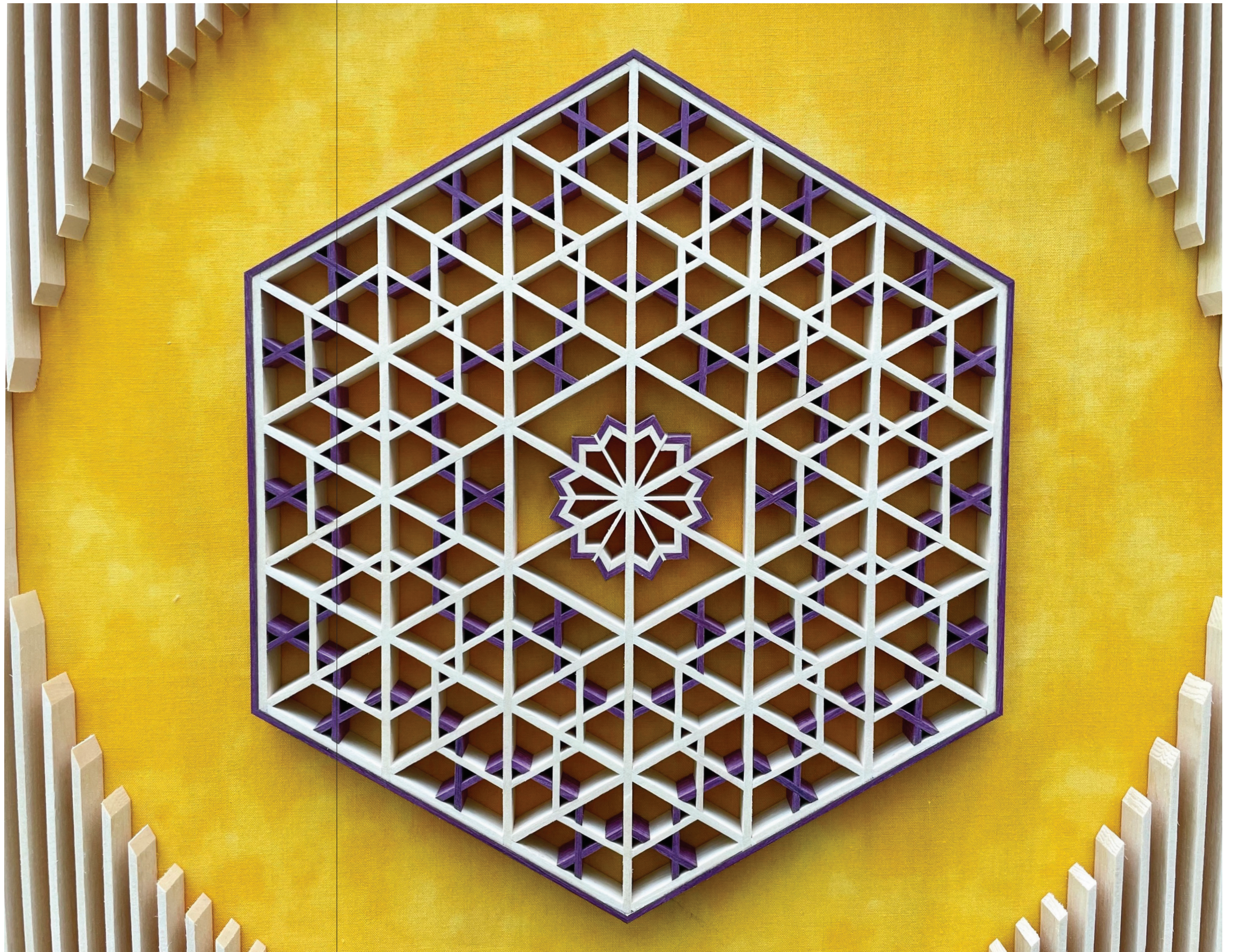




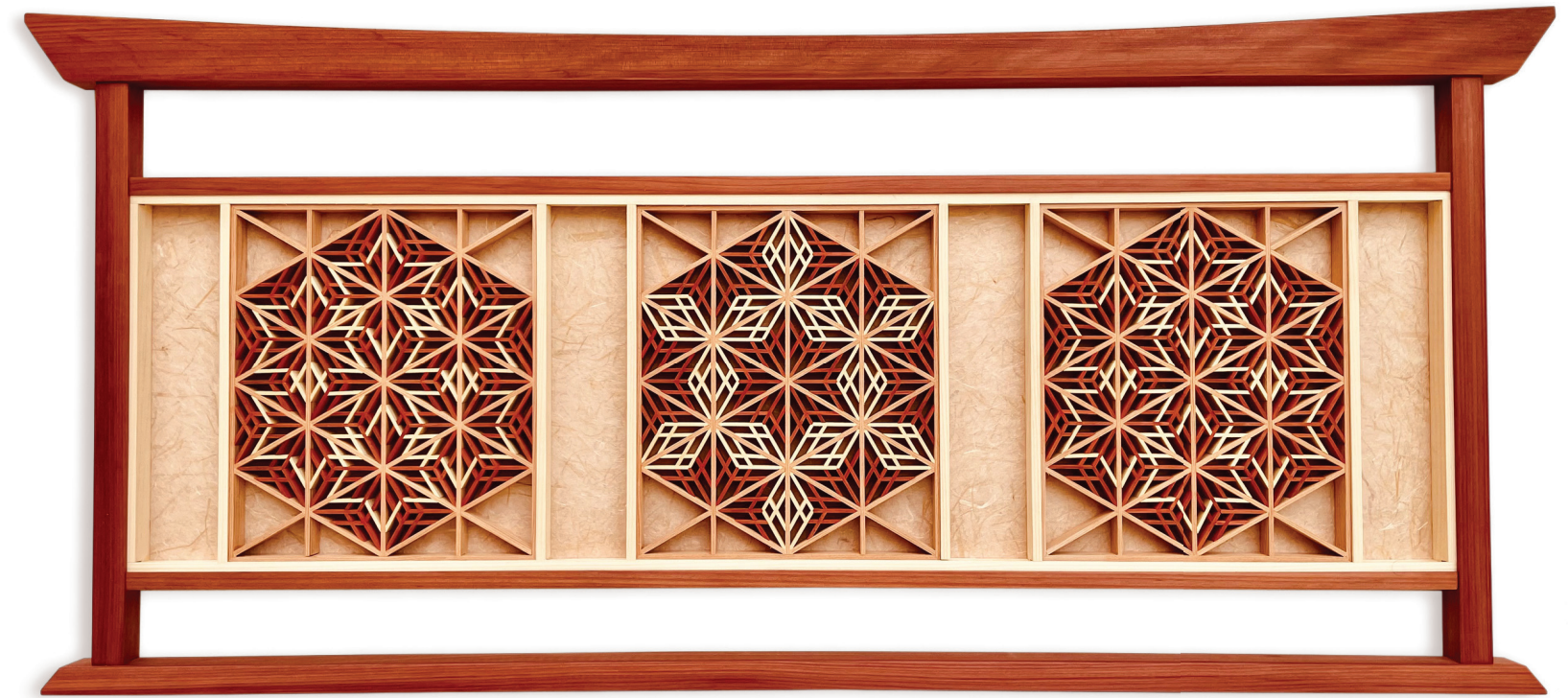
Portal  
Kuruma (*interlocking wheels*)  
Alaskan cedar, purpleheart on cloth, 19 × 19 inches, 2022

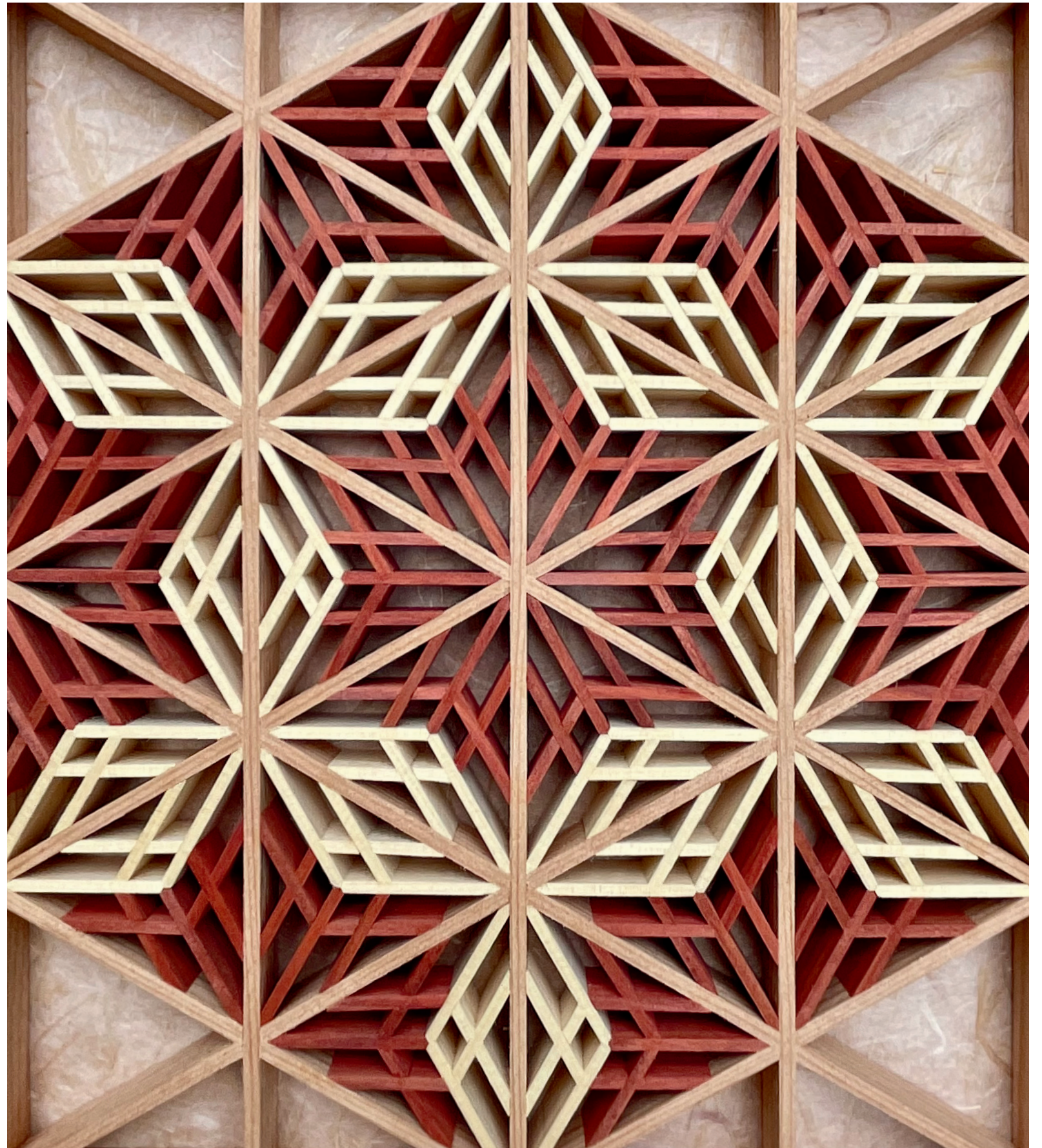






**Triptych #3**  
Yae Sakura (*double cherry blossom*)  
Alaskan cedar, redheart on washi paper, 14 × 32 inches, 2023

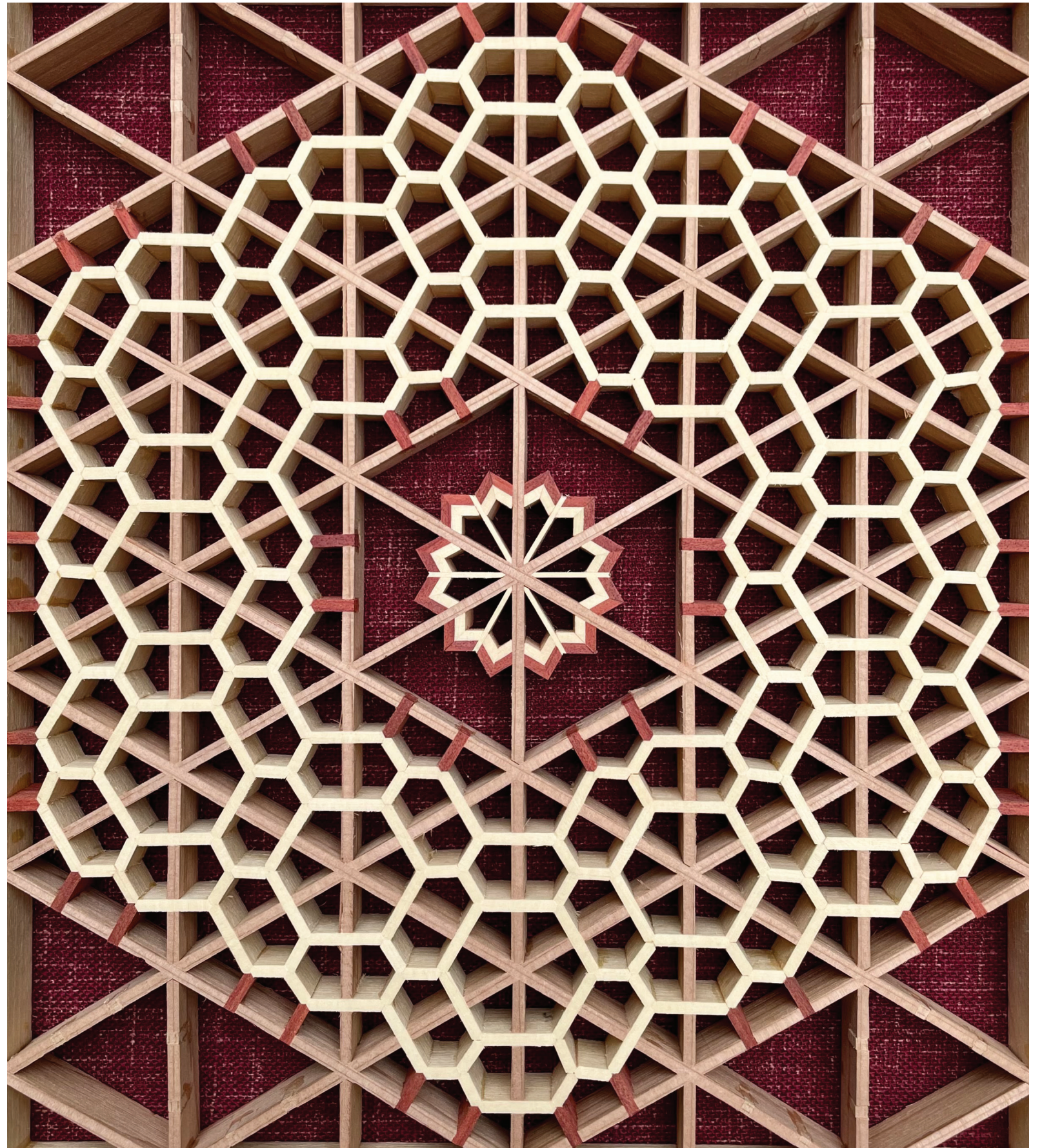




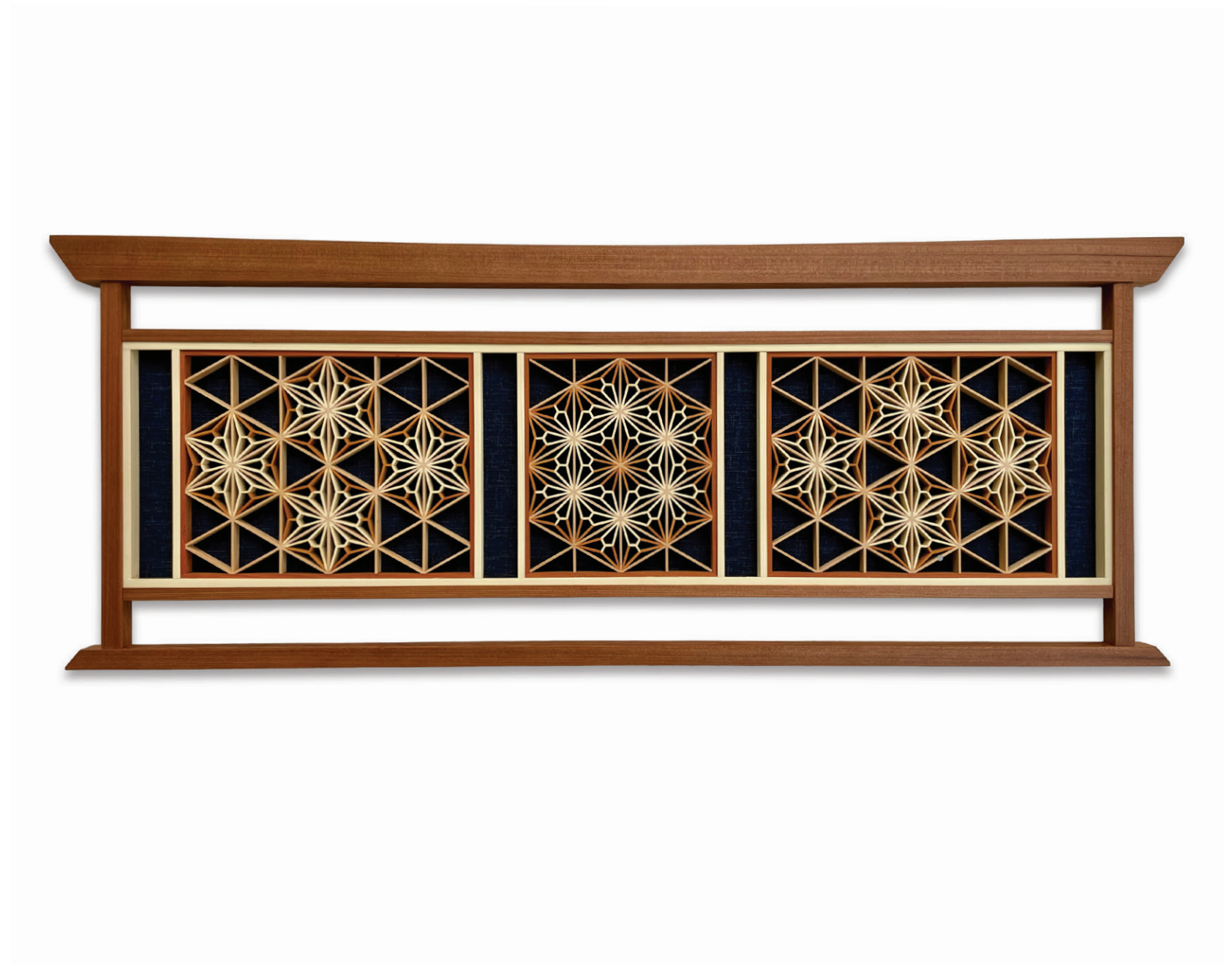
**Triptych #4**

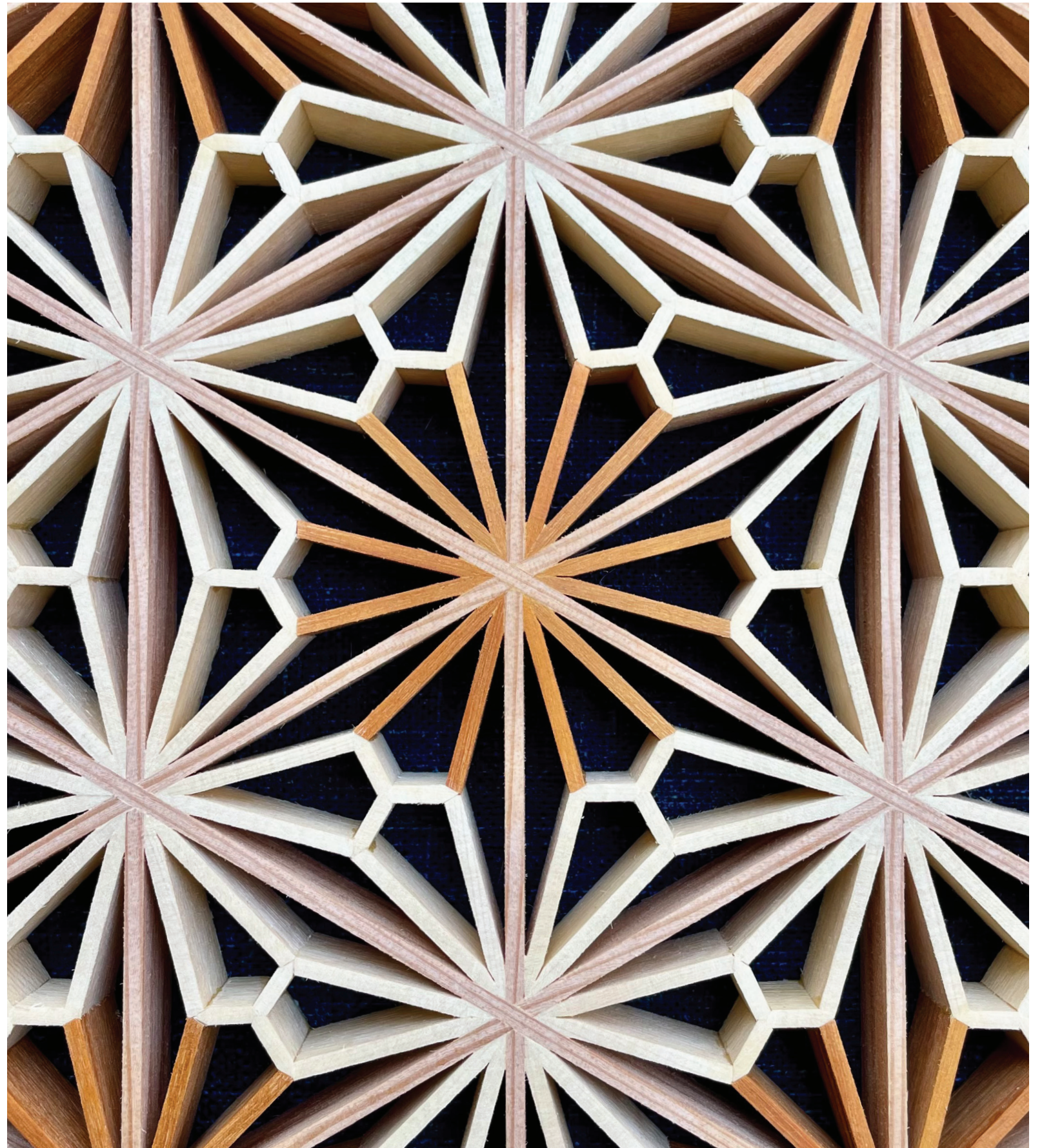
Tawara (*barrel-shaped sack*); Tsumi-ishi (*piled rocks*); Dahlia (*dahlia flower*), centers  
Alaskan cedar, redheart on cloth, 15 × 34 inches, 2023



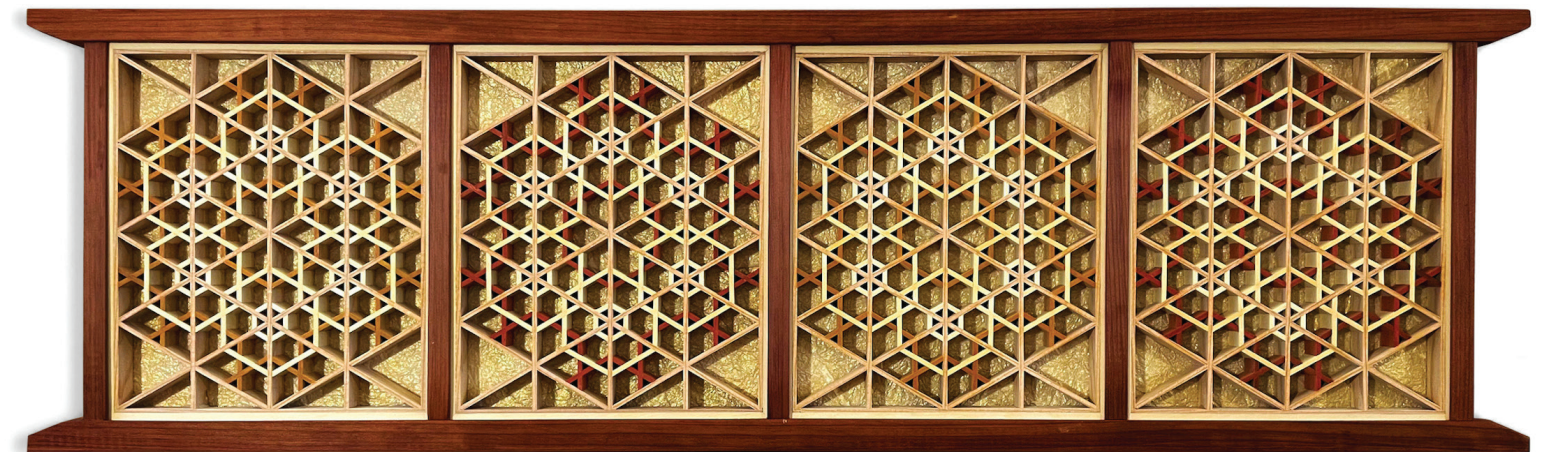


Triptych #5  
Futae-asanoha (*layered hemp leaf*)  
Alaskan cedar, osage on cloth, 15 × 38 inches, 2023

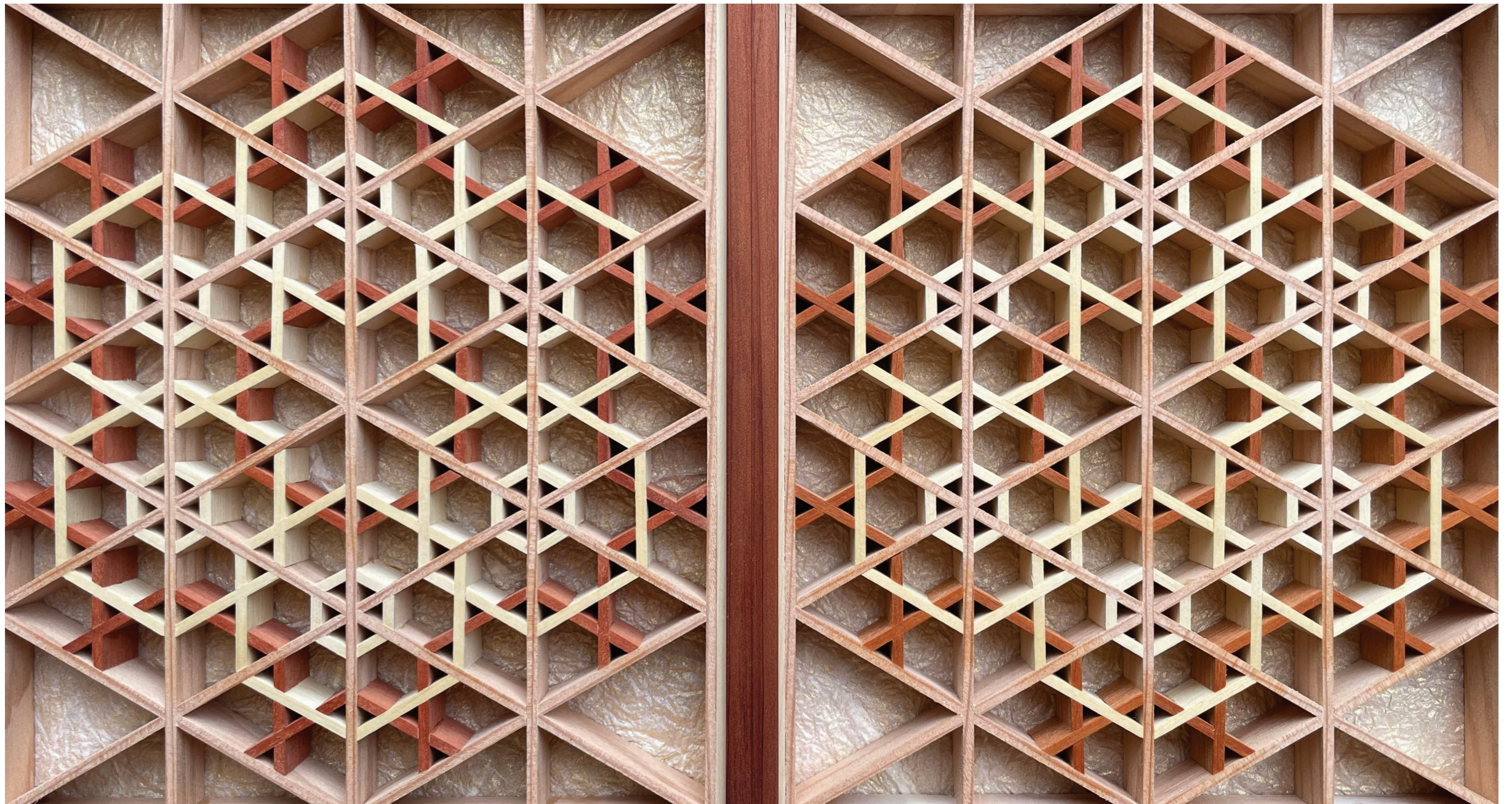




**Quartet**  
Kuruma (*interlocking wheels*)  
Alaskan cedar, redheart, osage on washi paper, 7 × 25 inches, 2023

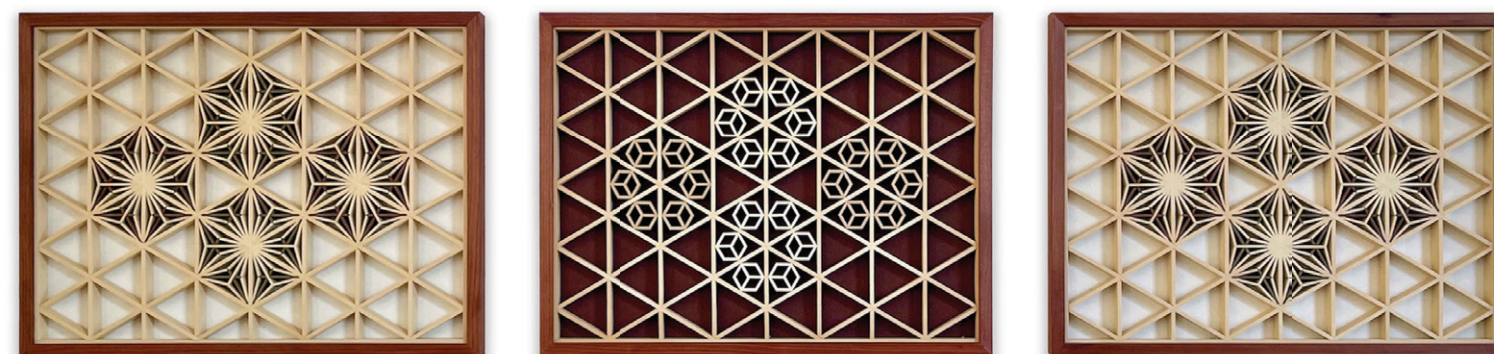


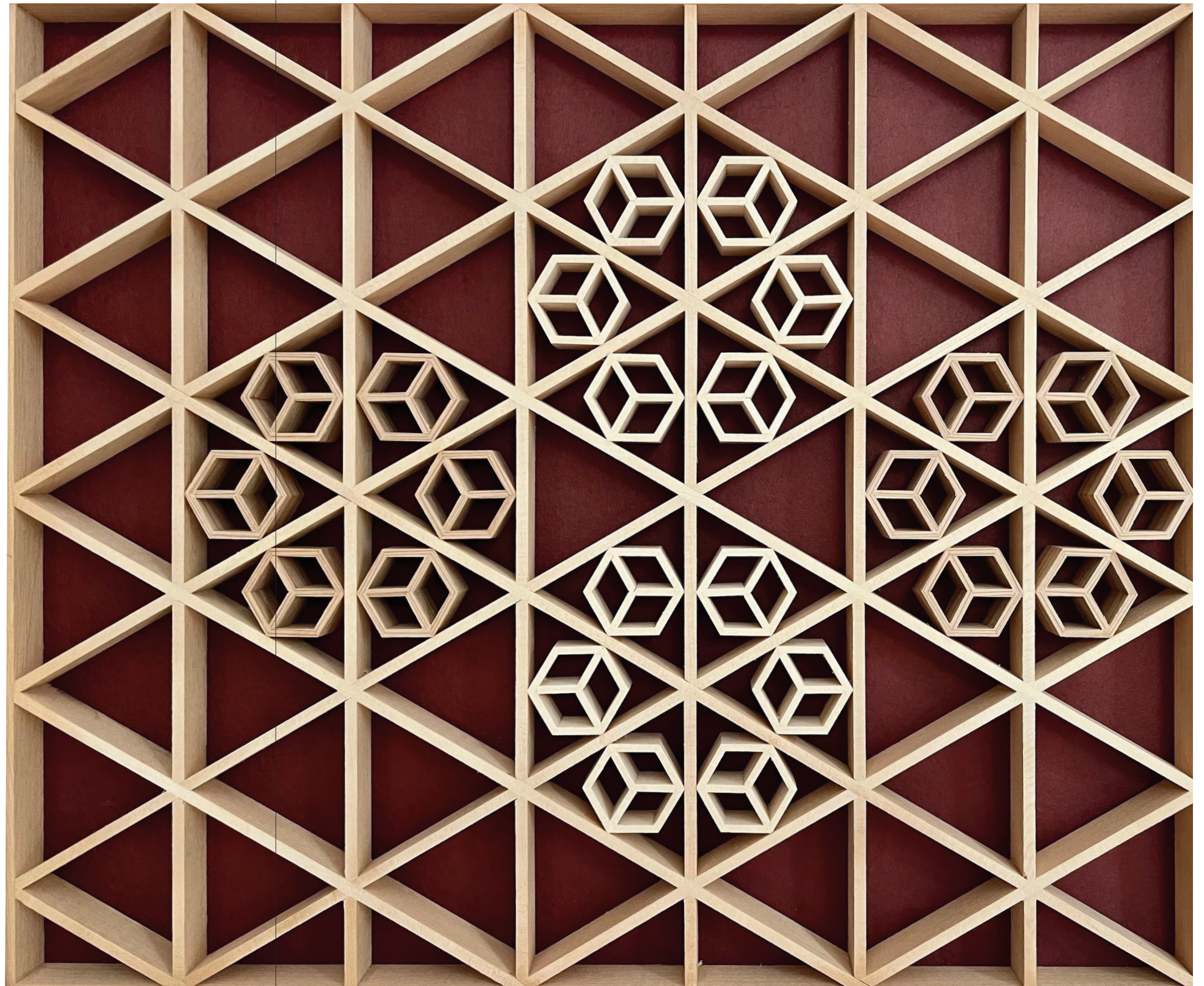




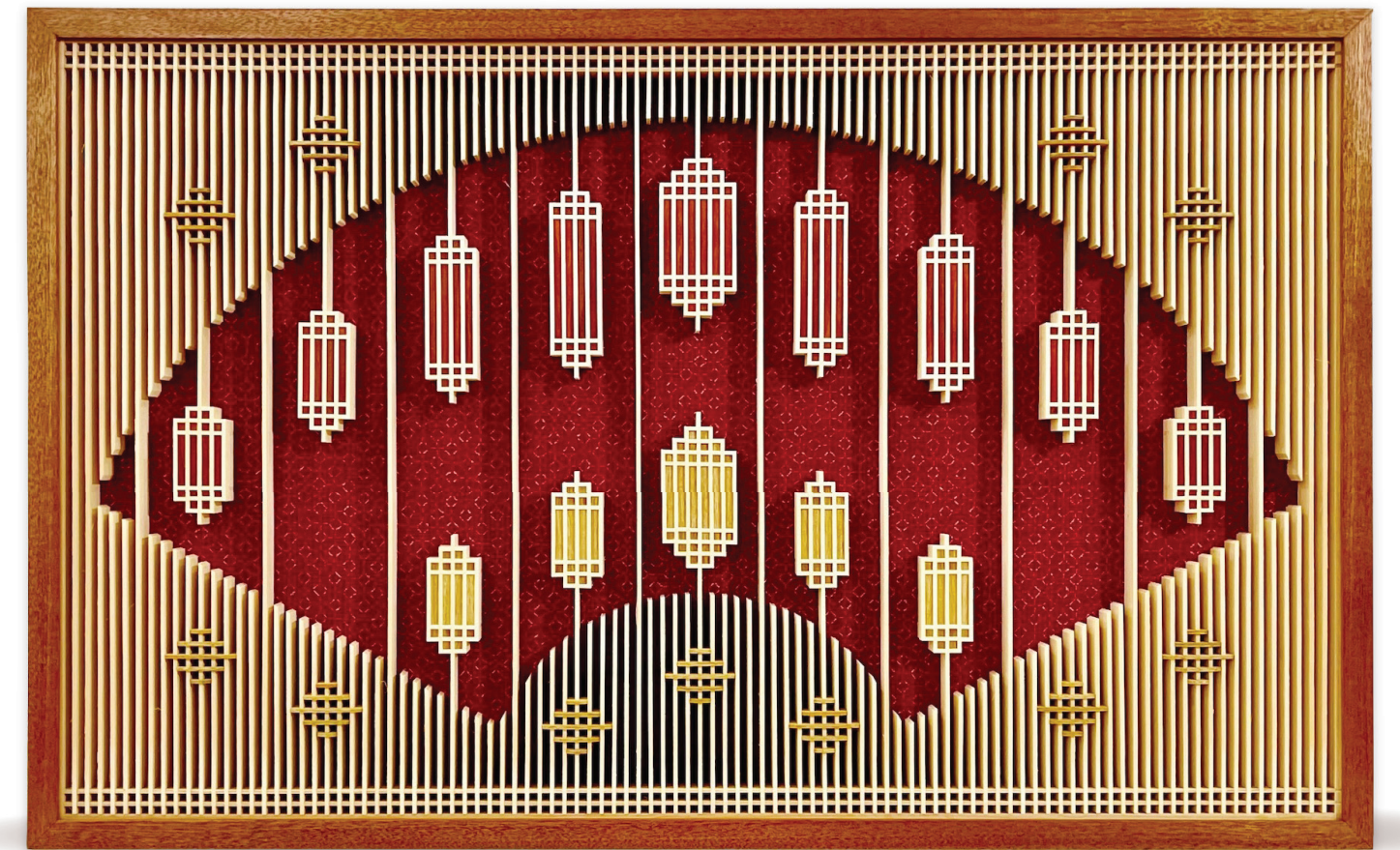
**Triptych #2**

Yae-asanoha (*hemp leaf*), right and left panels; Simple cubes, original design, center panel  
Alaskan cedar, redheart, Sitka spruce on mulberry and washi paper, 11 × 39 inches, 2023

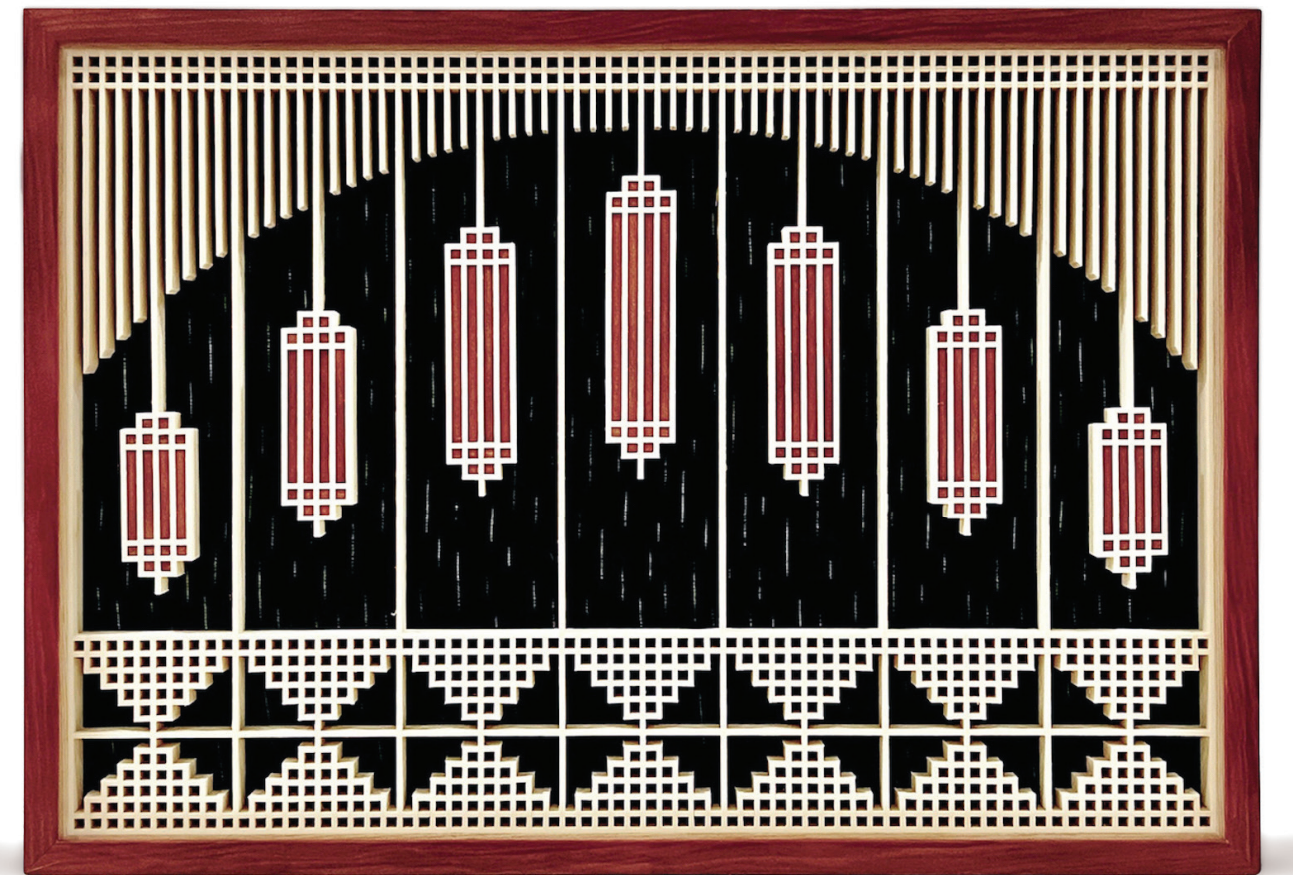




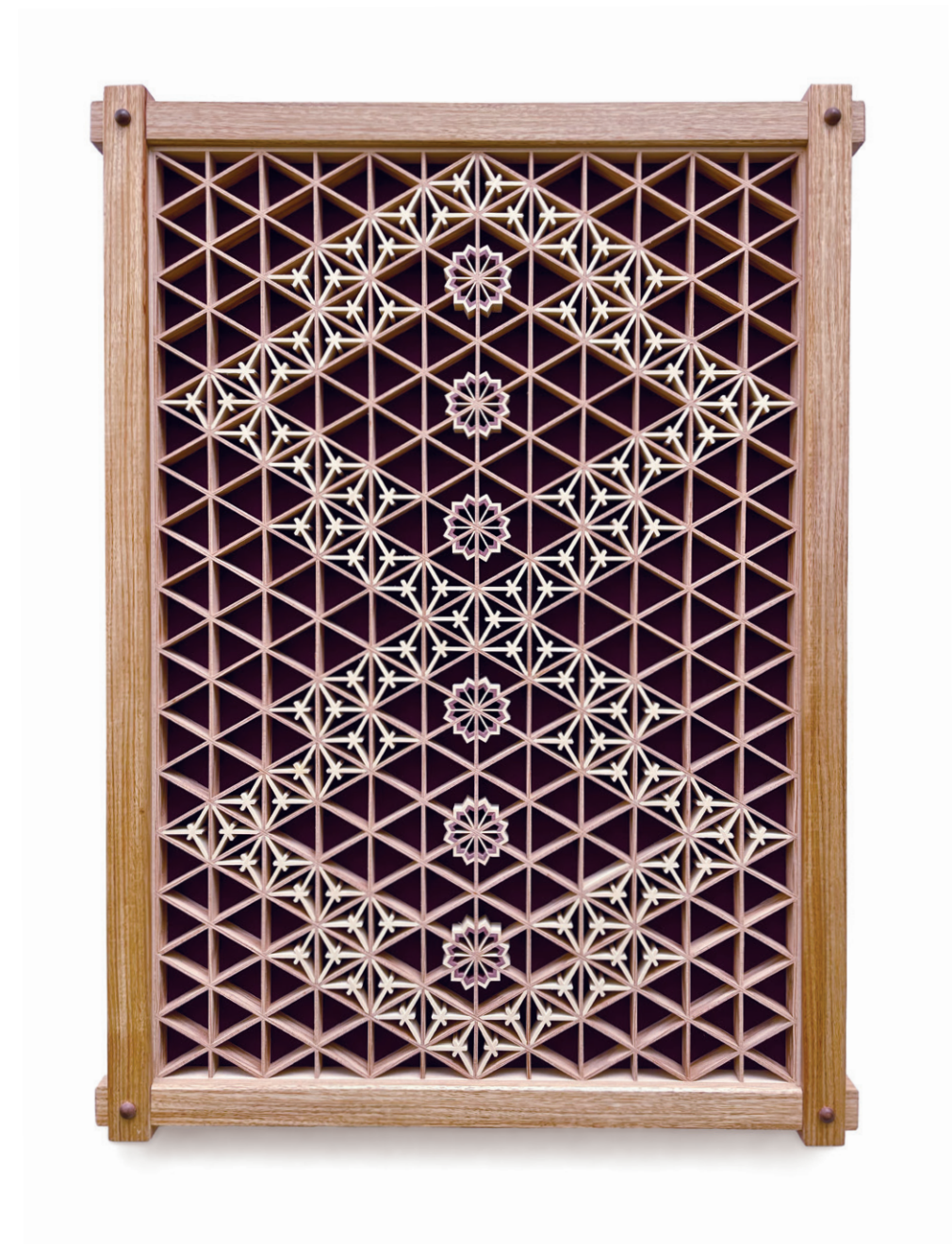
Lanterns #2  
Traditional motif  
Alaskan cedar, redheart, osage on cloth, 14 x 22 inches, 2022

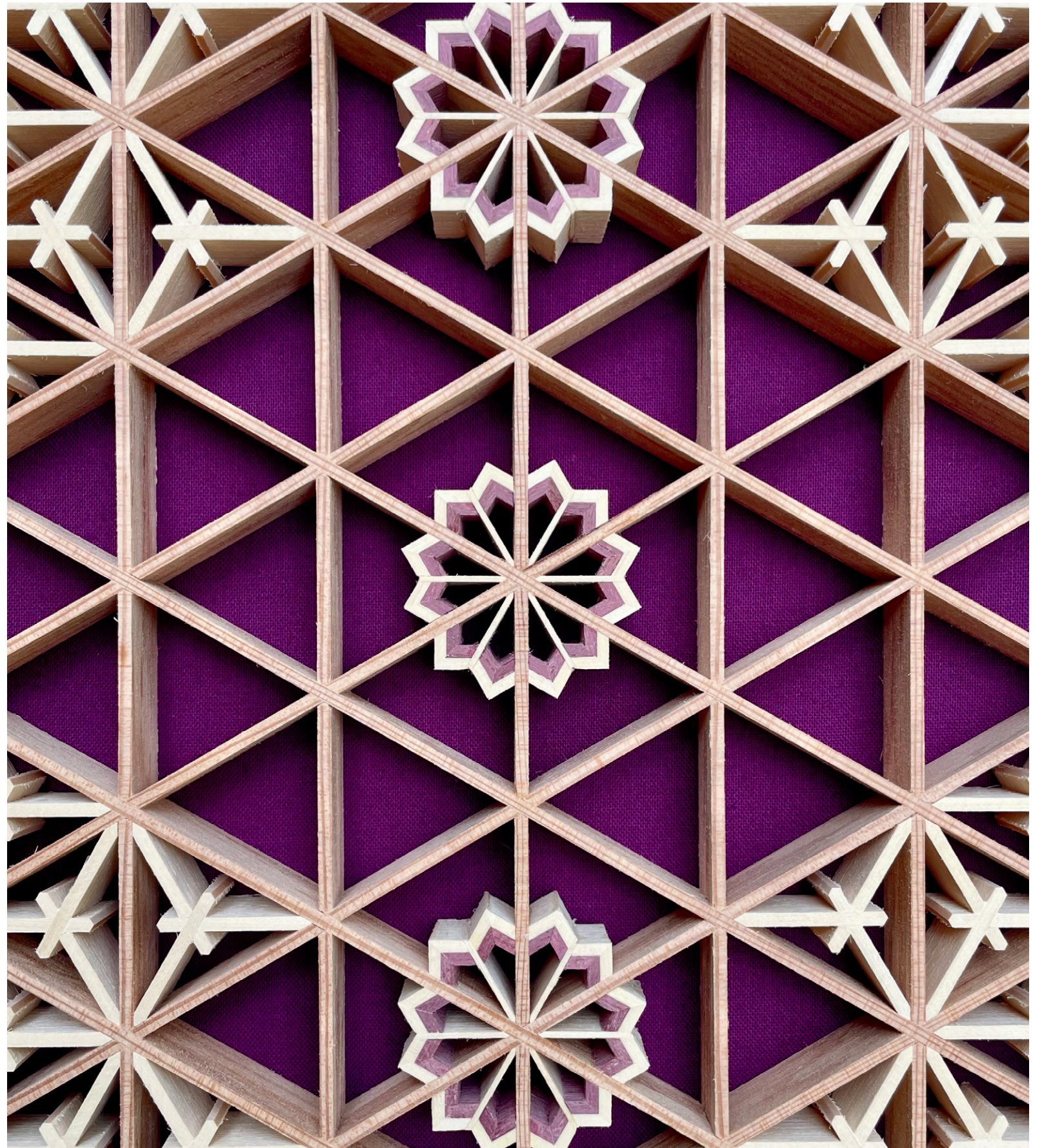


Lanterns #1  
Traditional motif  
Alaskan cedar, redheart on cloth, 12 x 17 inches, 2022

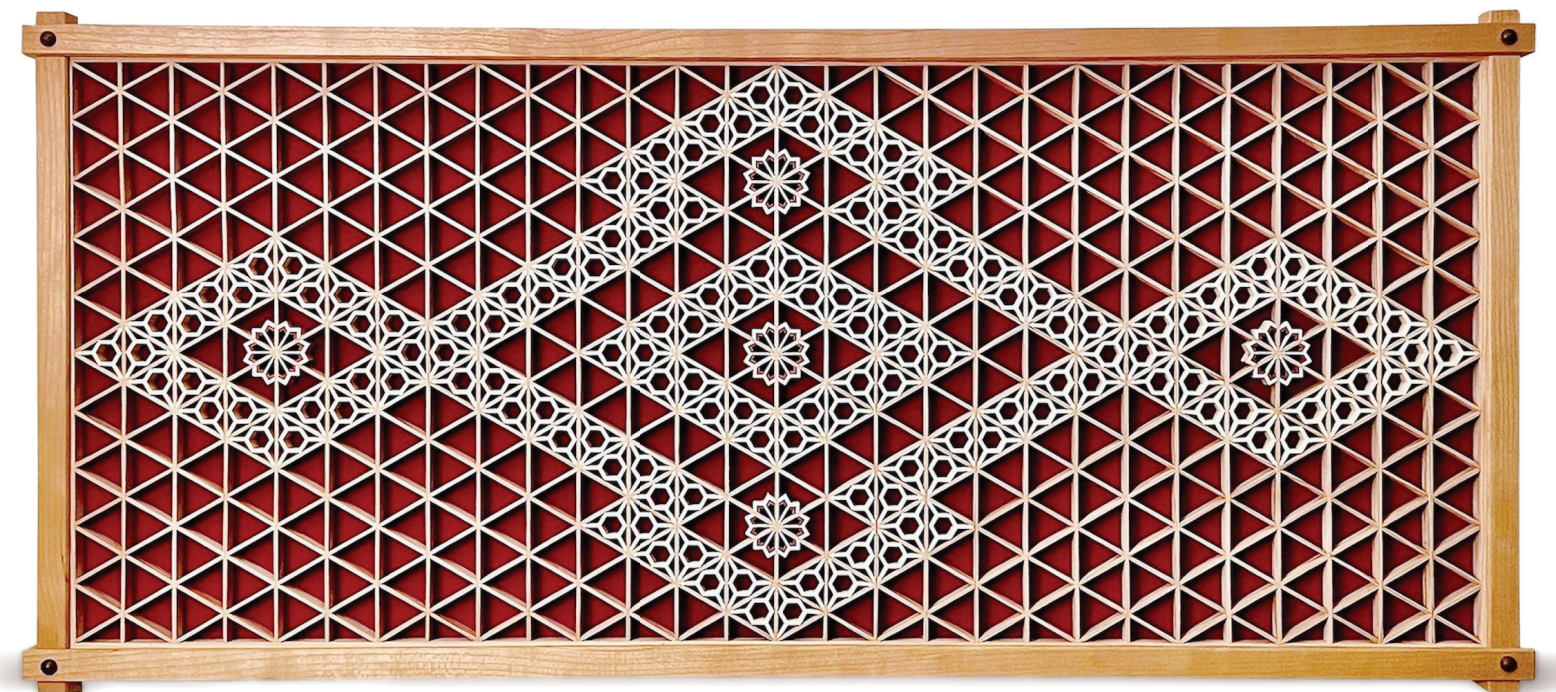


DNA  
Tsuno (*horns*); Dahlia (*Dahlia flower*)  
Alaskan cedar, redheart on cloth, 20 × 14 inches, 2022

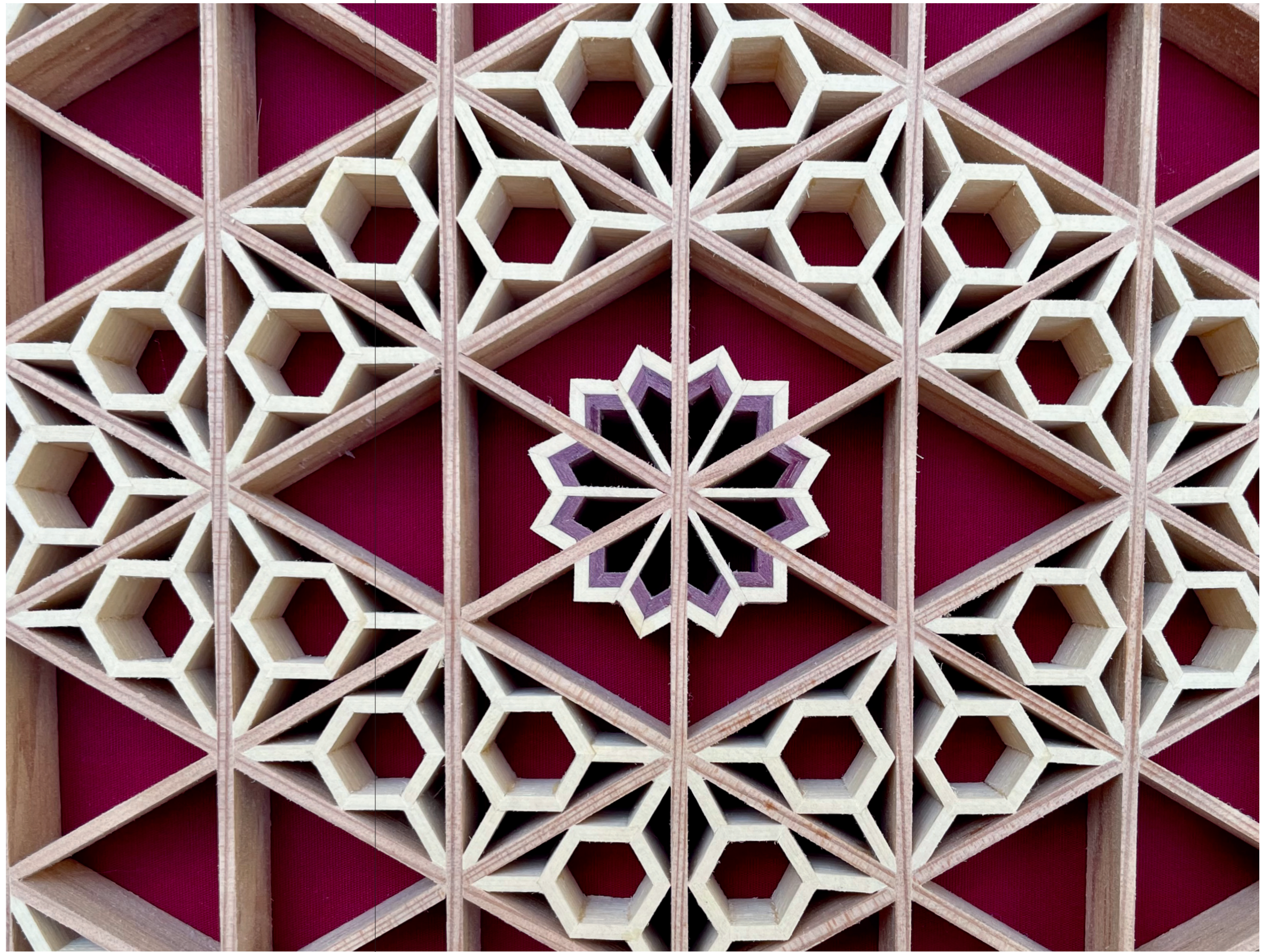




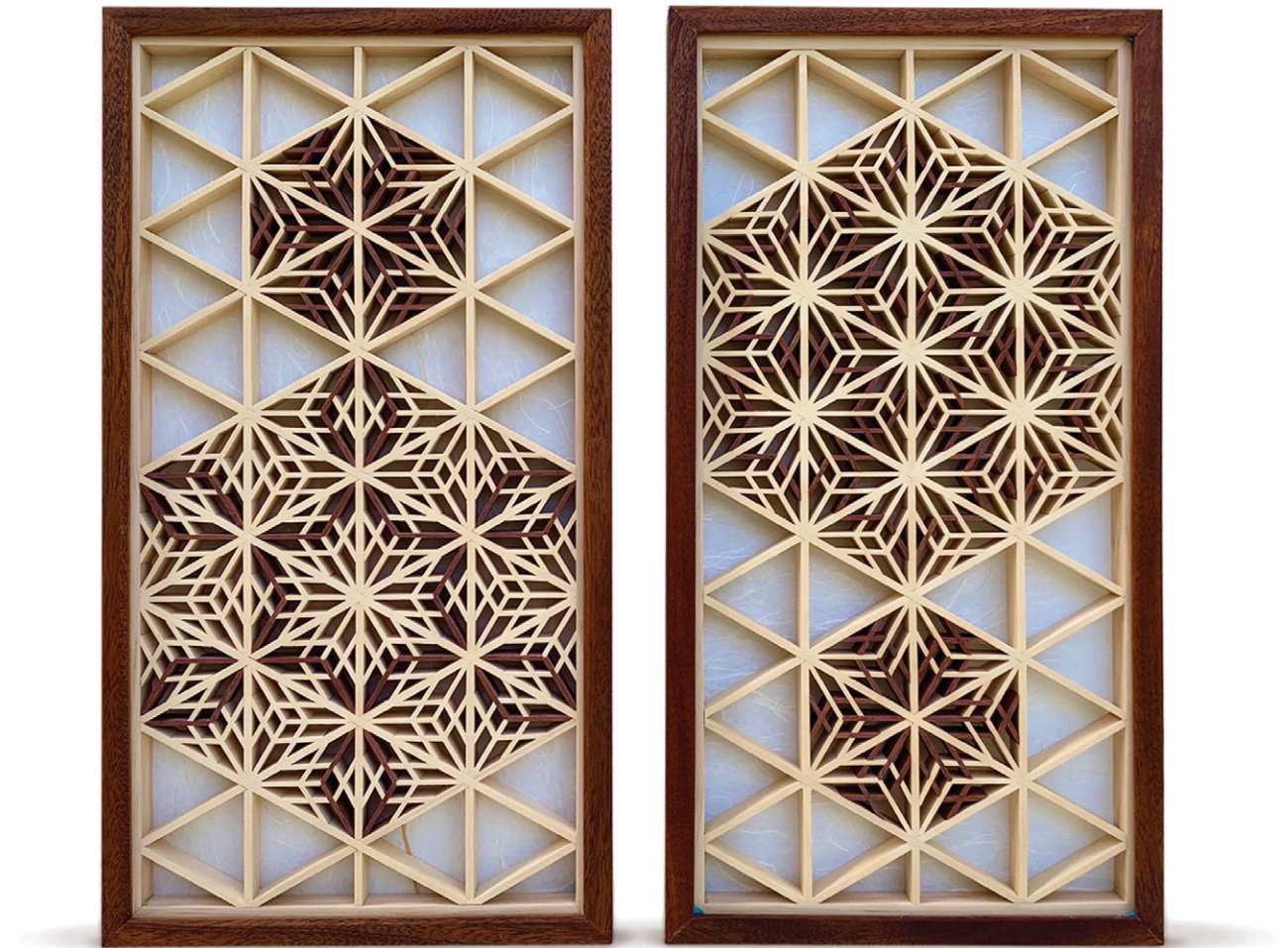
RNA  
Urahana (*hidden meaning*); Dahlia (*dahlia flower*)  
Alaskan cedar, purpleheart on cloth, 15 × 32 inches, 2022



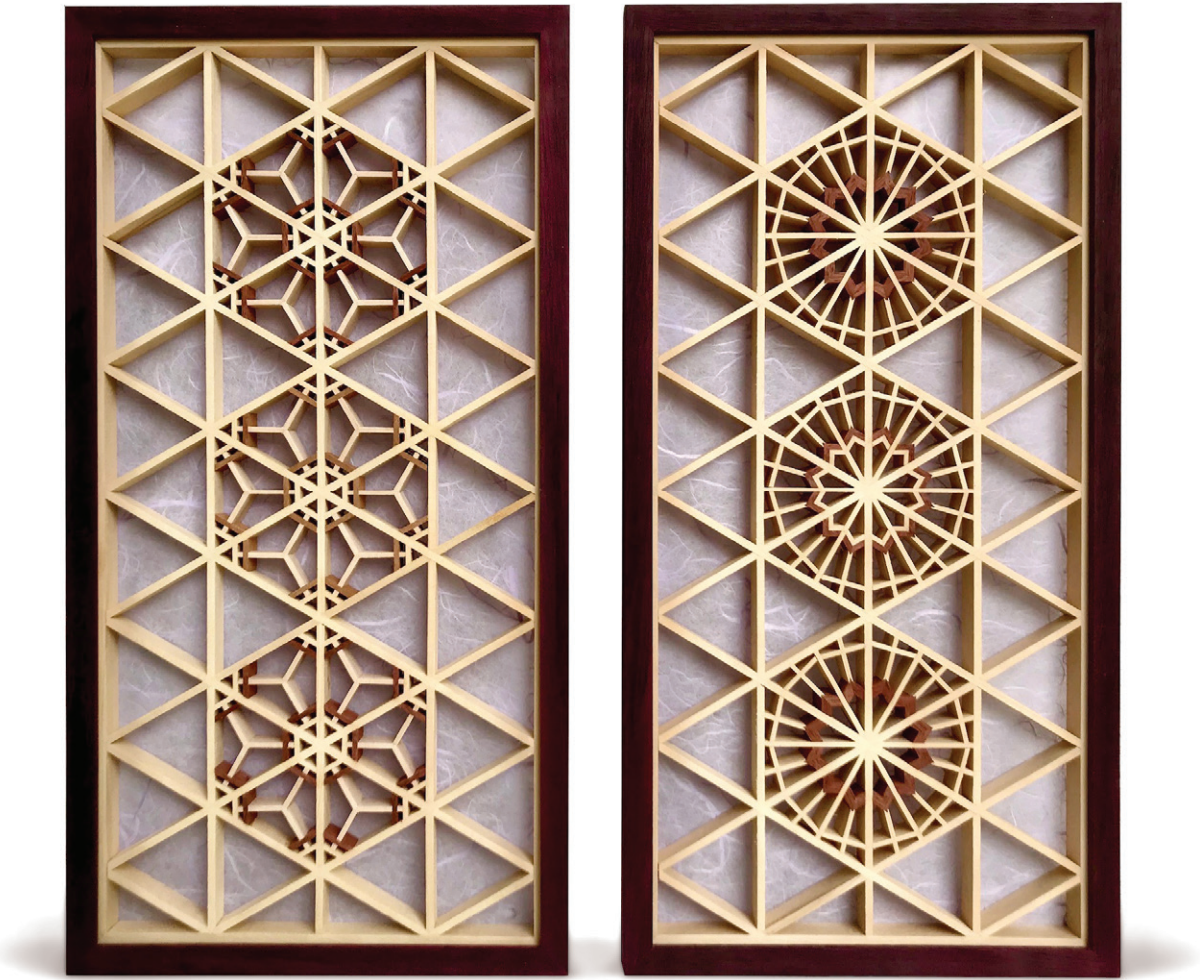




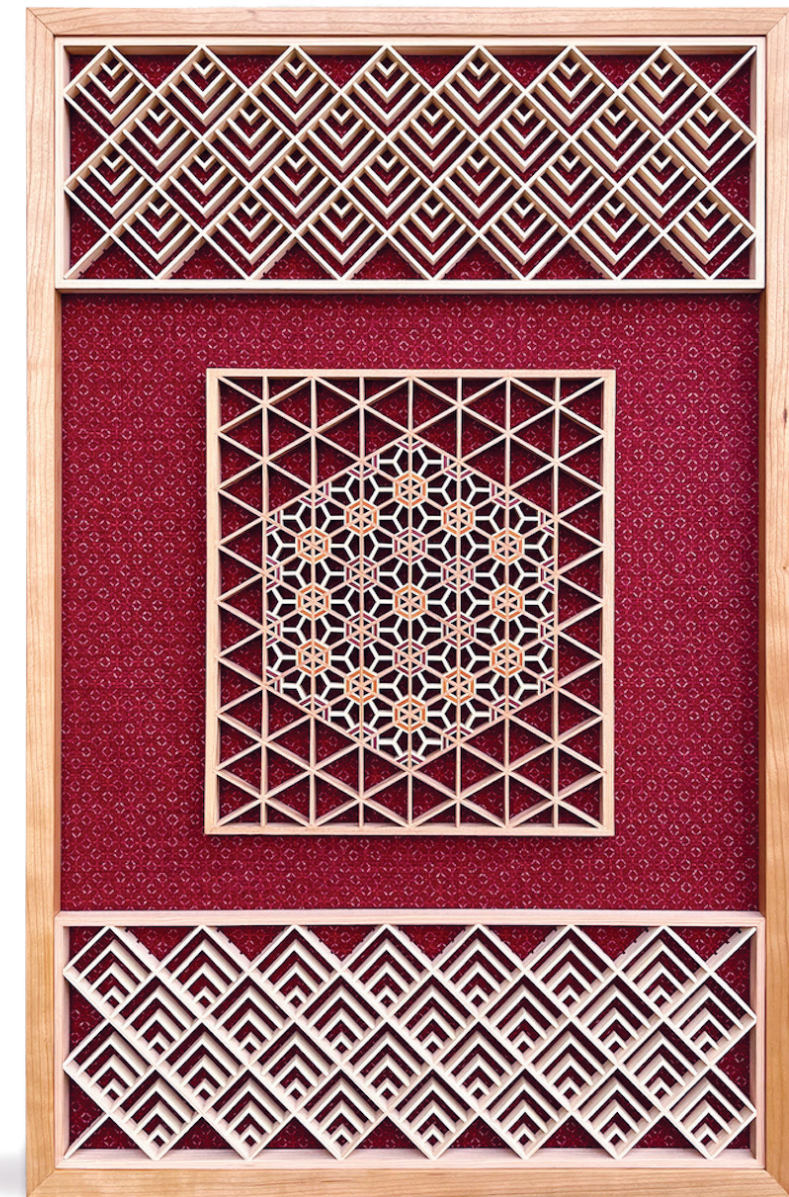
**Equilibrium**  
Yae Sakura (*double cherry blossom*)  
Alaskan cedar, redheart on mulberry paper, 8 × 15 inches each, 2020

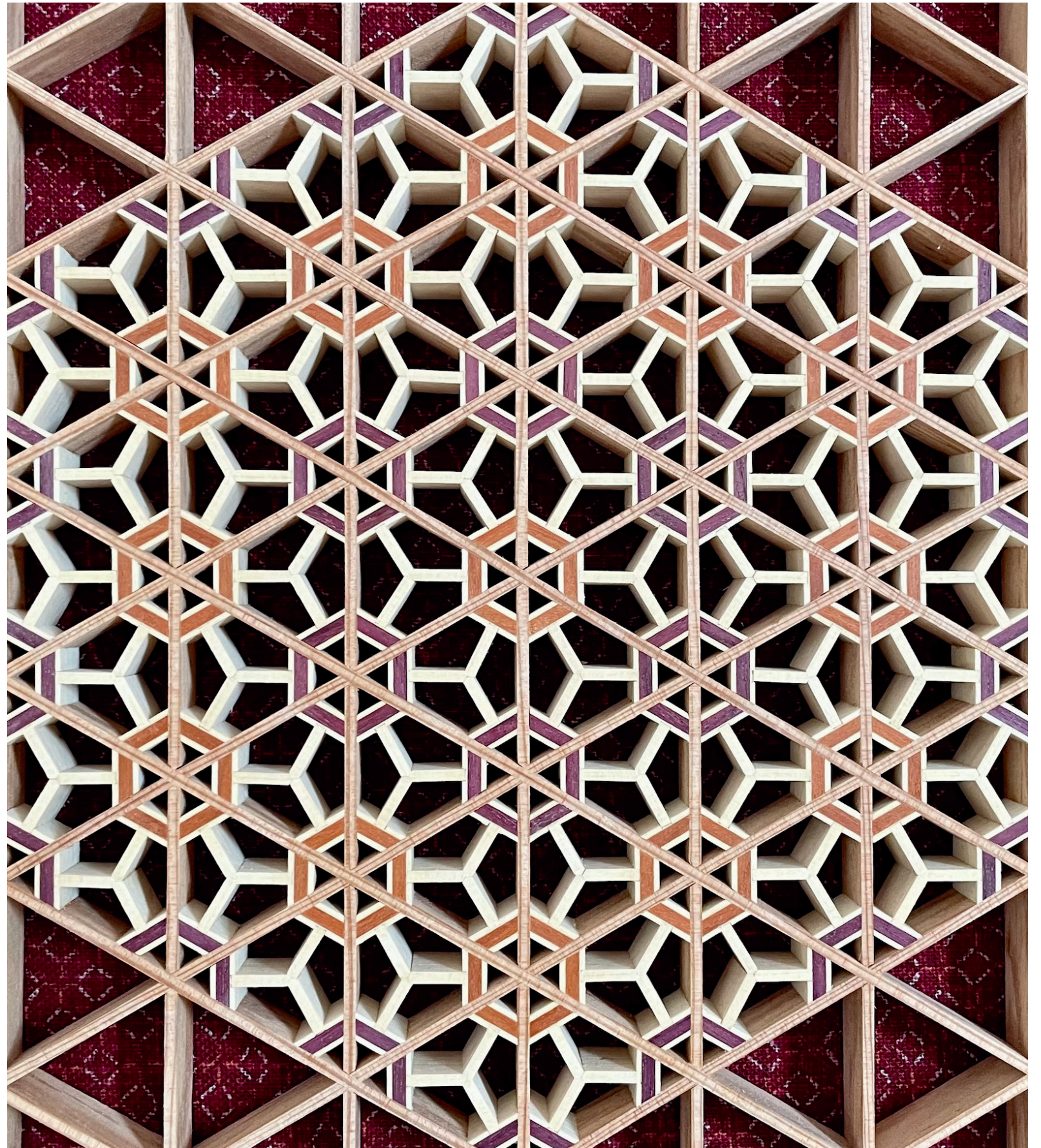


**Coffee and Tea**  
Futae Sakura (*double cherry blossom*), right panel; Dahlia (*dahlia flower*), left panel  
Alaskan cedar, redheart on mulberry paper, 8 × 15 inches each, 2020



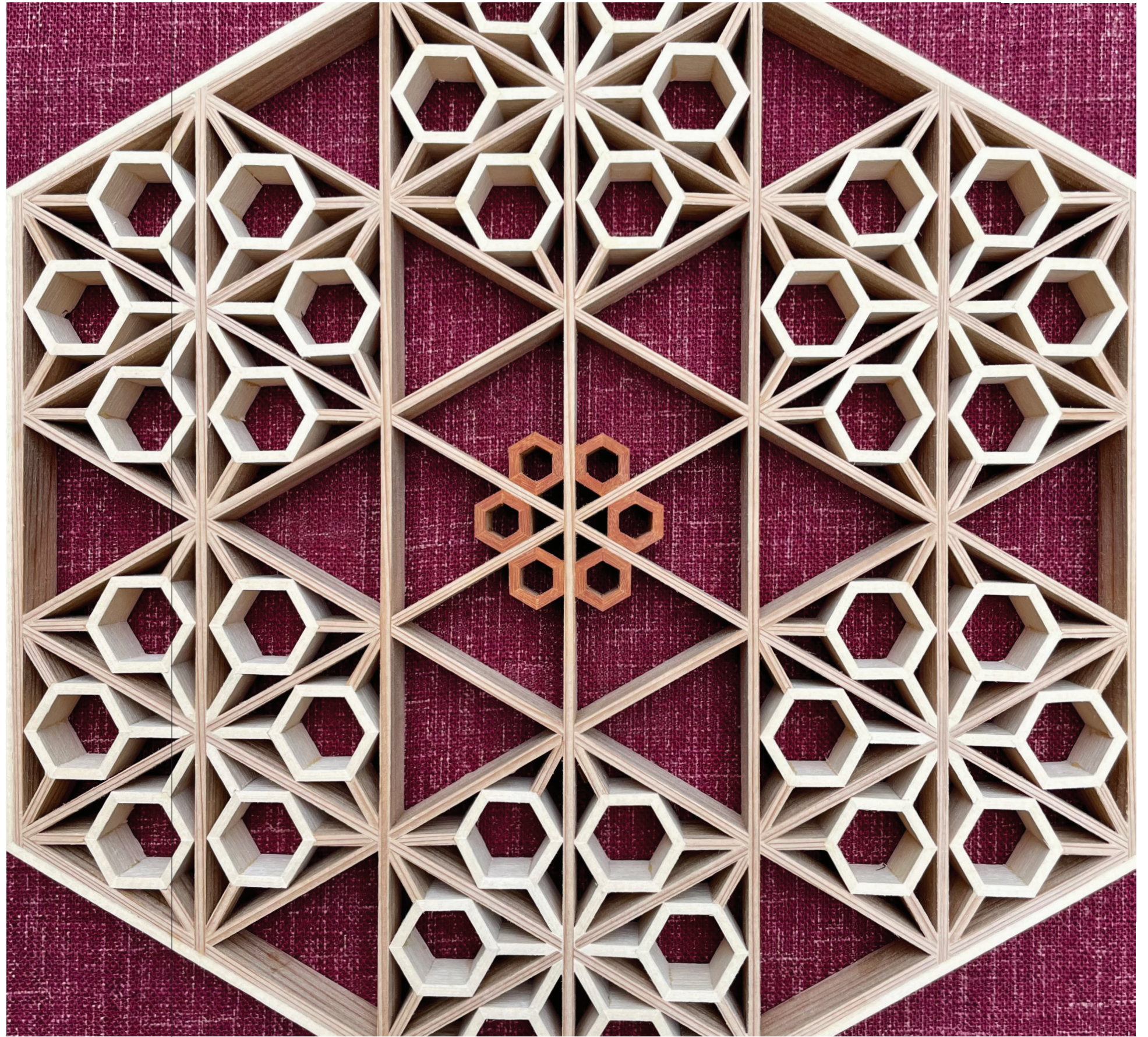
**Zakura**  
Sakura (*cherry blossom*), center; Original pattern, upper and lower  
Alaskan cedar, osage, redheart on cloth, 27 × 18 inches, 2023





**Purpose**  
Urahana (*hidden meaning*)  
Alaskan cedar, osage on cloth, 32 × 14 inches, 2022

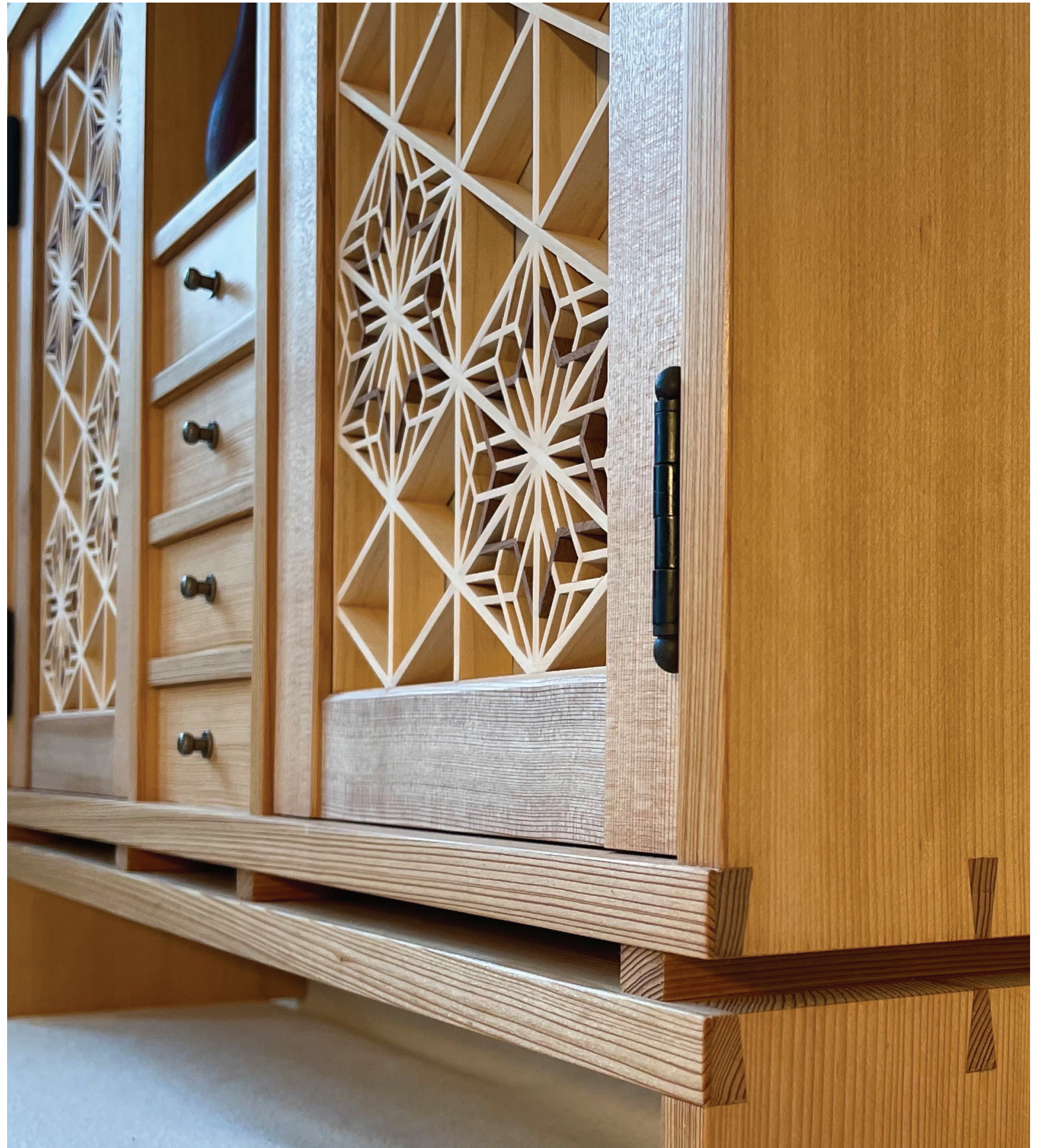




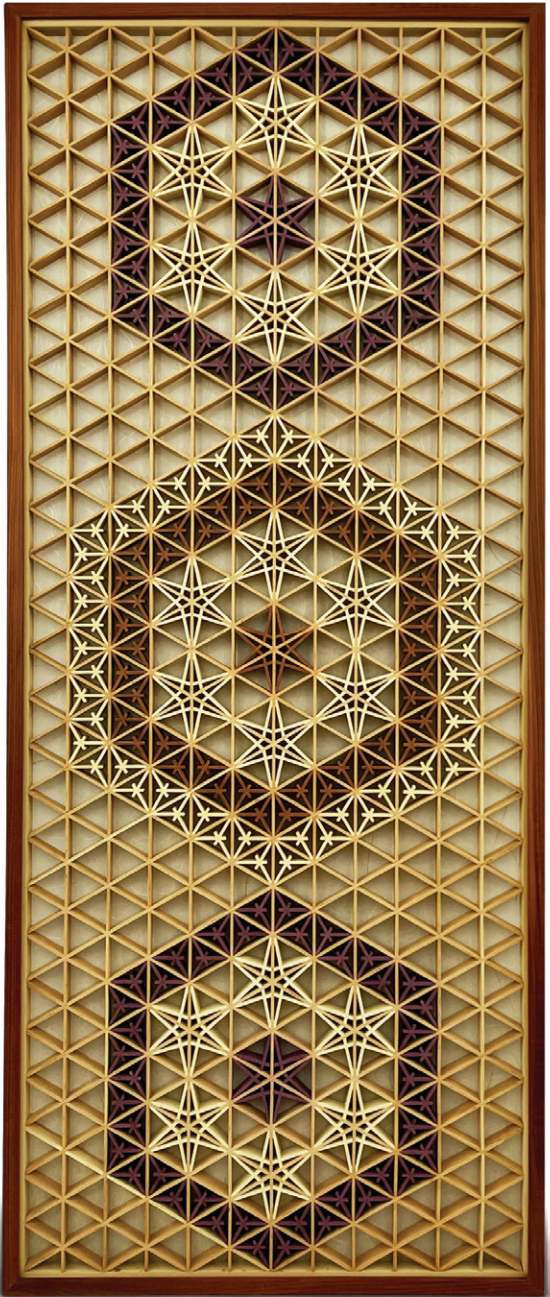
**Cabinet with Vases**  
Yae Asanoha (*layered hemp leaf*), upper; Yae Sakura (*double cherry blossom*), lower  
Alaskan cedar, Douglass fir, cypress, redheart, 15 × 27 × 6 inches, 2022



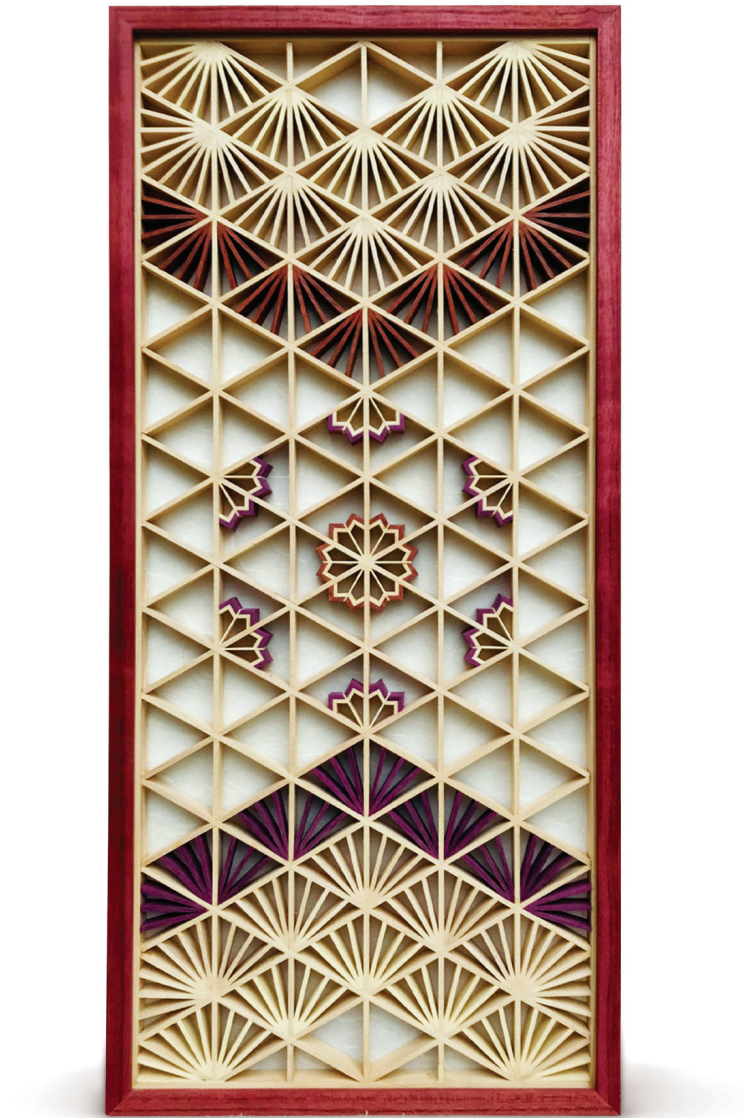




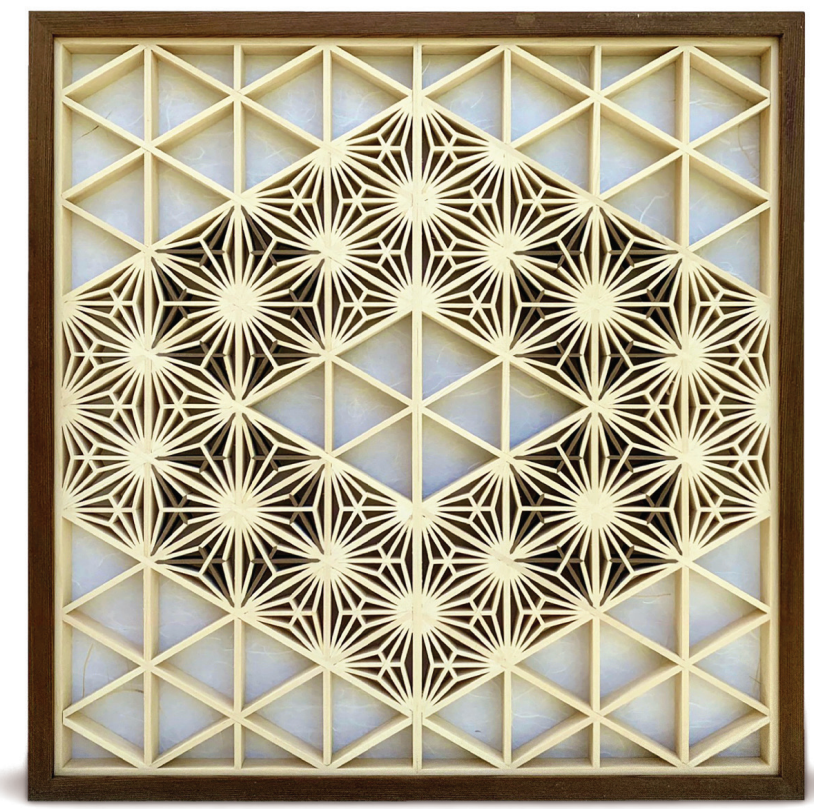
Untitled  
Kasane Rindo (*layered gentian*); Tsuno Asanoha (*horns*)  
Alaskan cedar, purpleheart, redheart on mulberry paper, 35 × 14 inches, 2021



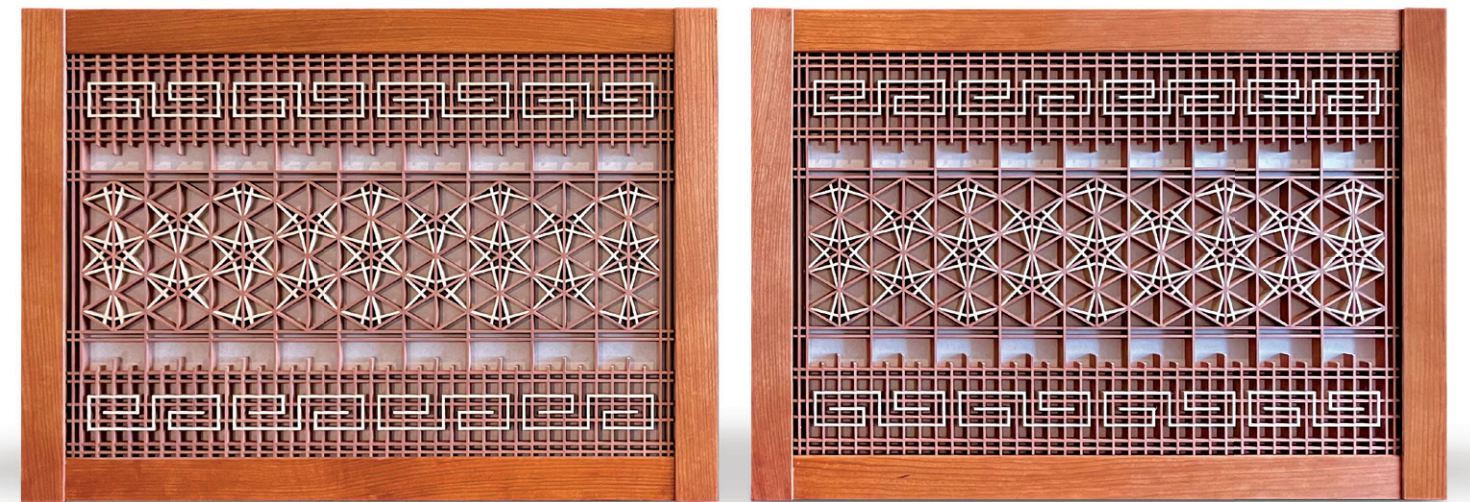
Untitled  
Rindo (*gentian flower*); Dahlia (*dahlia flower*)  
Alaskan cedar, Sitka spruce, purpleheart on mulberry paper, 20 × 9 inches, 2021



February  
Yae-asanoha (*layered hemp leaf*)  
Alaskan cedar, Western cedar on mulberry paper, 15 × 15 inches, 2021

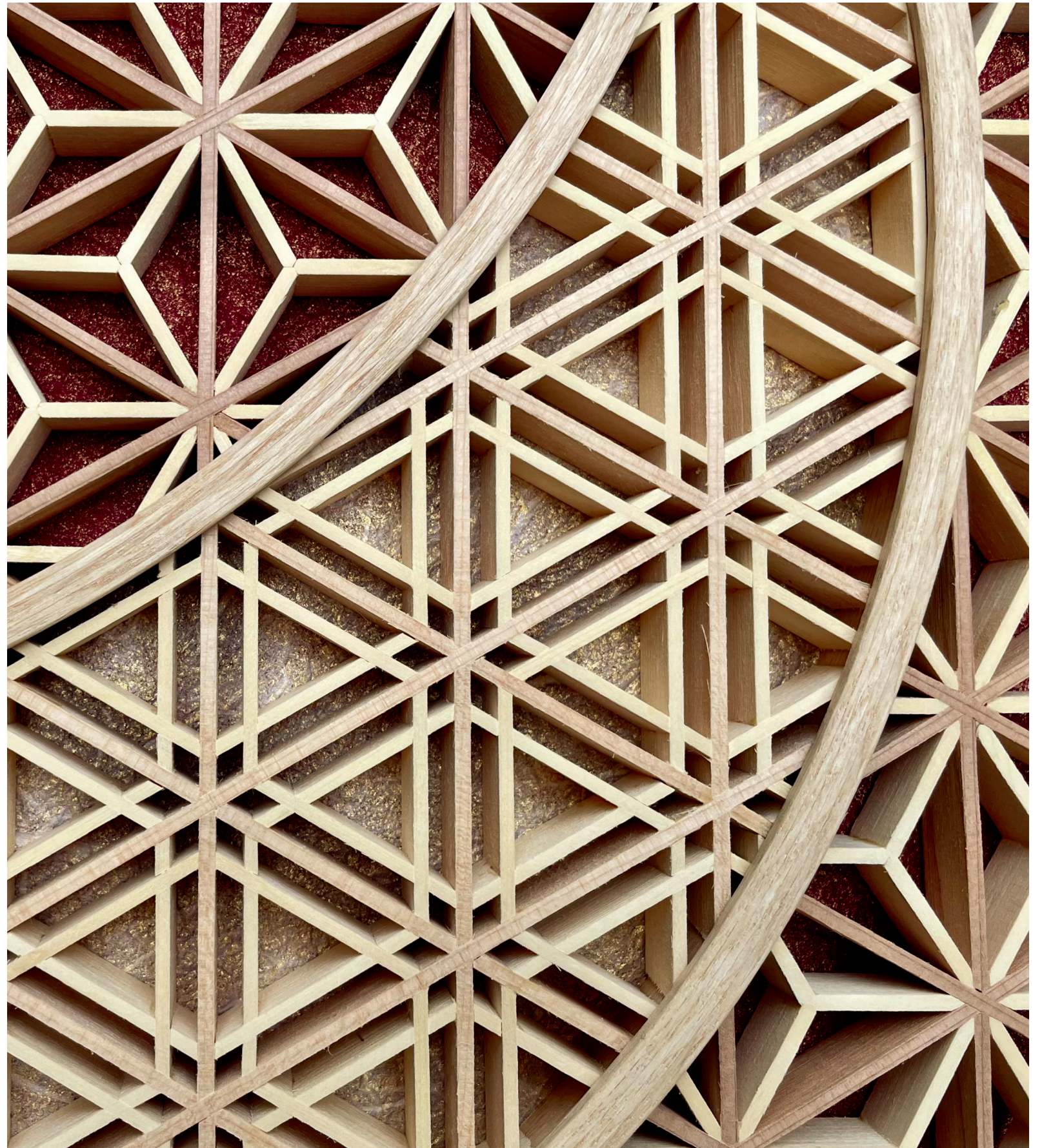


October  
Kasane Rindo (*layered gentian*)  
Alaskan cedar, Eastern cedar, cherry on mulberry paper, 20 × 14 inches each, 2021



**Hemp and Sesame**  
*Asanoha (hemp leaf); Goma (sesame flower)*  
Alaskan cedar, redheart on washi paper, 12 inches (circumference), 2023

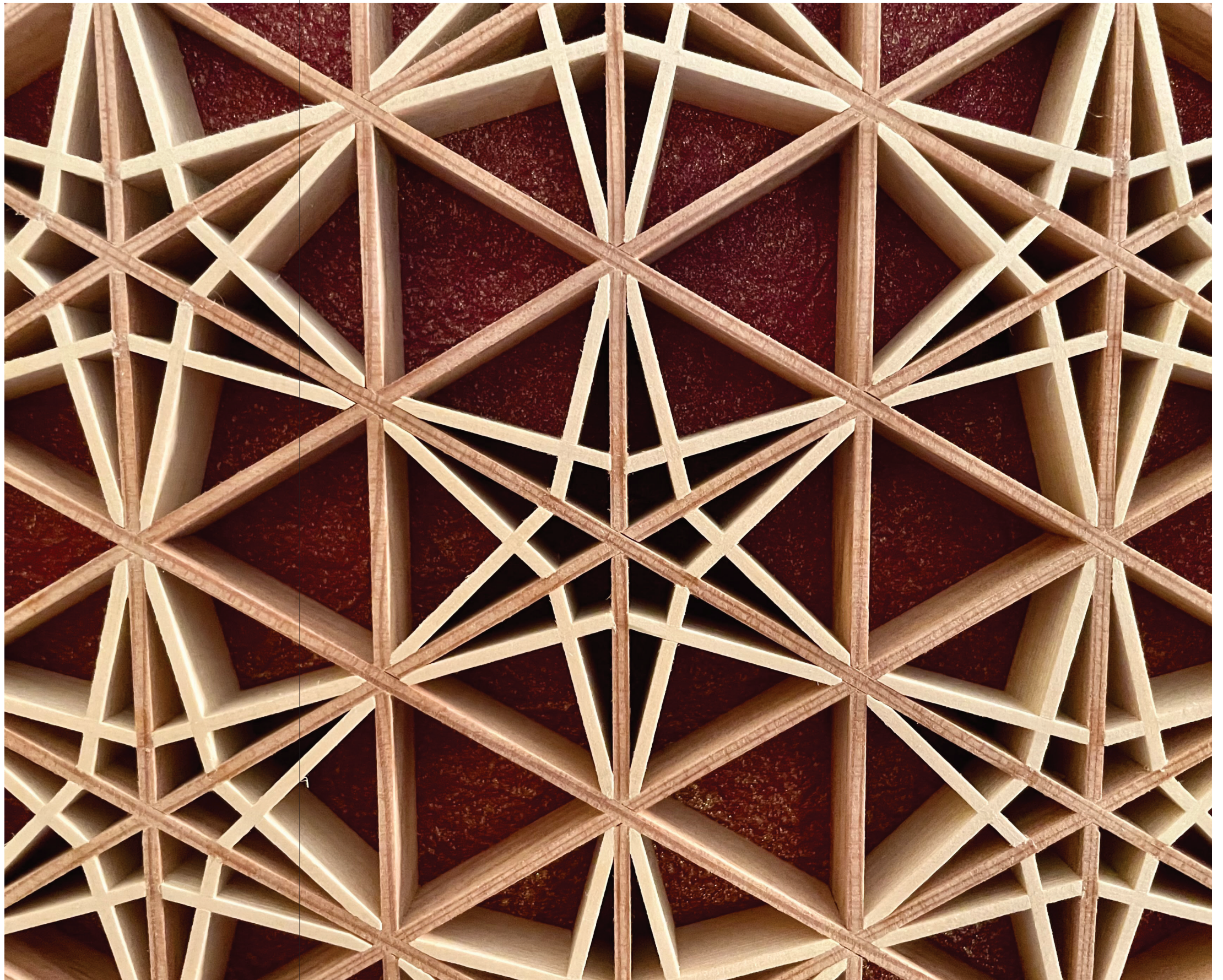




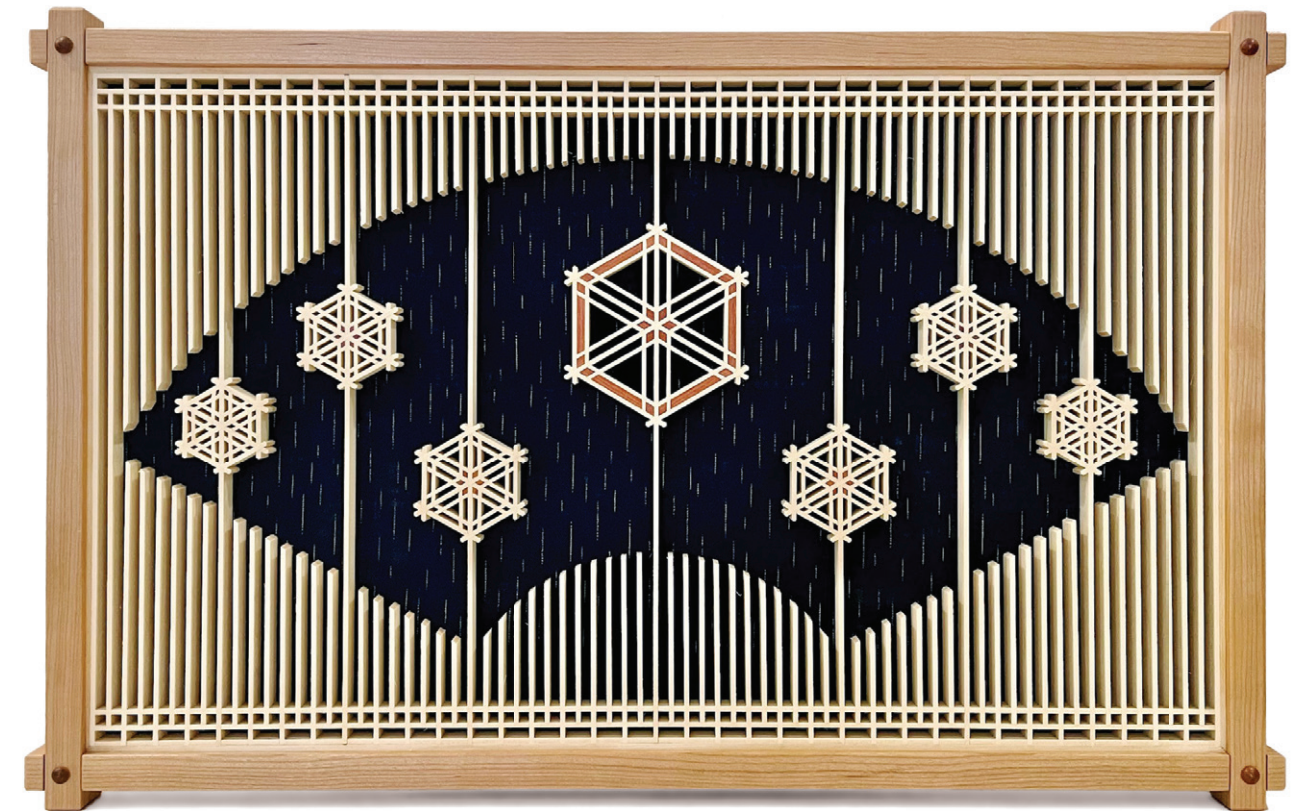
**Suspension**  
Kasane Rindo (*layered gentian*)  
Alaskan cedar, redheart on washi paper, 20 × 30 inches, 2023







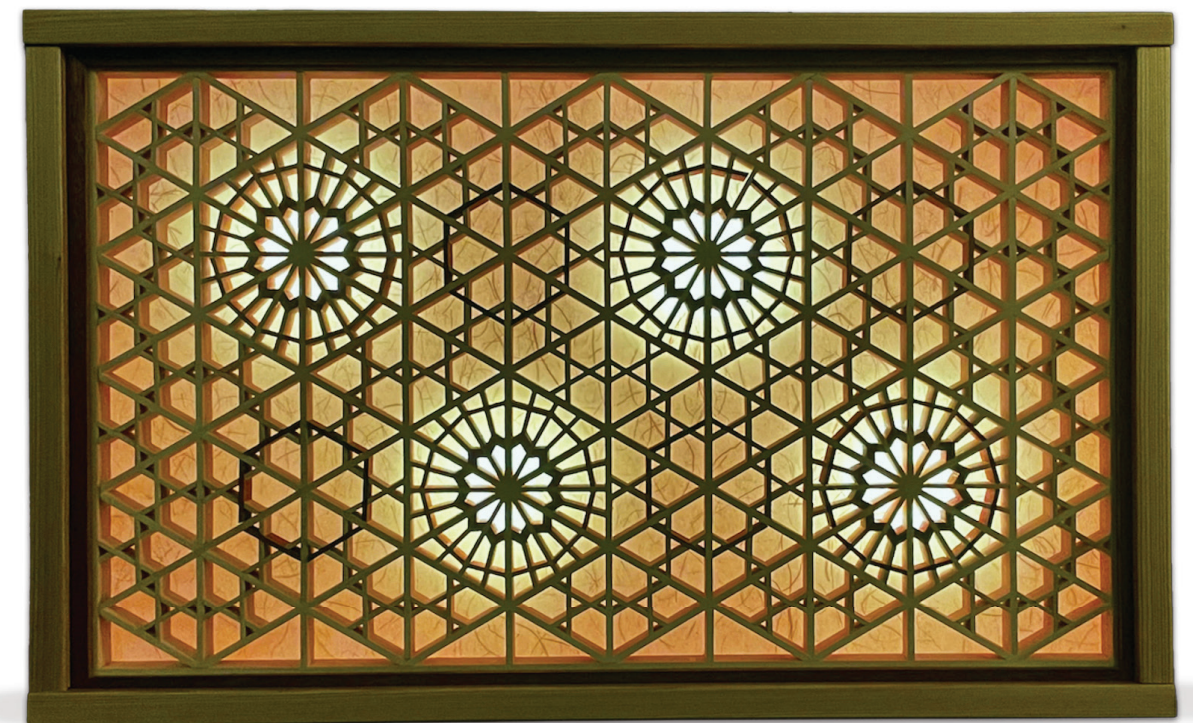
December  
Goma (*sesame flower*)  
Alaskan cedar, osage on cloth, 18 × 28 inches, 2022



Lightbox #2

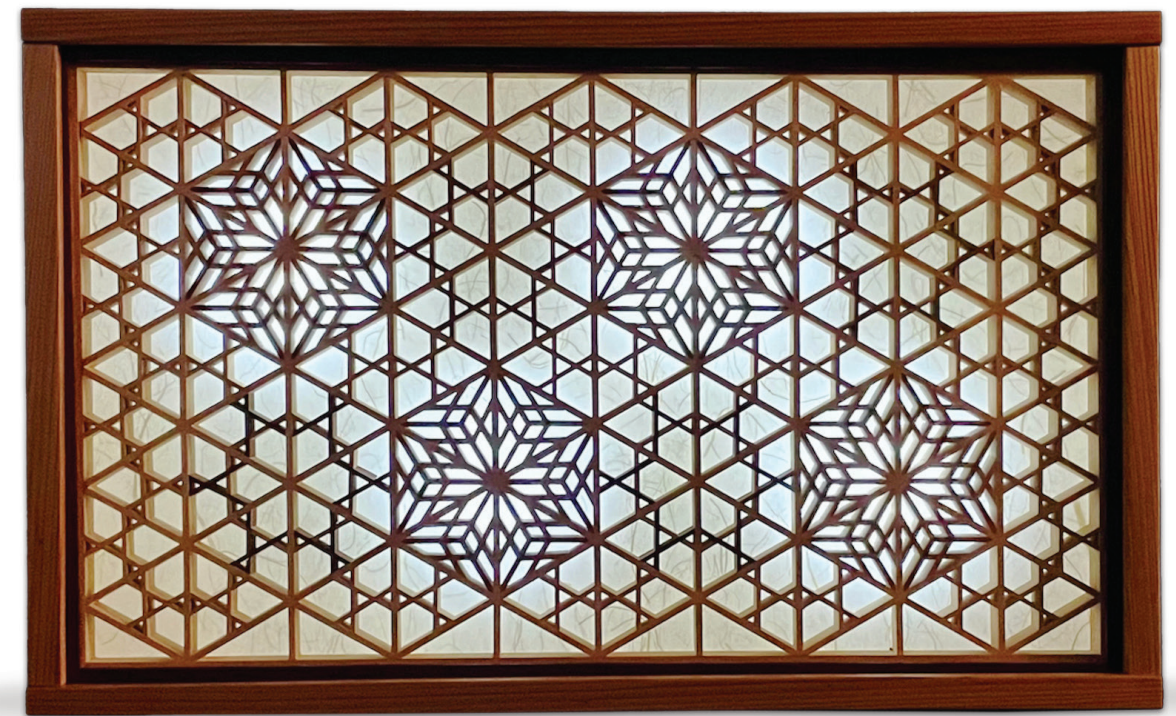
Dahlia (*dahlia flower*)

Alaskan yellow cedar, purpleheart on mulberry paper, LED lights, 11 × 19 × 3 inches, 2021





**Lightbox #3**  
Yae Sakura (*double cherry blossom*)  
Alaskan cedar, purpleheart on mulberry paper, LED lights, 11 × 19 × 3 inches, 2021

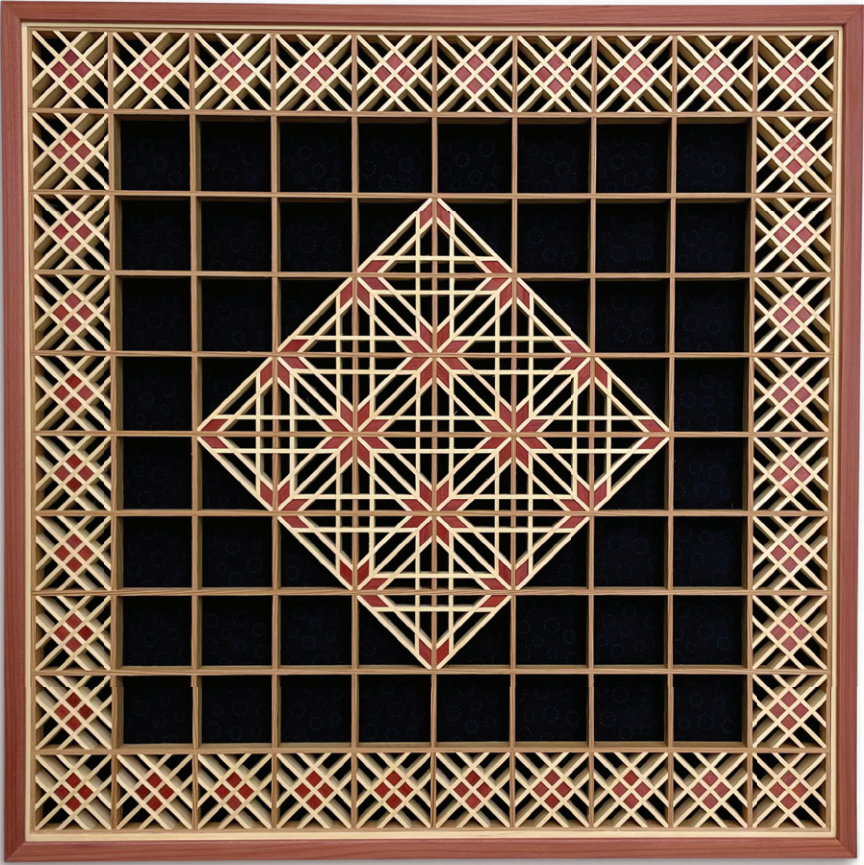




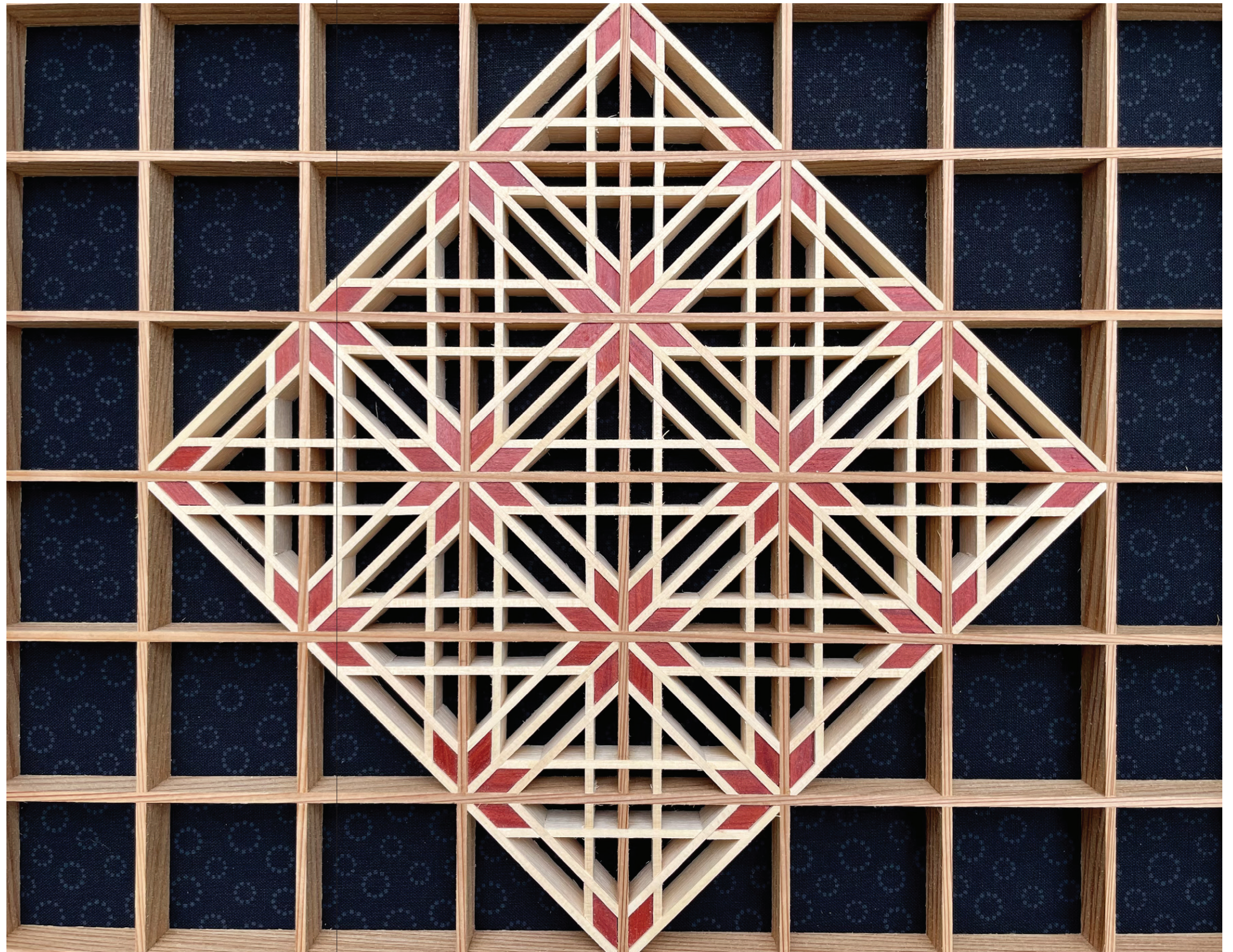
**Asanoha cabinet**  
Alaskan cedar, Western cedar, cherry, mulberry paper, 25 × 46 × 13 inches, 2021



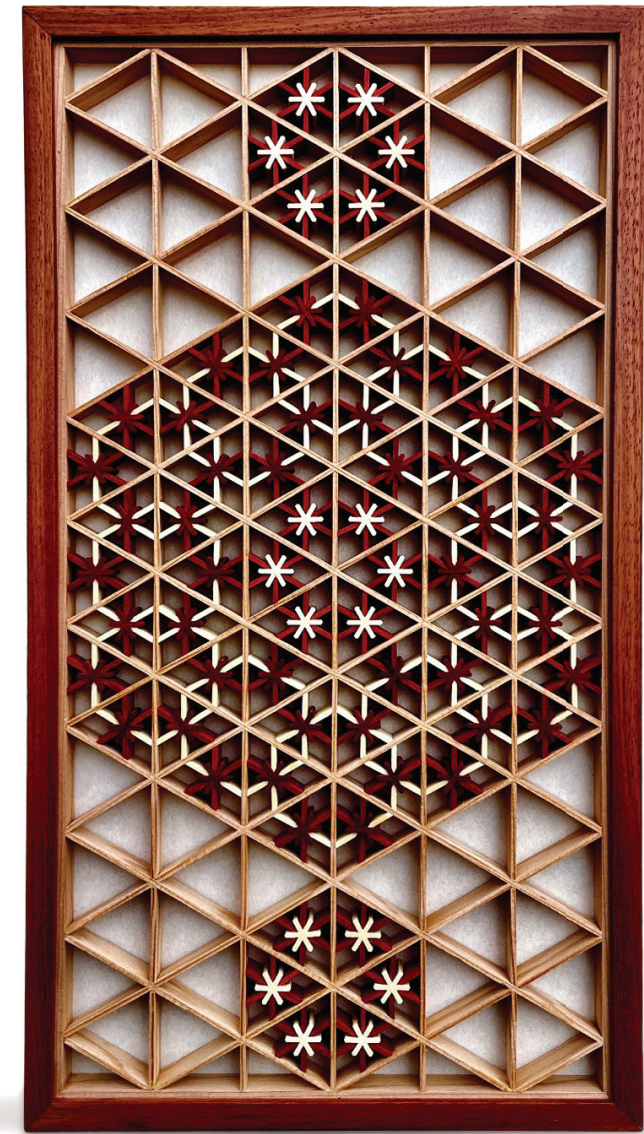
**Sugi (Cedar)**  
Goma-Gara (*sesame flower*), center; Masu-Tsunagi (*measuring cup*), border  
Alaskan cedar, redheart on cloth, 16 × 16 inches, 2023

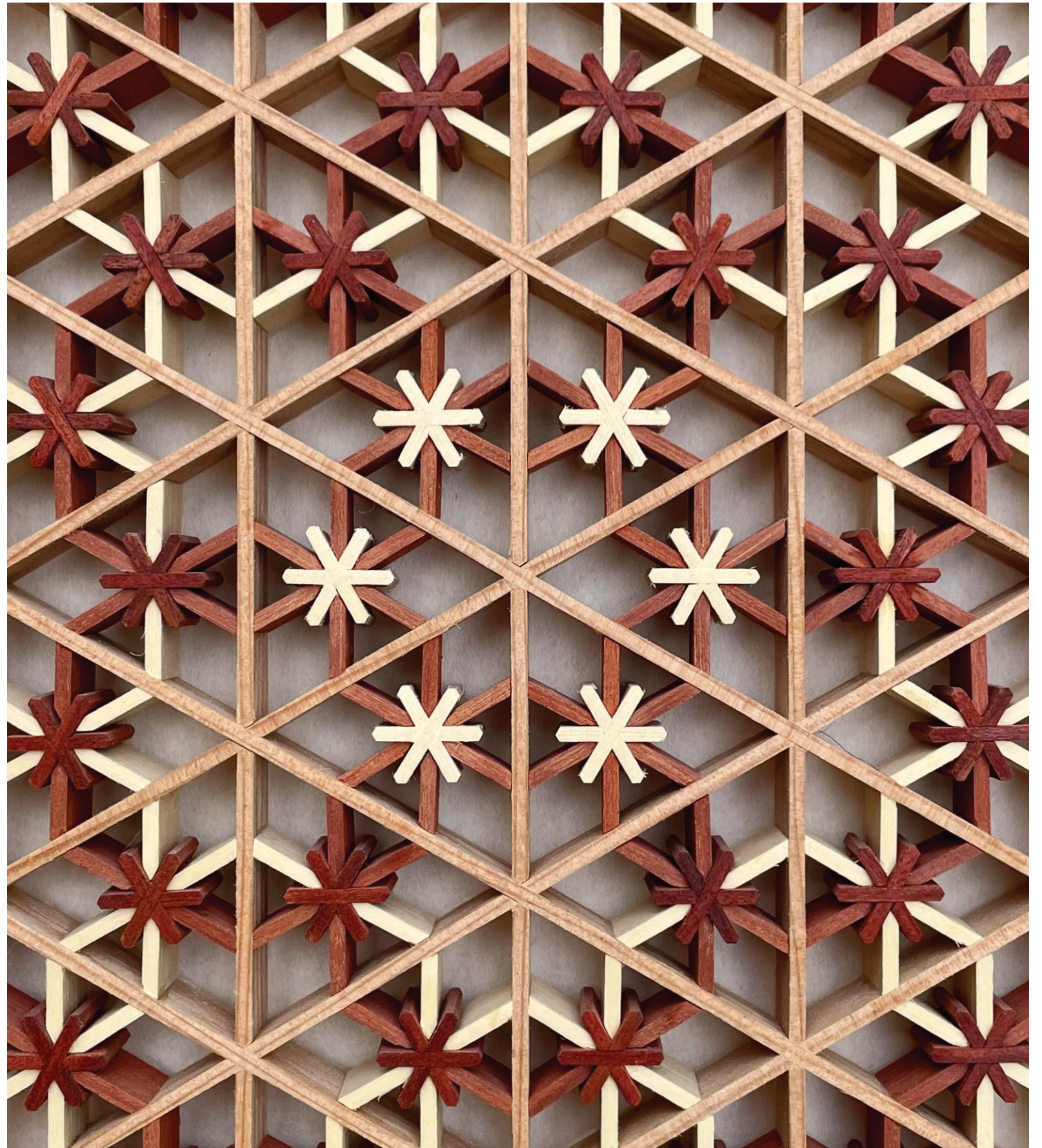




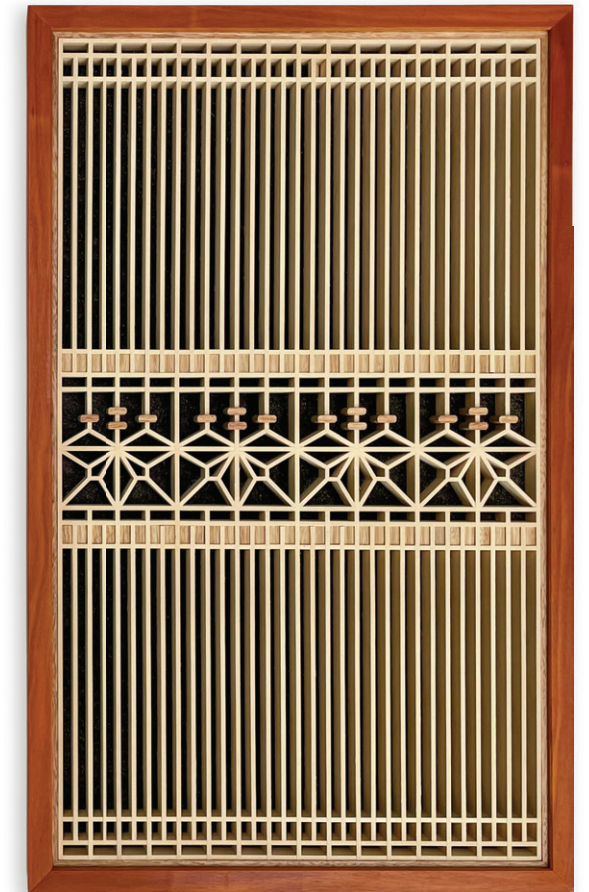


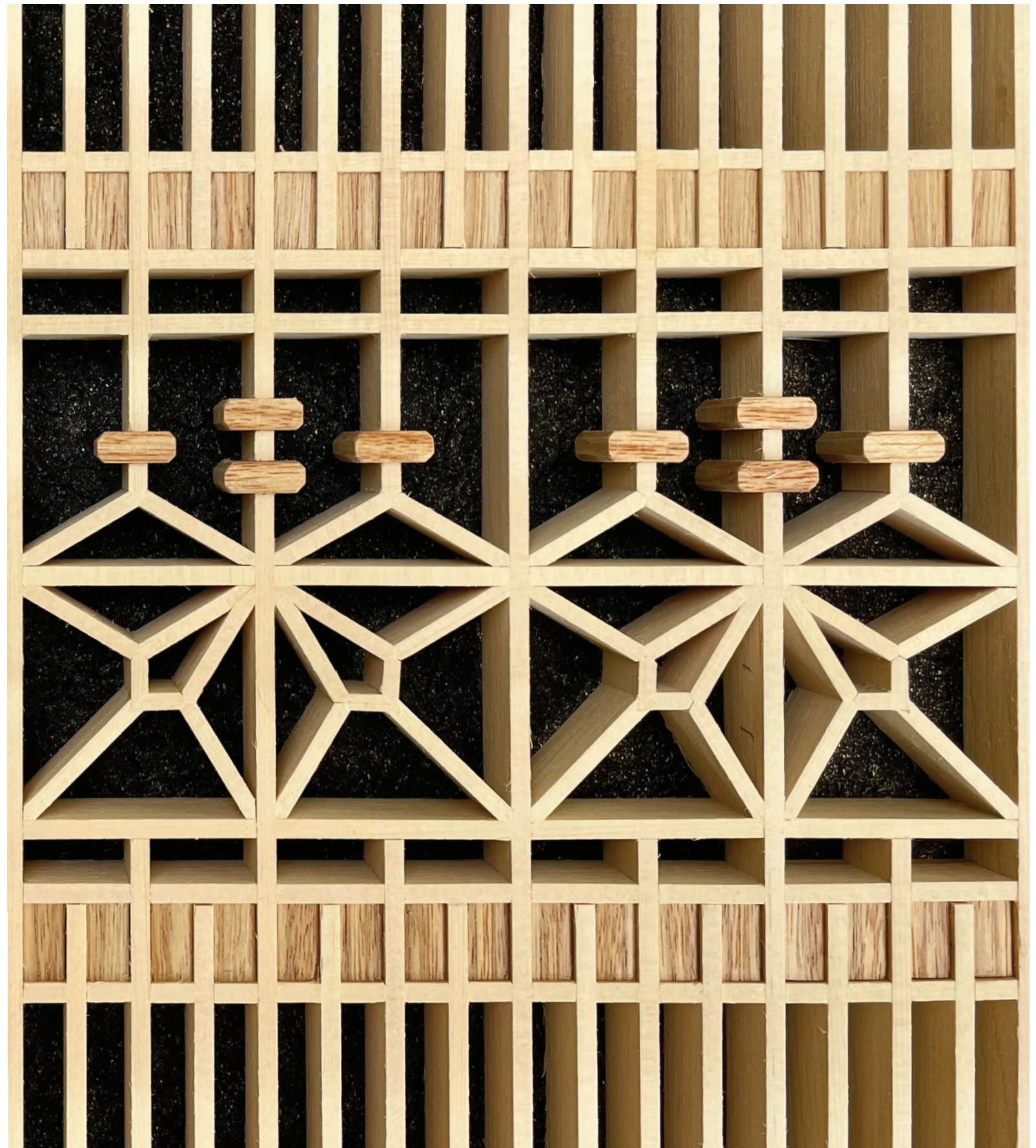
Pomegranate  
Unknown pattern  
Alaskan cedar, redheart on mulberry paper, 16 × 9 inches, 2023



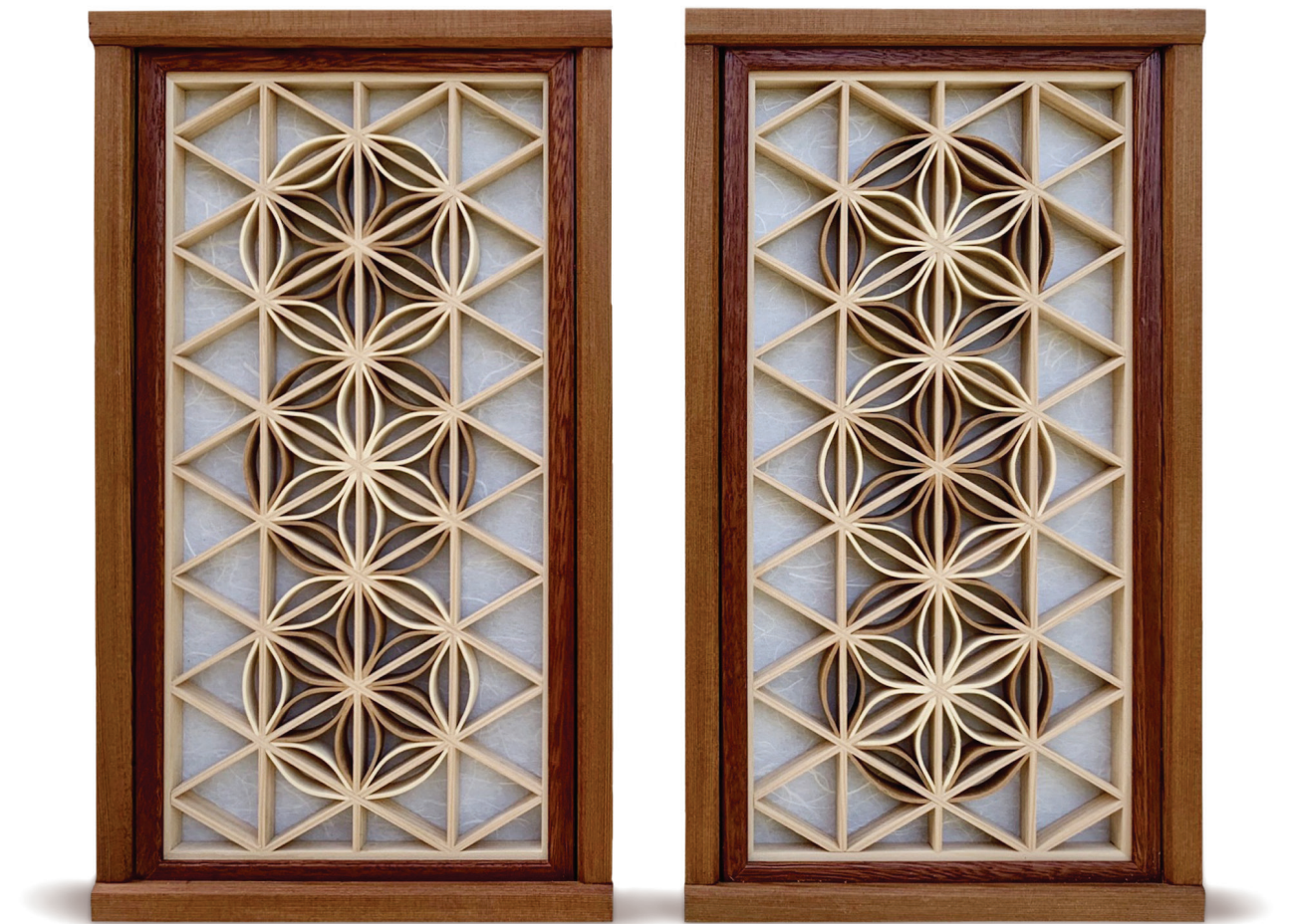


**Gateway**  
Kiri (*Palownia flower*)  
Alaskan cedar, osage on mulberry paper, 19 × 11 inches, 2023



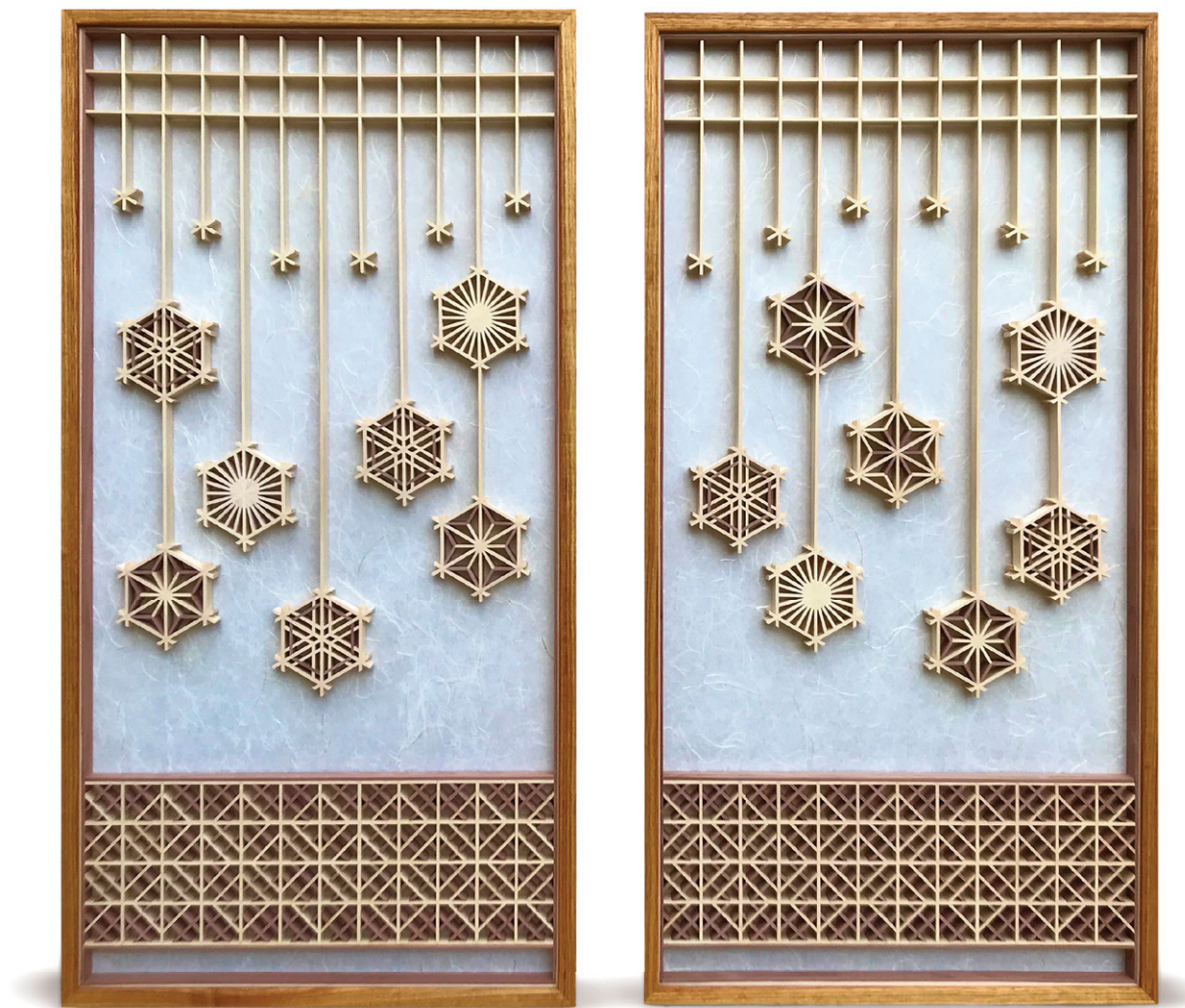


Lightbox #1  
Shippo (*seven treasures*)  
Alaskan cedar, Western cedar on mulberry paper, 16 × 9 inches, 2020





**January**  
Goma (*sesame flower*); Asanoha (*hemp leaf*); Rindo (*layered gentian*)  
Alaskan cedar, Western cedar on Mulberry paper, 25 × 13 each, 2020





**Small Cabinet**  
Shippo (*seven treasures*)  
Alaskan cedar, cherry, 33 × 30 × 10 inches, 2021



**Boxes for Mina and Amara**  
Dahlia (*dahlia flower*), Yae Sakura (*double cherry blossom*)  
Alaskan cedar, redheart, Western cedar on mulberry paper, 6 × 7 × 4 inches each, 2021





## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Originally from Rochester, NY, David Gootnick has lived in Boston, New York City, and currently resides in Washington, DC. David studied at the School for American Crafts in Rochester, NY, and was an apprentice to Donald Warnock, a master luthier in Princeton, Massachusetts. David later worked in the shops of Bernie Lehman and Curtis Bryant, both master luthiers and important mentors. David established his own studio in 2019.

David has a B.A. in Art History from Harvard University and an M.D. from the University of Rochester. He has worked as an emergency medicine physician, served as the Director of Medical Services at the Peace Corps, and as Director of International Affairs at the Government Accountability Office.



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