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Los Angeles has new library card art, and its star is a Dodgers fan

By CRAIG NAKANO APR 12, 2019 | 10:50 AM



A detail of the new Los Angeles Public Library Card featuring the artwork of Gajin Fujita. (Los Angeles Public Library)

The Los Angeles Public Library on Friday released a new card design: a mythological Japanese child of superhuman strength whose fiery red body is attired in Dodger blue.

The art is the work of [Gajin Fujita](#), a Los Angeles artist known for [merging contemporary street art](#) with the centuries-old style of Japanese [ukiyo-e woodblock prints](#). His card artwork centers on Kintaro, the folklore character also known as Golden Boy, usually depicted wearing a bib with the kanji character for gold. "I gave him a twist," Fujita said.



The new Los Angeles Public Library card features a detail of the Gajin Fujita painting "Guardian Angel." (Los Angeles Public Library)

The new library card will be available at all 73 LAPL locations "while supplies last," officials said, declining to state a specific number. The Kintaro design is the library's second limited-edition card; the first was by Shepard Fairey and Cleon Peterson and released in 2016.

Fujita said the imagery comes from a painting titled "Guardian Angel" that he created a few years ago but that had languished unsold. It eventually went on view at the Los Angeles Municipal Gallery, run by the Department of Cultural Affairs, where library marketing chief Peter Persic saw it, Fujita said.

Library cards typically feature horizontal imagery, so in order to get a good eye-blacked face, the new design will be the rare card with vertical imagery.

For Fujita, 47, an Otis College of Art and Design graduate who grew up in Boyle Heights and recalled going to the local public library as a boy to look at art books, the card represents something of a full circle.

“Those were the first moments in my life where I could feel myself in another world,” he said in an interview. “That was the beginning of a stirring of my imagination.”

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