

RISD MUSEUM

Expanding the Surface: Multiple-Panel Prints in Edo-Period Japan,

September 8, 2006-December 10, 2006

In Edo-period Japan (1603-1867), printmaking was a serious commercial venture as well as an artistic undertaking. In the printer's workshop, speed and efficiency were essential for cost-effective production. To facilitate this process, images were usually printed from a set of carved woodblocks of the same size onto a standard-size sheet of paper. These precut sheets were cut from larger standard-size sheets, making the process of paper production simpler. Toward the end of the 18th century, artists began to combine two or more sheets to expand the surface area available for their compositions. This innovation made possible sweeping designs of panoramic landscape views and more elaborate figural arrangements. The examples in this gallery illustrate how Japanese printmakers learned to manipulate the multiple-panel format to unify and dramatize their subjects. Most striking, of course, are the two vertical prints, both by Kunichika. The Toyohiro pentatych (five-panel print) exhibited in the case is a much earlier experiment in a horizontal multipaneled format. Contemporary with Toyohiro's small-scale panoramic view is Eizan's Fashionable Winding-Water Banquet, which creates a sense of deep spatial recession. Shigekatsu isolates each of his three kabuki actors within a single panel, utilizing a typical compositional device to monumentalize them against a plain background. In yet another compositional variation, Eisen's triptych depicts a densely crowded street scene, where the perspective frames and emphasizes recession into space. Landscape subjects were effective on the grander scale as well. The visual impact of these powerful designs is a clear indication of the resilience and creativity of Japanese printmakers. This exhibition is a telling example of how these artists constantly revitalized their tradition through innovations in format, composition, and subject.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Dai Xi, Japanese

Gayuken Shunsei, Japanese

*Scrapbook album of Onoe Tamizō II of Osaka (nidai Onoe Tamizō)
(1799-1886), mid 1820s*

Polychrome wood block print

Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.1054



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Kikukawa Eizan, Japanese, 1787-1867

Sanoya Kihei, Japanese

Fashionable Winding-Water Banquet (Furyu kyokusui no en), 1810s

Three-paneled polychrome woodblock print

Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.1062



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858

Fujiokaya Keijiro, Japanese

Hiroshige III, Japanese, 1843-1894

Iris garden at Horikiri in the eastern capital (Toto meisho horikiri no hana shobu; Sumida sekiya no sato koumedera ko no mukae fukei miharu), 1852

Polychrome woodblock print

Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.2330



Toyohara Kunichika, Japanese, 1835-1900

Fukuda Kumajiro, Japanese

Nakamura Shikan as Hige no Ikyu, Ichikawa Danjuro IX as

Hanakawado Sukeroku and Nakamura Fukusuke as Miuraya no Agemaki in the play Edo zakura (Edo cherry blossoms), April 1896

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Roger S. Keyes and Elizabeth Coombs 1997.90.9



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Toyohara Kunichika, Japanese, 1835-1900

The sinking of the steamship off Kii Province: The actors Ichikawa Danjuro IX as Kondo Tatsuo and Ichikawa Sadanji as Mikura Tomizo, 1887

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Roger S. Keyes and Elizabeth Coombs 1998.72.5



Utagawa Kunimasa, Japanese, 1848-1920

Morimoto Etsusaburo

The scene of the steamship sinking off the coast of Kii Province: the actors Ichikawa Danjuro IX as Kyoshi Kondo Tatsuo and Ichikawa Sadanji as Mikura Tomizo, 1887

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Roger S. Keyes and Elizabeth Coombs 1998.72.6



Toyohiro Utagawa, Japanese, 1773-1828

Parody of the Korean ambassador's procession (Mitate chosen tsushinshi), 1810s

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1159



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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Kichizō Tsutaya, Japanese
Moon reflected in the rice fields at Sarashina, Shinano Province
(*Shinshu sarashina tagoto no tsuki*), 1853
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1294



Toyohara Kunichika, Japanese, 1835-1900
Fukuda Kumajiro, Japanese
Umezawa to
Actors Onoe Kikugoro V as Okiku and Ichikawa Danjuro IX as Asayama Tessan in The Mansion of Plates and the Cursed Makeup Mirror
(*Sarayashiki kesho no sugatami*), 1892
Polychrome woodblock print
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2003.39.5



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Shigekatsu, Japanese

Tani Seiko, Japanese

Nakamura Utaemon III as Matsuomaru, Arashi Raishi II as Umeomaru and Onoe Kikugoro III as Sakuramaruin the scene "Pulling the carriage apart" (Kuruma biki) from the play Sugawara's secrets of calligraphy (Sugawara denju tenarai kagami), 1826

Polychrome woodblock print with embossing

Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2004.1



Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, Japanese, 1839-1892

Nichiren Prays for the Restless Spirit of the Cormorant Fisherman at the Isawa River, 1885

Polychrome woodblock print

Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2005.68



Keisai Eisen, Japanese, 1790-1848

Picture of the Kanzeon Raijin Gate at the Kinryuzan Sensoji Temple in Edo (Edo Kinryuzan Sensoji Kanzeon Raijinmon no zu), late 1820s

Three-paneled polychrome woodblock print

Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2006.1



Sadaoka Gakutei, Japanese, 1786?-1868

Doll on a Stand, probably made for the Doll Festival in 1822

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of George Pierce Metcalf 56.039.39



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Sadaoka Gakutei, Japanese, 1786?-1868
Glass Wine Jar, probably made for the Dolls Festival, spring 1822
Polychrome woodblock print with metallic embellishment
Gift of George Pierce Metcalf 56.039.85



Chikanobu Toyohara, Japanese, 1838-1912
Tsutsumi Kichibei, Japanese
Yamada Yukimoto, Japanese
Battle at Shizugatake: Kato Toranosuke and Yamaji Shogen
(*Shizugatake kassen: Kato Toranosuke Yamaji Shogen*), ca. 1897
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Paula and Leonard Granoff 85.197.13



Chikanobu Toyohara, Japanese, 1838-1912
The tea ceremony and flower arranging (Chanoyu kiribana), Women's quarters of Edo Castle, 1880s
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Paula and Leonard Granoff 85.197.14

