EXPOSITION OF JAPANESE PRINTS

AT THE QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY, JANUARY 1971

in conjunction with

THE 28TH WORLD CONGRESS OF ORIENTALISTS, CANBERRA

Featuring an Exhibition of Japanese Fabrics with a display of Ikebana and other Oriental objets d'art

January, 1971.

This Exposition of Japanese wood-block prints featuring the development of the *ukiyoe* tradition has been arranged to coincide with various presentations of oriental art by other State Galleries, in conjunction with the 28th World Congress of Orientalists held in Canberra this month.

Particular thanks are due to Professor Joyce Ackroyd of the Department of Japanese Language and Literature of the University of Queensland, for her selection and classification of the prints, and also for her recent visits on behalf of the Gallery to the Honolulu Academy of Arts, and the Adachi Institute, Tokyo, in order to obtain material for this Exposition.

The loan of prints, wood-blocks and specimen costume fabrics from the Honolulu Academy and that wood-blocks and an inking *'baren'* from the Adachi Institute, Tokyo, are gratefully acknowledged.

Thanks are also due to Miss Cecelia McNally for her loan of Chinese scrolls and to Mrs. M. Healy for her presentation of *Ikebana*.

It is hoped that this Exposition will prove informative to all who have some interest in this particular Japanese art form which reveals so much of the Japanese temperament and social history.

Raoul Mellish,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

THE UKIYOE PRINT

The *ukiyoe* wood-block print developed in Japan about the middle of the 17th century.

Ukiyoe (approximate pronunciation oo-kee-yoh-eh) means "pictures of the floating, i.e. fleeting world". The term *ukiyoe* derived originally from the Buddhist conception of phenomenal existence as a transient period of suffering, a world of illusion. A shift of meaning, based on the implied connotation of fickleness, led to emphasis on the hedonistic undertones, and from about 1680 on, a special sense developed, viz.: "the fashionable world", "the pleasures of the flesh" - specifically the money-squandering sensation-seeking life of the rich merchant and other townsmen of the late 16th to the mid 19th century.

During this time, Japan, after centuries of civil warfare, was united and ruled by a succession of brilliant generals. The third of these founded a dynasty which endured from 1603 to 1868. Under this family, the Tokugawa, the dominant warrior classes were congregated in castle towns, and big cities like Kyōto, Ōsaka, and particularly Edo (present Tōkyō), the seat of government, attracted a large population of merchants and artisans to supply the needs of the warrior rulers. As these classes grew in wealth, they created their own special culture, borrowing standards of conduct, taste, and affluence from their masters, but centred round the Kabuki theatre and the gay quarters. A demand for literature and art reflecting this culture naturally accompanied its growth. This activity first flourished mainly in Kyōto but after about 50 years, Edo became more important, and the *ukiyoe* print is chiefly associated with the capital. It must be remembered, however, that prints were produced in other important cities as well.

THE UKIYOE SCHOOL

A *ukiyoe* or genre school of <u>painting</u> had grown in vigour from about 1680, the favourite subjects being people at their occupations, festivals, outings, and (from the 17th century on) beautiful girls.

This school of painting employed styles developed by the two classic schools of Japanese painting, one of which followed a purely native tradition and one of which incorporated mannerisms and techniques borrowed from Chinese painting. Paintings on silk were expensive, but a demand for pin-ups, post-cards, and posters illustrating the actors and courtesans arose and increased. The solution was found in the wood-block printing process already developed to a high standard in the production of books. When genre art was produced by wood-block printing, these techniques formed the basis of the designer's treatment.

WOOD-BLOCK PRINTING

Wood-block printing originated in China, and was transmitted to Japan via Korea. Japanese wood-block printed religious texts survive from the 8th century. The late 12th century has bequeathed wood-cuts of genre subjects on fan-shaped papers inscribed with Buddhist sutras, while between 1391 and 1414 a block-printed history of a Buddhist sect was illustrated by wood-cuts, each several feet in length.

At the beginning of the 17th century a great desire for education was manifested by the lesser-ranking warrior classes, and the merchants and artisans, so that wood-block printing of classic and popular literature began to flourish. Wood-block illustrations were soon added, and about the middle of the 17th century, the idea was hit on of issuing pictures separately.

THE WOOD-BLOCK TECHNIQUE

The technique of the wood-block print gradually grew more sophisticated. At first, prints were simply black-and-white, like book illustrations. These were called *sumi-zuri-e* (black ink-rubbed pictures). See No. 1.

But soon there was a demand for colour. About the beginning of the 18th century a yellow or orange colour was added by hand, the term *tan-e* (red lead picture) being employed. See No. 2.

By the 1720's other colours like pink and green were also used, these pictures being termed *beni-e* (rouge pictures).

When the black ink was mixed with glue to give a lacquer-like sheen, the word *urushi-e* (lacquer picture) was used. See No. 3.

Colour-printing, invented in China in the 16th century, was introduced into Japan in 1634, but the technique was not applied to popular prints, probably for cost reasons, till the late 1730's. Pink and green were used first, the result being called *beni-zuri-e*, (rouge-rubbed pictures). See No. 4. A separate block was cut for each colour. Accurate register was obtained by guide marks on the right-hand corner and the bottom.

In 1765 the polychrome print *nishiki-e* (brocade picture) appeared. See No. 5.

As time went on many subtle effects were gained by embossing (or relief), blind printing (or indentation), sizing over colour and sprinkling mica, brass, or copper dust, gradation of colour or colour blending on flat blocks, frottage and so on.

THE PROCESS

The traditional print was the work of three men: the designer-artist, the wood-block carver, and the printer. Over them stood the publisher, often himself a very cultivated man, who gauged the public taste and sought out talent.

THE ARTIST AND HIS DESIGN

The artist first collected his basic sketches, then composed and sketched his design, made corrections, and then produced the finished line-drawing in black and white.

This was carefully pasted face down on the key-block, and the back surface-rubbed off to expose the design through the back more clearly.

The lines were then cut in relief, and the unwanted areas cleared.

A number of impressions of the key-block were then taken. This number was determined by the number of colours to be used. The artist then indicated in red on each impression the areas to be printed in that particular colour. See Exhibit A. The colour blocks were then carved, and an artist's proof printed.

The artist adjusted the colours to his liking, faults in carving were corrected, and the print went into production.

THE WOOD-BLOCK

Cherry was the wood most generally used, cut vertically, not horizontally, from the tree trunk, so that the carver worked <u>with</u>, not <u>across</u> the grain. The blocks were seasoned for several years, then planed six times to produce a smooth surface.

Especially hard and therefore heavy wood with a straight, close grain was used for the key-block, but softer though close grained types were preferred for colour-blocks.

A cherry-wood block could be used for more than 10,000 impressions.

THE CARVERS

The chief carver concentrated on the fine work required in heads, hair and faces. His subordinate carver cut the bodies and other parts of the design, while apprentices were permitted only to "clear" or cut away the unwanted parts of the surface.

The carving was a highly skilled work, the craftsman could produce lines much finer than the brush strokes of the artist's brush. See Exhibit B.

The lines were cut to an even depth, then intervening spaces cleared away, starting from the outside and ending up at the lines. See Exhibit C. The carver used a special tool for cutting the *kentō* or register guide, a right angle at the lower right hand corner and a straight one near the lower left hand corner.

In the colour blocks, the detail for each particular colour was carved in relief within a trough.

THE TOOLS

These included a knife (for cutting the lines), plus veiners, gouges, scrapers, and flat chisels used with the mallet (for clearing between the lines). See Exhibit D, and whetstones of varying surface grades.

THE PAPER

Japanese hand-made paper made of plant fibres, e.g. *mitsumata* and a kind of mulberry, etc. was used. Its absorbency was controlled (a) by sizing with a mixture of glue and alum, and (b) damping to a degree carefully maintained throughout the process.

THE PRINTER

The beauty of the final print depended to an even greater extent on the printer than in the carver, though his status was not so high.

THE TOOLS

The printer's brushes were made of horsehair or bamboo. The horsehair brushes included shapes varying from that of a boot-brush, to that of a house-painter's brushes, and a fine Japanese-style writing brush. The bamboo brush looked a little like a miniature witch's broom. See Exhibit E.

The *baren*, or pressing pad, was round in shape and made of paper and bamboo. The sheath of a species of bamboo grown in Kyushu was softened by soaking in water, air-dried, scraped, split into thin strips, and plaited into cords, and then replaited and replaited, alternatively clockwise and anti-clockwise until an 8, 12 or 16-ply cord was obtained. This was formed into a flat spiral and fitted into a shallow-rimmed laminated disk of compressed paper of a special kind, thicker at the centre than at the circumference. The disk and spiral were then wrapped in a large piece of softened bamboo sheath or husk with tapered ends. The centre part was stretched firmly over the cord-spiral, with the disk inverted, and snugly up round the rim of the disk. Each tapered end in turn was pleated into a twist, which was reinforced by a role of bamboo-husk. These twists were then tied across the back of the *baren* with twine. See Exhibit F.

THE COLOURS

These were mineral and vegetable pigments soluble in water. Among them may be mentioned:

SUMI or BLACK	soot from the smoke of fresh pine needles mixed with glue.
WHITE	ground sea shells and glue.
BENI	safflower and plum
TAN	lead, salt-petre and sulphur
INDIGO	from the indigo plant

The colours were mixed on the block with paste made from rice soaked in water, pounded, and boiled till it became translucent, stirred and strained.

The pigment was placed on the block, with the bamboo brush and a drop of paste added, and then pigment and paste were brushed into the block with the appropriate horse-hair brush.

For gradation printing, the block was first rubbed with a wet cloth. The paper was positioned on the block by reference to the kentō guides, and the back was rubbed with the *baren*, the printer applying the strength of his whole body and moving it in the same direction as the fibre of the paper. The strokes were controlled in length and direction. See Exhibit G.

ORDER OF THE BLOCKS

The key block was the first. The order of the colour block was determined by the size of the area to be printed, in order to maintain the degree of moisture at an even level, and by the intensity of the colours, either from light to dark or from medium to light and dark alternately.

Prints of courtesans show quarter-festivals, processions, customs and street scenes, geisha and courtesans with their attendants, apprentices, and portraits of individual celebrated beauties. These prints served as souvenirs, guides, or objects of longing for customer or would-be customers.

PICTURES OF BEAUTIFUL WOMEN *(bijinga)*

The author James Michener has estimated that, between 1660 and 1860, 40 per cent of the total production of *ukiyoe* were of this category. These included courtesans, geisha, tea-house waitresses and shop-assistants renowned for their looks, and women in domestic life - sometimes, though rarely, women of the upper classes. The type of woman depicted can often be detected from the dress, e.g. their footwear or the way the obi is tied. Courtesans are usually barefoot, while other women wear digitated socks; after 1741 the obi was tied at the back, but courtesans adhered to the older style of tying it in front. See Nos. 11 to 16.

Women are depicted before their mirrors or after a bath, admiring the moon, dreaming of their seduction, eloping, with musical instruments, pets, pipes, or dolls, playing games, with their children, maids, or lovers, at feminine occupations like sewing, writing poems, or visiting a temple, compared with flowers, poems or scenery, or in parodies of historical or literary incidents.

The ideal of feminine beauty was subject to the vagaries of fashion: Kaigetsudō Andō and Torii Kiyonaga drew stately women, usually of solid proportions; Harunobu's ideal was frail and graceful; Kiyonaga's women were elongated though naturalistic; Utamaro's majestic, tall, reserved though seductive; Eishi (1756 - 1829) made his figures delicate, but abnormally elongated; Eiri (1790's) produced romantic dolls; Hokusai created frail, appealing women.

THE SUBJECTS

The traditional print concentrated on certain fixed themes:

EROTICA *(shunga)*

First produced in Kyōtō, these were in the beginning crude, but later the master designer, Sukenobu, lifted them to lyrical heights, producing work remarkable for its tenderness and seriousness. Other early masters were: Okumura Masunobu, Hishikawa Moronobu, and Tsukioka Settei, but almost all the great *ukiyoe* artists included erotica among their work. E.g. Utamaro produced 35 albums of the kind between 1784 and 1804. Outside of *shunga*, the nude is rare, though partly draped figures, and gestures and postures with a vague erotic suggestiveness are frequent in the next category.

THE BROTHEL

The Yoshiwara and later Shin-Yoshiwara in Edo, the Shimabara district in Kyōtō, and Shimmachi in Ōsaka were the most famous licensed quarters of Tokugawa times, and underwent extensive development about the middle of the 17th century. From this time the courtesan figured prominently in literature and art.

For the Japanese man, whose marriage was arranged for family and financial considerations, the brothel provided romance and the chance to prove himself in the competition for love. "The Japanese courtesan was at once a prostitute and not a prostitute ..... She could theoretically be had for money, ... but at the same time she enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom and influence in her own limited world." and developed her own standards for judging would-be lovers.

The popular literature of the time included guides to the brothels which contained critical appreciations of the qualities of leading courtesans. At first, samurai were the main frequenters, but by 1678 the townsmen were becoming the chief customers.

COSTUME

In *ukiyoe* frequently the whole interest of the design centres on the *kimono*. The pattern and colours of materials and the arrangement of the *kimono*, the width, design, and style of tying the sash *(obi)* as in the popular literature of the day, provided endless interest for *ukiyoe* purchasers. This was to be expected in a society where being up to the minute, or displaying a recherche knowledge of the antique was highly admired.

The *ukiyoe* print is a mine of information on fashion and weaving. Koryūsai, Kiyonaga and Eizan were particularly renowned for their *kimono* designs.

Sometimes the design on a kimono gives a clue to the identity of the wearer. A pattern of chrysanthemums on a *kimono* would suggest the wearer's name was O-kiku (Miss Chrysanthemum), or a crest (of a family, actors' school, or prostitute) might be incorporated to make identification exact.

PICTURES OF ACTORS

As the brothel supplied the material for male dreams, so the theatre served women, but it was also a centre of pederasty.

The *Kabuki* theatre was founded in 1600. It began with risque skits by transvestite actresses and actors, and under repressive government regulations, developed by way of lewd shows by female, and then male prostitutes, to a highly skilled art-form, surrealistic in histrionic technique, and gorgeous and spectacular in costuming and presentation. From the last quarter of the 17th century, it provided a major part of the subject matter of *ukiyoe* prints.

Yakusha-e include posters and playbills (from 1696), pin-ups, usually showing the actors in character in some dramatic pose *(mie)*, or sometimes in groups in famous scenes from popular plays, or in twos and threes in climactic moments, designs for fans (after 1740) and memorial portraits of dead actors (after 1820). See Nos. 17 to 23.

LANDSCAPES

Imports of European copperplate engravings of landscapes during the 17th century contributed to the rise of Japanese landscape prints. Guide books to famous places appeared in 1640 to cater to the travel boom in Tokugawa times, which reached a peak in Hiroshige's time. Moronobu published an album of prints of the Tōkaidō Road (from Edo to Kyōtō) in 1690.

The atmospheric landscape print made its debut as early as 1738 - 1742. In 1842 a government edict forbad the production of actor and courtesan prints, and thus gave a strong fillip to the production of landscape prints.

The landscape prints dealt with the posting stations on the great trunk roads, and famous beauty spots, particularly noted rivers and the sacred mountain Fuji viewed from various localities. See Nos. 25 - 28.

An interesting sidelight on landscapes (and interiors also) is the type of perspective used, whether reversed (no. 5) or Western (Nos. 29 - 31).

PRINTS OF BIRDS, FLOWERS AND FISH *(kachō-e)*

The earliest were prints of eagles by Torii Kiyomasa I in 1716 on *kakemono* size (see below) sheets. In 1735 those subjects appeared in *hoso-ban* (see below) size. Utamaro published five albums of bird, insect and fish studies in 1796, and Hokusai designed two sets, one large (in 1830) and one small of flower studies. Hiroshige also produced several fine sets. (See No. 33).

OTHERS

Other types of prints are pictures showing sumo wrestlers (See No.24), foreigners in Nagasaki or Yokohama *(Nagasaki-e,* and *Yokohama-e)* fan-prints - folding *(sensu),*

the earliest by Hiroshige, or oval *(uchiwa)* see No. 32, and greeting-cards *(surimono)* as early as the 1720's. Prints continued to be issued in the Meiji period (1868-1911) and Taishō period (1911-1926) as broadsheets or news announcements. See Nos. 34 - 37. Copper-plate engraving was introduced into Japan early in the period of foreign intercourse, and after Meiji, European methods of engraving became popular.

FORMAT

Prints were issued as album collections (horizontal prints folded in the middle and bound), and single sheets of varying sizes. These included large *"kakemono-e"* (hanging scroll type prints) as cheaper substitutes for alcove paintings, narrow pillar prints *(hashira-e)* for pinning on pillars, large, middle-size, small and square sheets.

SIZES OF PRINTS

Large *(ōban)*	15" x 10"
Middle *(chūban)*	11" x 8"
Small *(koban)*	10" x 7"
Narrow *(hosoe)*	12" x 6"
Pillar *(hashira-e)*	27" x 5"
Kakemono-size	27" x 12"

INSCRIPTION ON PRINTS

These include the title of the print, the series in which it occurs, the artist's signature, sometimes including his artistic names (indicating changes in his

style or condition of life), and the name bestowed on him by his school, after 1790 censors' seals included seals meaning *kiwame* or *aratame* (censored), names of censors, date, block-carvers' seals, publishers' names and seals, dates, locations of scenes. This information often helps in difficult identifications of prints.

THE ARTISTS

Hishikawa MORONOBU (1640-1694) is credited with being the "inventor" of *ukiyoe*. A genre illustrator, he produced single sheet prints in black and white of Yoshiwara scenes and lovers.

Torii KIYONOBU (1664-1730), founder of the Torii school which enjoyed a monopoly of producing advertisements for Kabuki. He produced vigorous, often grotesque, full-length portraits of actors in costume at peaks of tension; also courtesan prints.

Okumura MASANOBU (1686-1764) was a great innovator who produced albums of prints with a strong literary quality.

Kaigetsudō ANDŌ (1671-1743) produced stately studies of single standing courtesans in flowing robes, his designs being distinguished by massed black and intricate pattern.

Utagawa TOYOHARU (1713-1864) founded a school and developed the perspective print, introducing the "wide-angle" lens.

Suzuki HARUNOBU (1725-1770) perfected the colour print, producing calendar prints with full colour registry. He is noted for his dream-like atmosphere and his creation of a feminine ideal. His speciality was eternal girlhood in poetic settings.

Katsukawa SHUNSHŌ (1726-1793) individualised the faces of Kabuki actors.

Torii KIYONAGA (1752-1815) produced *Bijinga*, developing a characteristic junoesque figure in sweeping draperies delineated by a flowing calligraphic line and more realistic *yakusha-e*.

Kitagawa UTAMARO (1753-1806) produced psychologically subtle portraits of courtesans and other women.

Chōbunsai EISHI (1756-1829) produced idylls, characterised by an elongated female form.

Isoda KŌRYŪSAI (1760-1770) was the master of the pillar print and though more realistic than Harunobu often created a magical atmosphere.

Eishōsai CHŌKI (1760-1800) drew women as fragile dolls.

Katsuchika HOKUSAI (1760-1849) was noted for landscapes and bird and flower studies.

The work of Utagawa TOYOKUNI (1769-1825) is regarded as the culmination of the actor-print.

Utagawa KUNISADA (1786-1865) took the artistic names of Gototei and Kochōrō, considered himself the true successor of Toyokuni, was capable of greatness especially in landscape, but his figure designs, though talented, demonstrate the decline of *ukiyoe*.

Tōshūsai SHARAKU (active 1794-5) produced penetrating realistic portraits of Kabuki actors in action. He was not popular because he did not glamourise or beautify them.

Andō HIROSHIGE (1797-1858) was a master of the landscape print endued with poetic atmosphere.

Utagawa KUNIYOSHI (1797-1861) showed a bent towards the melodramatic. His conceptions were always coloured by stage representations. He was a master of designs with impact.

J.A.

INFLUENCE OF JAPANESE PRINTS ON WESTERN ART

Soon after the unification of Japan by the powerful Tokugawa family at the beginning of the 17th century, Japan closed her doors to foreign countries for the next two centuries. In this period, the *ukiyoe* print was able to develop in the full sense of being an expression of Japanese social life as the country was almost completely free from foreign influences. Bankoku, works devoted to foreign peoples, are rare for this reason.

On the other hand there was little movement of Japanese art out of the country during this period.

With the final fall of the Japanese feudal system in 1868, Westernisation of the country caused a stagnation of Japanese traditional art.

However, if Japanese art was to suffer from Western influences, the reverse was to apply to Western art through imported Japanese influences at the time when French Impressionism was beginning so many vital changes in painting.

About the middle of the nineteenth century, Japanese prints began to create interest in Paris. In 1856, Bracquemond, who was later to be one of the Café Guerbois group, discovered a little volume of Hokusai which had been used as packing for chinaware. Bracquemond was to circulate this volume widely among his colleagues. Monet was also interested in Japanese prints which he had come across at Le Havre about the same time.

However, a very important source of supply of Japanese prints was "La Porte Chinoise" an oriental art shop opened in 1862 by M. and Mme. Desoye who had lived in Japan. Among the many artists who bought from this shop were Whistler, Rossetti, Manet, Fantin-Latour, Alfred Stevens, James Tissot and Degas. The writers Beaudelaire, Zola and the Goncourt brothers were also patrons.

Thus, within a short time, Japanese prints became well-known in the intellectual circles which were motivating the changes in Western art. The Paris World's Fair of 1867 which featured Japanese prints in a particular section devoted to oriental art, consolidated this interest.

It is further significant that, at the opening of his Salon of Art Nouveau in Paris in 1895, Samuel Bing concurrently presented his adjoining Japanese Galleries devoted entirely to art of Japan.

Of the group of painters who met regularly at the Café Guerbois in Paris to discuss painting in general, and in particular Japanese art, it was Degas who showed the most interest in Japanese prints. Manet was the leader of this group whose regular members included Bracquemond, Bazille, Fantin-Latour, Renoir; other constant visitors were Cezanne, Sisley, Monet, Pissarro and Alfred Stevens. Zola and other writers were also regular visitors.

Unlike Tissot and Whistler, who made more direct use of picturesque Japanese subjects or elements, Degas endeavoured to absorb the principles of Japanese art into his own style. These derived elements are the subtle use of line, decorative qualities, foreshortening and composition.

The principal subjects were often placed off-centre with strong accent on asymetric diagonal composition in which space was expressed by the juncture of two diagonals inclined at 45°, instead of through the usual movement of lines drawn in perspective towards a converging point. This last element of perspective, derived from Japanese prints represents the first dramatic change in the use of conventional perspective which was established by Brunelleschi and Alberti in the early days of the Renaissance. This change in perspective was to have far-reaching effects in the use of the human figure purely as an element of design in a picture.

Lautrec had in common with Degas a particular concern with the appeal of line in the definition of the object. He admired the uncompromising analytical use of line in Japanese prints held in check by overall discipline. The boldness of composition of the Japanese prints, their sureness of line and use of colour were factors that influenced Lautrec strongly in producing his poster lithographs for the Moulin Rouge. In fact Lautrec is credited as the originator of Western poster art.

It is interesting to note here that the *ukiyoe* prints featured actors of the Kabuki Theatre from as far back as 1696: the first being produced by Kiyonobu I, the son of a Kabuki actor, who was also the first to design play bills for wood-block reproduction.

Lautrec's theatre lithographs are a continuation of this tradition.

Whistler, who introduced the cult of the Japanese to London in 1859, was particularly influenced by Japanese prints in his portraits. This being evident in their delicacy and exquisiteness of colour and in their composition.

It was his series of 'Nocturnes' based on views of the Thames at night which showed most distinct Japanese influence in the simplicity of their composition.

One of these in particular, 'Nocturne in Blue and Silver; Old Battersea Bridge' provoked Ruskin, whose criticism brought on the famous (rather 'infamous') libel suit in which Whistler won his case but was awarded only one farthing damages!

Another American artist, Mary Cassat, who worked with the Impressionists, was strongly influenced by Japanese prints in the simplification and precision of line in her etchings.

Van Gogh and Gauguin, who shared the Impressionists ideals for a time, were also influenced by Japanese prints.

Van Gogh had come into contact with these prints in his parents' home at Nuenen and also in Amsterdam before finally going to Paris and copying works of Hiroshige and Kesai Yeisen. (During the two centuries in which Japan cut herself off from all foreign contact, a small number of Dutch were the sole Europeans allowed to trade with Japan. Doubtless some prints found their way to Holland through this source).

In Paris, Van Gogh also came into contact with Japanese prints in the shop of Père Tanguy and painted two portraits of the old man against a background decorated with Japanese prints.

The incisive outlines of these prints was to have a strong influence on the work Van Gogh did in and around Arles.

Gauguin when he left the influence of the Impressionists (c 1889) began to paint in large areas of flat colour with shapes surrounded by pronounced outlines, a procedure derived from the influence of Japanese prints.

In this style, increasing use of curvaceous and decorative lines made Gauguin one of the forerunners of Art Nouveau.

John Peter Russell (1859-1930), the Australian expatriate painter provides an interesting link with the influence of Japanese prints on Rodin. As a youth Russell was sent on a tour of the Pacific to visit China and Japan. When he later settled on the island of Belle-Île-en Mer off the coast of Brittany and became a particular friend of Rodin, his collection of Japanese prints and Chinese drawings were to inspire the sculptor to do his famous wash and line sketches of nudes which were preparatory to his clay models of figures. These sketches now stand as complete expressions in their own right.

To return finally to the Café Guerbois group, there is little doubt that, in relation to their discussions on the subject of shadows, Japanese prints with their disregard for treatment of shadows and frank use of pure colour acted as a strong catalyst in the process of change in Western painting in relation to the importance of colour itself.

This development taken up by Cézanne led him to his concept of rendering volumes and 'architecting forms' through noting with exactitude the necessary colour of each plane. Extending the idea of the importance of colour through the Post Impressionists and Fauves to Robert Delaunay we reach his discovery that 'Colour alone is both form and subject', which concept is one of the main bases of modern abstract art.

To sum up, it is pertinent to quote Bernard Dorival who stated in his book of 'Twentieth Century Painters', that it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the role played by the *ukiyoe* prints in the revival of Western painting.

He states: "That depth, for example can be expressed by other means than that of geometric or aerial perspectiv that felicitious effects can be obtained by 'shots' taken from angles not normally seen in Western painting or by compositions deliberately off-centred, that intensity of colour need not necessarily be diminished with recession not weakened by shadow, that line in the same way as description can be a suggestion and that a stroke of pen or brush by its thickness, thinness, elisions, curves or interruptions can indicate matter and form, that it is not high treason to show human figures from the back or in silhouette or as incidental to more important subjects, that the world still contains original sights which the

Western world had neither looked at, noticed nor seen represented since the Renaissance - all these lessons Hokusai and Hiroshige and Kiyonaga, old or new masters of Japanese engraving, taught first to the Parisian painters of the end of the Second Empire and notably to Whistler and Degas, before teaching them to the Impressionists and their successors".

R.M.

MODERN PRINTS

Prints since the Meiji Restoration (1868) include both traditional prints and so-called creative prints.

Kawase HASUI (b. 1883) produced traditional prints, i.e. his compositions were carved and printed by artisans in the traditional manner, and his work helped keep alive the old tradition of wood-block printing. See No. 38. Wood-block carving and printing houses which preserve these ancient skills are still in operation and now concentrate mainly on reproductions.

THE "CREATIVE PRINT" *(sōsaku-hanga)*

In contrast to the traditional print, which resulted from the collaboration of artist, block carver and printer, in the modern "creative print" one man is responsible for the whole process. Hence where *ukiyoe* reveals its origin in the brush, the *sōsaku-hanga* reveals its origin in the knife or gouge.

Many modern print makers have been much influenced by Western art, in content and technique, and some have studied for long periods abroad. Kandinsky, Munch, Redon, Gauguin, Mondrian and other European impressionists who had been excited and influenced by the traditional *ukiyoe* are named as their inspiration.

1909 is taken as the year when the creative print movement got under way, under the leadership of Yamamoto Kanae, who had been trained in European wood-engraving, though this artist made his first creative print in 1904.

The method of the creative print varies with each artist. Some use unconventional tools - stencils cut from cardboard, bits of rubber, leaves, cloth, fish fins, decayed wood, string, fruit skins. Others use electric drills to carve the block, sandpaper *baren*, a roller to apply the colours. Some use only one block altering it permanently at each stage of printing. Others use plywood, or paste slivers of wood to a block in a kind of mosaic technique.

For pigments, traditional vegetable water-colours, oils, poster paints, or water-repellent inks, are employed. Experiments are made with many different kinds of paper and varying degrees of absorbency are obtained by eschewing size altogether or sizing several times. The method of application of the pigment allows for a great variety of effects, in daubs, in brush strokes, by wiping on, etc. Over-printing with a combination of transparent, translucent, and opaque colours also produces significant variations.

Saito KIYOSHI, born 1907, is an interesting example of a creative print maker who has "arrived". He names as his influences Munch, Gauguin, and Mondrian, and his works draw strong inspiration from his birthplace, Aizu province. His early prints were made by carving in relief directly on to a black-painted block with an awl, or something resembling an ice-pick, gouging out the complete design with free-hand scratches. He then applied a print made from this to a flat block in the dominant colour, and completed background and details by printing from colours painted one by one on limited areas of the carved block. Colour intensity was gained by printing the same area up to 10 times. As he used no registry marks, once paper was applied, it could not be entirely removed until the print was complete. He later changed to a technique involving several plywood blocks, making use of beautiful and varying grained veneers.

J.A.

CATALOGUE

(The prints in this Exposition include reproductions and originals; the reproductions have been produced by the same process as the originals.)

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No. 1. *Hishikawa MORONOBU (1640-1694)* - the originator of *ukiyoe*.

Scene at the *yoshiwara* (brothel-quarter) (from a set of 12) about 1680. Typifies the transition from book illustrations to independent works. This is an example of a print depicting the gay quarters.

Extra large *sumizurie* (wood-block printed in black.)

(HON)

No. 2. *Torii KIYONOBU I (about 1664-1729)* - the founder of the first school of *ukiyoe*, noted for elastic line and buxom limbs.

Woman with Cherry (a courtesan and her apprentice). A *bijinga* (beautiful woman picture. Large *tan-e* (wood-block printed in black with orange i.e. tan and yellow added by brushwork.)

Signature: Torii Kiyonobu, master artist of Japanese painting - seals of the artist and publisher.

(HON)

No. 3. *Furuyama MOROMASA (active 1688-1735)*

"Jankempon" in a geisha-house in the Shin-Yoshiwara. The house shows Western perspective, a novelty in Japan at that time, 1720; Western perspective pictures were called *uki-e* or relief pictures.

Extra-large *urushi-e* (lacquer print).

(HON)

No. 4. *Ishikawa TOYONOBU (1711-1785)*

O-Kiku and Kōsuke: two male actors (Nakamura Kiyosaburō and Ichimura Kamezō) portray a rich merchant's daughter and her lover, a servant. Note that the girl's face is truly feminine, not that of a female impersonator. This is an actor picture from a play staged 1751, based on a suicide scandal. The red lettering is a poem on O-kiku's tenderness. Signed ISHIKAWA SHŪHA TOYONOBU, artist's seal and publisher.

Large *benizuri-e* (rouge print).

(HON)

No. 5. *Suzuki HARUNOBU (about 1725-1770)* - the originator of the polychrome print noted for his idealized female figures.

Beauty at the Veranda: A courtesan has stepped out of a room where a guest is being entertained, to take a breath of fresh air. The white dress, purple lining, and scarlet petticoat romanticize the girl into a type of "the snow maiden".

Medium-sized *nishikie* (brocade print). Note gauffrage (recessed lines) showing modelling and the reverse perspective of veranda-boards.

(HON)

No. 6. *Utagawa TOYOKUNI I (1769-1825)*

Komachi Visiting from the series Sketches of Seven Elegant Komachis. (Komachi was a poetess of the classical period, hence this is a typical skit). This is one of *TOYOKUNI'S* best works. It shows a maid-servant seeing a geisha off from an evening entertaining a customer. Particularly the posture of the maid and the technique for showing the light from the lantern (by wiping the block of colour) are fine touches.

Publisher's seal Izumiya Ichibei.

(QAG)

No. 7. *Kitao SHIGEMASA (1739-1820)*

Beauties of the East typifying a change from the style of *Suzuki HARUNOBU* in that the background is left blank, and the feminine ideal is real, healthy, and human. This type of delineation reflects a reaction against *Harunobu's* lyricism. The women portrayed belong to one of the Edo entertainment areas - probably geisha girls of Fukagawa.

Large *nishikie*.

(HON)

No. 8. *Katsukawa SHUNCHŌ (active 1777 - mid 1790's)*

Three Beauties and a child enjoying the cool evening under a willow tree - one of a set of three pictures. *Shunchō* modelled his beauties on *Kiyonaga's* as the latter artist was then at the height of his popularity. There is a sensuous quality in the white skin seen through the thin robe of the woman on the bench.

Large Nishikie published by the Eiyūdō of Murataya Jirobei.

(HON)

No. 9. *Keisai EISEN (1790-1848)* - a dissolute drunkard, known for his erotica and portraits of voluptuous women, he expressed the fin-de-siécle of the declining feudal age.

Couple in Summer: a courtesan in *yukata* (cotton kimono) after her bath reclining against her lover. The elipse of the bonsai pot is noteworthy.

Large Nishikie.

(HON)

No. 10. a & b *Toyohara KUNICHIKA (1835-1900)* In the Meiji period, considered one of the three outstanding artists of the era, and the last of the great traditionalists. He produced mainly actor prints and his beautiful girl prints are few in number. The stylized facial features give a hard, cold impression, making his designs resemble the padded pictures on battledores. They became a kind of "trade-mark" of his *bijinga* designs.

Two courtesan prints: (a) Nakamonji Hamura and
(b) Ōgane Imamurasaki

Publisher's seal.

(QAG)

No. 11. *Suzuki HARUNOBU (1725-1770)*

Lovers under an umbrella, one of his masterpieces, remarkable for its delicate use of gauffrage. Ippitsusai Buncho (active 1764-1771), who mainly depicted actors, produced about twenty *bijinga* among which is a very close copy of this but presented as actors in costume. The fact that Buncho copied Harunobu's so closely proves its popularity.

Nishikie.

Private Collection

No. 12. *Torii KIYONAGA (1752-1785)* - head of the Torii family in the fourth generation, but specialized not in *yakusha-e*, but in *bijinga*.

"Women at Tachibana" from the series "Contemporary Beauties of the Gay Quarters", 1784, when Kiyonaga was at his height. The women portrayed here are geisha, for whom the Tachibana area was famed at this time. The realistic portrayal of mature beauty shown here struck a novel note. Kiyonaga typically drew women in groups in ornately patterned dresses.

Large *Nishikie*.

(HON)

No. 13a *Kitagawa UTAMARO (1753-1806)*- the most famous recorder of the scenes of the demi-monde - noted for his psychological perception in female portrayal and a great colourist.

Love Mortifying (1792-3)
Select poems - Volume on Love - a *bijinga* (beautiful woman picture). The background was first printed in pink, paste applied by a duplicate wood-block, then mica was sprinkled.

Artist's signature surmounted by publisher's seal.

(HON)

13b From the series Seasonal amusements of Beauties.

(Private Collection)

13c From the series "Seven Ladies at their Toilet"

Shows a striking use of mica in the mirror.

(Private Collection)

13d A striking composition showing a beauty with a fan.

(QAG)

No. 14. *Chōbunsai EISHI (1756-1815)* - a military lord and high official, famous for his slender beauties in a seductive pose.

Shizuka of the Shizutama House, (about 1794-5) from the series Six Select Beauties of the Gay Quarters. Though the pose is essentially slovenly, the woman has an elegant charm. The courtesan's crest *(mon)* is a starfish.

(HON)

No. 15. *Eishōsai CHŌKI (active 1760-1800)*

On the right the high-ranking courtesan (Yaeyoi-Tayū) of the Higashi-ōgi-ya, in Shimmachi, Ōsaka, and on the left her attendant Nakai (waitress) shirotae from the Yoshida-ya.

(QAG)

No. 16. *Utagawa KUNISADA (1786-1864)* signed *Gototei Kunisada*, an artistic name used until 1844 when he adopted his teacher's name *Toyokuni*. He is known as *TOYOKUNI III*.

Woman Attentive to her Looks - from the series "Thirty-two types of Contemporary Women". This title is a skit on the Thirty-two Manifestations of Kannon, the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy. The picture shows a woman stripping herself to her waist as she looks in a mirror. The cloth tied on her left upper arm probably conceals the tattooed name of her lover. Kunisada's portraits of women were criticised by fellow print-makers as having the faces of Kabuki female impersonators.

Large *Nishikie*.

(Private Collection)

No. 17. *Torii KIYOTOMO (active during the period 1716-1735)*

Ichikawa Danjūrō II making an introductory speech on the occasion of the centenary commemorative performance at the Kabuki theatre NAKAMURA-ZA in 1723. Within the stylized representation of the Torii school, KIYOTOMO has achieved a new note in the expression on the actor's face.

Urushi-e with brass dust *hoso-ban*.
Published by the Ise-ya.

(Private Collection)

No. 18. *Torii KIYOTADA (active 1730-1740's)*

Portrait of Ichikawa Danjūrō II in the play SHIBARAKU; belongs to the period 1716-1735. SHIBARAKU means "wait a moment" and was the general name for plays in which brave heroes appeared in the nick of time to prevent tyrants harming innocent victims. This print illustrates the stylized depiction of early *yakusha-e*. It shows a fixed pose but predates the time when print designers attempted facial likenesses of individual actors.

Tan-e, hoso-ban, published by the IGA-YA.

(Private Collection)

No. 19. *Kabukidō ENKYŌ (1750-1803)* -
Probably a Kabuki actor who produced no more than seven unpublished prints for private distribution, remarkable for his vivid portraiture of actors.

NAKAMURA NAKAZŌ as MATSUŌ-MARU, the hero of a famous play, SUGAWARA DENJŪ TENARAI KAGAMI (The Imparting of the illustrious calligraphy secrets of Sugawara), staged in 1796. Matsuō-maru sacrifices his own son to save the son of his lord.

Large *Nishikie* (polychrome).

(HON)

No. 20 *Katsukawa SHUNKŌ (1743-1812; active 1771-1791)*

The actor Ichikawa Ebizo in the dramatic make-up *(kumadori)* for the hero (Kamakura no Gongoro Kagemasa) in Shibaraku (first presented 1691) one of the 18 Classical Kabuki plays.

A "large head" actor print.

(Private Collection)

No. 21a *Utagawa TOYOKUNI I (1769-1825; active 1786-1825)*
The great eclectic of *ukiyoe*; dominated the field of portrayal of Kabuki actors for three decades.

SAWAMURA SŌJŪRŌ as OBOSHI YURANOSUKE (1793-1796). This picture reveals the artist's youthful exhuberance and talent, its carving being precise and its printing technique ingenious. Its mildness reflects Toyokuni's personality.

(HON)

21b Ascribed to Toyokuni though suggesting the quality of Kunisada; an actor-print showing female impersonators. O-shichi (climbing the ladder) was the pretty daughter of a greengrocer. Once, when her father's house burnt down the family took refuge in a temple. There she met and fell in love with a handsome priest. To meet him again she burnt down her father's house a second time. The scandal is the plot for one of Ihara Saikaku's stories in Five Women who Loved Love. The characteristic face of the female impersonator is illustrated in the portrait of the two women.

Censor's Seal. Publisher Hamada-ya Tokubei.

Original (Private Collection)

No. 22a *Utagawa TOYOKUNI III (artistic name KŌCHŌRŌ) i.e. KUNISADA (1786-1865).*
He changed his name to KŌCHŌRŌ in 1844.

This print reveals Kunisada's dramatic qualities in actor prints.

(Private Collection)

No. 22b Actor ONOE MATSUSUKE in costume.

Publisher Hagiwara.

(QAG)

No. 23a *Tōshūsai SHARAKU (active 1794-5)*
A *No* (classical drama) actor from *shikoku* (real name SAITŌ JŌRŌBEI, dramatic name SHUNTO MONZAEMON). Noted for his acrid but life-life portrayal of actors as they appeared on the Kabuki stage. The exaggerated grimaces were part of the surrealistic histrionic technique of Kabuki, and made an almost traumatic impression on a performer trained in the classical drama, the essence of which is restraint and whose principal actors wore masks.

ŌTANI ONIJI as EDOBEI.

Medium sized *nishikie* (polychrome) with a dark mica background.

Publisher Tsutaya Kichizō (1801-1868).

(HON)

23b Actor in fawn cap.

(QAG)

No. 24 *Tōshūsai SHARAKU*

The sumō wrestler DAIDŌZAN BUNGORŌ, lifting a chessboard at the age of 8 in 1794. It gives his height, weight, and chest girth at this age.

(Private Collection)

No. 25 - (a), (b), (c) and (d).

Katsushika HOKUSAI (1760-1849) - one of the greatest of landscape print-makers, an eccentric who devoted his whole life to painting and print-making.

Four of the Series Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji (1823-1833), one of his most famous series.

(a) Senjū in Musashi Province (within the present city of Tokyo) - early 1820's.

(QAG)

(b) Cormorant fishing on the Fuji River at Kajikazawa in the Province of Kai. (late 1820's).

(QAG)

(c) Onoshinden in Suruga Province (now Shizuoka) (late 1820's).

(QAG)

(d) A shower of rain below the mountain, (late 1820's).

Signature (early 1820's) Hokusai changed to Iitsu (or Tamekazu). (Late 1820's) Iitsu (Tamekaru) formerly Hokusai.

(Private Collection)

No. 26. *Katsushika HOKUSAI (1760-1849)*

At Chōshi in Shimōsa Province from the series "Thousand Water-side Landscapes" (between 1823-1833), of which 10 are extant. The subject is net-fishing but the artist's intent is to portray the violent motion of water. The bird's eye view point results in filling the entire composition with waves, and leaves an impression of unfathomable depths beneath the surface. Probably contemporary with the "Thirty-Six Views of Fuji" set.

A medium-size *Nishikie*, signed "Saki no Hokusai Tamekazu hitsu" i.e. picture by Tamekazu (or Iitsu) formerly Hokusai.

(HON)

No. 27. *Andō HIROSHIGE I (1797-1858)* - most famous depicter of Japanese landscape, noted for his creation of poetic atmosphere.

Full Moon at Kanazawa in Musashi Province.

A *triptych aizurie* (indigo monochrome print).

(Private Collection)

No. 28. *Utagawa KUNIYOSHI (1797-1861)* - remarkable for his original grotesque style.

SHUBI-NO-MATSU from the Series "Famous Places in the Eastern Capital" - published 1830-1843 - title of this print taken from name of a famous pine tree on the River Sumida in Asakusa in Edo (now Tōkyō) - described as "like a dragon crouching" - depicts the filthy river side - shows Western technique in shading.

Large *Niahikie* (polychrome).

(HON)

No. 29. *Utagawa TOYOHARU (1713-1814)* - developer of the *uki-e* on perspective print - the first to apply Western perspective to outdoor scenes (about 1764).

Landscape at Mimeguri (1770's). Here the perspective is combined with a bird's-eye view, resulting in the presentation of a large stretch of country-side.

Medium-size. *Urushie* (lacquer picture).

(HON)

No. 30. *Utagawa KUNISADA I (later Utagawa TOYOKUNI III) (1786-1865)*

A night street perspective.

The artist's name is signed on the lantern.

(Private Collection)

No. 31. *Utagawa KUNIYOSHI (1797-1861)* - signed *ICHIYŪSAI.* one of his *go* (artist's name).

The 11th act of the CHŪSHINGURA (The Loyal League) the night attack (1826).

This is not a stage scene and therefore is to be classed as a landscape print, but the shadows from the moon fall in an unnatural way, as they might on the stage. The surrealistic treatment of Mt. Fuji (an abstract cone) may be noted.

(Private Collection)

No. 32. *Katsushika HOKUSAI (1760-1849)* - noted for his landscapes, birds and flowers designs, and cartoons.

A group of fowls. One of Hokusai's most highly rated designs.

Signed TAMEKAZE (or IITSU) formerly HOKUSAI.

(Private Collection)

No. 33. *Ōgata GEKKŌ - (1859-1920)* - Though his medium was the wood-block print, his style was that of the painter.

The dance of the sparrows is the reward for the good old man in the fairy story "The Tongue-cut Sparrow." Animals dressed as humans are a favourite subject in wood-cut prints, especially greeting-card prints. This print employs the colouring of the background to emphasize the rhythm of the design (1934).

Original(Private Collection)

No. 34. The 332nd issue of the *TŌKYŌ NICHI NICHI SHIMBUN* (Daily News) showing the arrest of a ruffian by a heroic policeman.

Signed KEISAI HŌKI

Original(Private Collection)

No. 35. A *MEIJI (1868-1911)* production showing a *seppuku* following a revenge for love. A report of a scandal.

Original (Private Collection)

No. 36. *Ōgata GEKKŌ (1859-1920)* - a self taught artist, always slightly intoxicated. One of the two great newspaper artists of the end of Meiji.

Report of War News. Probably the Boxer Rebellion 1900. He did many prints of the Sino Japanese War.

Original (Private Collection)

No. 37. *Andō HIROSHIGE III (1843-1894)* - real name *Andō TOKUBEI.*

Report of July, 1882, giving Outline Regulations for Horse-trams. The information included states that fares are:

1st class	-	3 sen
2nd class	-	2 sen
Children in Arms	-	free

plus the same charges for every ward (city division) travelled.

Block engraver Andō Tokubei, 27 Minami Konyachō. Publisher Ōkura Magobei, 19 Tori Itchōme, Nihonbashi.

The aniline dyes imported from Germany are responsible for the harsh colours typical of MEIJI prints.

(QAG)

No. 38. *Kawase HASUI (born 1883)*

Roofs under Snow at Shiobara (dated 1946)

(Private Collection)

No. 39. *Urushibara Y. (MOKUCHŪ) (born 1889)* - lived in London and Paris for 30 years.

Horse.

(Private Collection)

No. 40. *Okuyama GIHACHIRŌ (born 1907).*
Umbrellas in Rain.

(Private Collection)

No. 41. *Saitō KIYOSHI (born 1907)* -a native of Aizu.

(a) Rustic scene.
(b) Cat.

(Private Collection)

No. 42. *Kawano KAORU (born 1916)* - a native of Hokkaidō.

Red Hood.

(Private Collection)

No. 43. *T. NAKAYAMA*
Galloping horses.

(Private Collection)

(HON) HONOLULU ACADEMY OF ARTS
(QAG) QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY