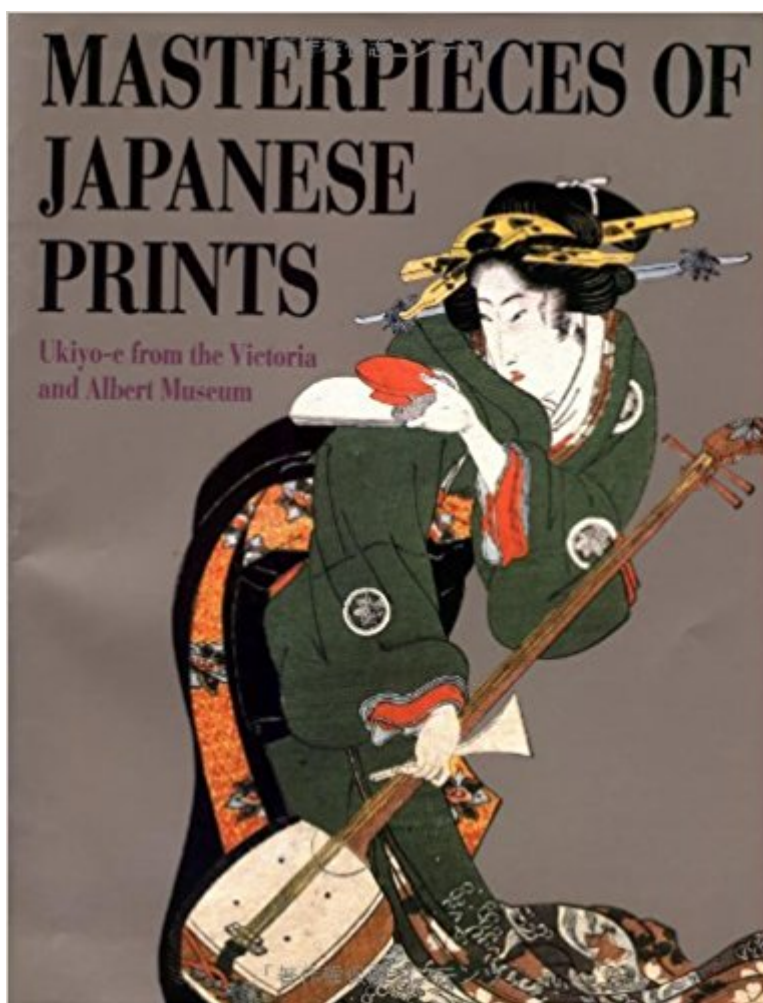


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Masterpieces Of Japanese Prints: Ukiyo-e From The Victoria And Albert Museum



Synopsis

Ever since Japan opened its doors to the West in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Westerners have been fascinated by the exquisite art forms that flourished during the previous two hundred years of self-imposed isolation. Among the most intriguing were the bold yet refined paintings and prints known as ukiyo-e, which portrayed the popular pursuits of the time with extraordinary power. Such was the appeal of this unique art in the West that tens of thousands of superb prints eventually found their way into museum collections around the world. The present volume highlights over 130 outstanding examples from the vast holdings of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Strikingly original and sumptuously colored, the ukiyo-e in these pages recapture the spirit of the period in which they were created. Here can be found the glamorous courtesans of the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters, the flamboyant vigor of kabuki theater, and the diversities of the Japanese landscape. The prints form a breathtaking panorama of the world of ukiyo-e from its inception to its final flowering at the end of the nineteenth century. Complementary texts by Rupert Faulkner and Richard Lane illuminate the craft of woodblock print making and explore the emergence of such versatile geniuses as Hokusai and Hiroshige. The lasting appeal of Japanese woodblock prints may be rooted in the richness of their imagery and the power of their innovation, or perhaps in their uncanny ability to convey the special vitality of Edo Japan. Whatever the case, this lavish volume seeks not only to pay homage to the Japanese artists and craftsmen who took the woodblock print to unprecedented heights, but also to show the range of this astonishingly versatile art form.

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Customer Reviews

RUPERT FAULKNER is Deputy Curator in the Far Eastern Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, where he has particular responsibility for the collections of Japanese art. Born in Yokohama in 1955 and subsequently educated in Britain, he graduated from Cambridge University with a degree in Japanese studies. After joining the V&A in 1984, he set up a database system for recataloguing the V&A's extensive collection of ukiyo-e woodblock prints. He subsequently concentrated his attentions on contemporary Japanese studio crafts, building up the museum's collection in this area and organizing the exhibition, "Japanese Studio Crafts: Tradition and the Avant-Garde." He is currently engaged in the publication of a book on the V&A's collection of ukiyo-e fan prints by Utagawa Hiroshige and a project to examine the relationship between Japanese food culture and the ceramic traditions of Seto and Mino. RICHARD LANE is a leading American scholar of Japanese prints. He received degrees in Japanese language and literature at the University of Hawaii and Columbia University, doing graduate research at Tokyo, Waseda, and Kyoto universities as well as at the Tokyo National Museum. His publications include *Masters of the Japanese Print: Their World and Their Work* (1962), *Images from the Floating World* (1978), and *Hokusai: Life and Work* (1989), a definitive monograph in English on this major artist.

decent book

A large number of pages with lots of colored blocks of paintings. Good book.

good

Every one interested in Art should have this one.

Was gift to my daughter and she loves it! The prints are beautiful and I would recommend it to anyone who loves Japanese Art.

Unexpected earnings from the Great Exhibition of 1851 (at the Crystal Palace in London) were used to establish the following year the Victoria and Albert Museum, the world's largest collection of applied art and design. In 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry made his famous expedition to Japan, which had been isolated for 250 years, and set up trade agreements. Examples of Western technology (locomotive, telegraph, camera) were given to the Japanese, and Japanese artifacts to

Westerners. Of particular impact were Japanese woodcuts of the 17th through 19th centuries, called ukiyo-e or images of "the floating world," tens of thousands of which ended up in museum collections throughout the world. Many (perhaps most) American and European artists and designers were influenced by the then-strange stylistic traits of these prints (crisp black outlines, bold flat areas of color, asymmetrical arrangements, and dramatic cropping), among them such people as Whistler, Manet, Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, Gauguin, Aubrey Beardsley, and Frank Lloyd Wright. "All my work," wrote Vincent van Gogh to his brother, "is in a way founded on Japanese art." This stunning volume is a full-color treasury of 130 of those woodcuts (introduced and annotated by scholars) from the many now in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. (Copyright © by Roy R. Behrens from *Ballast Quarterly Review*, Vol. 14 No. 3, Spring 1999.)

Nice reference book to keep!

European art was very much influenced by Japanese prints; think of Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Graphic Works, for example. Pp. 40-136 are all color plates. Elegant stuff.

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