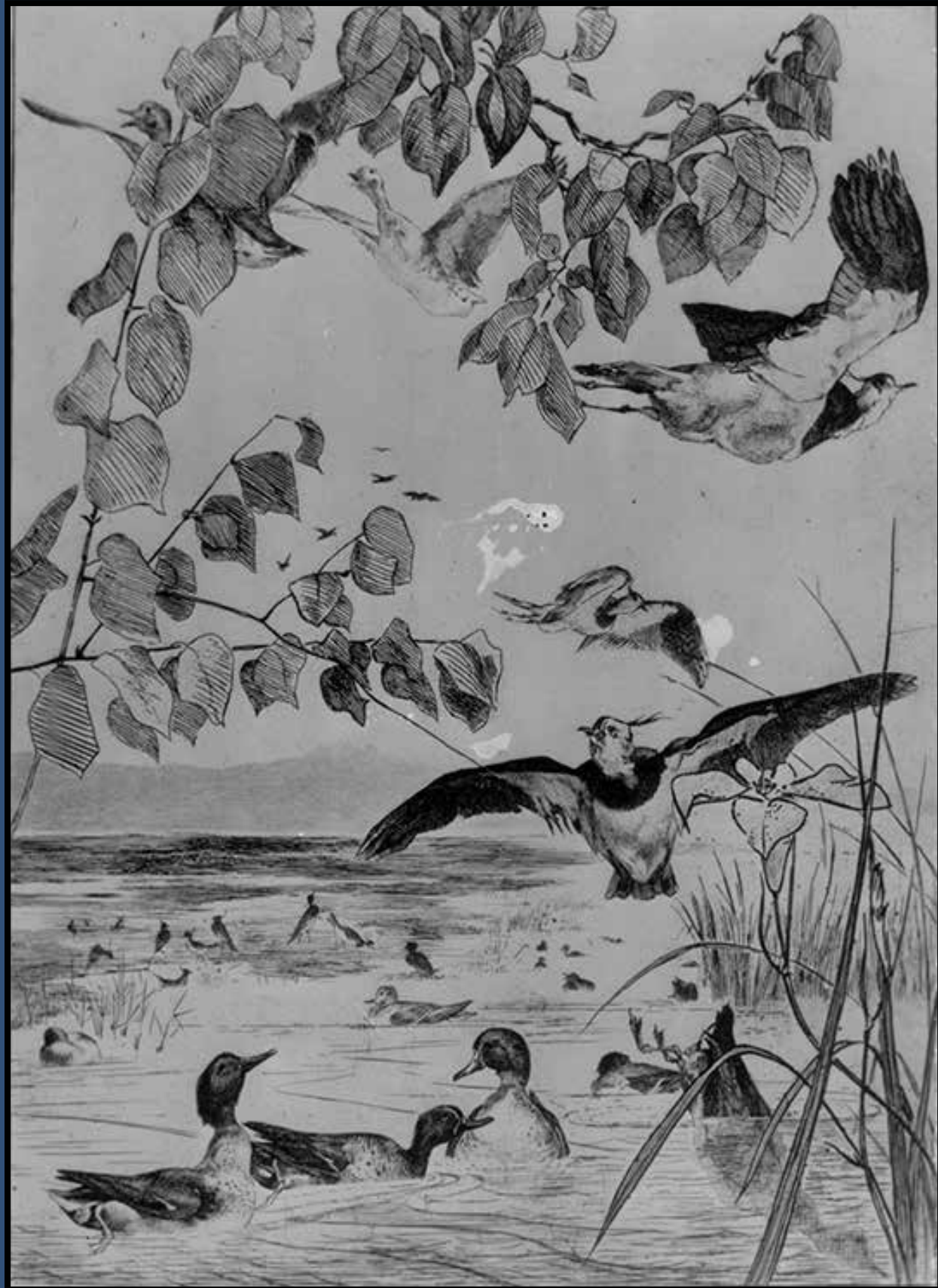


Japonisme in Print

Japanese Style/Western Culture

Although part of the Museum's series on Japanese color woodblock prints, this exhibition takes a different approach by recognizing the impact of Japanese images on European and American printmaking in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. During that time Japan's involvement with the Western world was undergoing fundamental changes. From 1867 to 1868, Japanese political rule transitioned from the military dictatorship of the shogunate to the restoration of the authority of the emperor. Under the leadership of Emperor Meiji (r. 1867–1912), Japan experienced major shifts in political and social structures, economics, technology, industry, militarization, and foreign relations, especially with the West.

As a signal of its new position in global affairs, Japan sponsored a pavilion at the 1867 Parisian *Exposition universelle d'art et d'industrie* (Universal Exhibition of Art and Industry), the second ever international showcase of its kind. This pivotal event, along with Japan's burgeoning global trade, exposed European and American audiences to the distinctive materials and modes of representation of Japanese art, creating a furor for things *à la Japonaise*. The Western works of art, decorative art, and architecture referencing or imitating Japanese styles have come to be known as *Japonisme*, a French term that reflects the trend's flashpoint in Paris in 1867. *Japonisme*, or Japanism, came to be an essential facet in the development of Modernist aesthetics and idioms, as the European and American prints showcased here demonstrate.



Félix Bracquemond



Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige I

Félix Bracquemond (French, 1833–1914)
Vanneaux et Sarcelles (Lapwings and Teals), 1862
 Etching and drypoint on chine collé
 Transferred from the University of Missouri (X-85)

Félix Bracquemond is among the earliest French artists to have ‘discovered’ Japanese color woodblock prints and to have incorporated their formal qualities into his own art. He reportedly first saw Japanese printed images around 1856 in the Parisian studio of a friend. His depiction of two types of birds amid foliage recalls a popular genre of Japanese prints called *kacho-e* (bird-and-flower pictures). Similar to *kacho-e* that focus on avifauna and flora while presenting only spare elements of the setting, this print only suggests the horizon line. The vertical orientation of the composition, along with the subtle division of the top and bottom halves, may inadvertently replicate an effect of Japanese block cutting and printing practices. Sometimes two designs were cut on the same block and the impressions made from them were separated only after being printed. An example of two designs that were printed on the same sheet but never cut apart is preserved in the Museum’s collection and illustrated here.

Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige I (Japanese, 1797–1858)
Gourds and Japanese White-Eye (above)
Peonies and Finch (below), 1832–1834
 Color woodblock print

Gift of Mr. Alvin John Accola in memory of his wife
 Katharine Mize Accola (68.25)



John Taylor Arms



Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige I



John Taylor Arms (American, 1887–1953)

***The Full Moon*, 1920**

Etching and aquatint

Gift of Doreen Canaday Spitzer in memory of Ward and Mariam Canaday (76.122)

Made more than fifty years after the official opening of Japan to more extensive trade with the West, this print demonstrates the lasting impact of Japanese motifs and style on European and American printmaking. By 1920, *Japonisme* had become a fixture of Modernism, but artists continued to innovatively assimilate Japanese imagery into their own art. In this print, John Taylor Arms effectively created with aquatint areas of different tonal values that mimic the patches of color seen in multi-block woodcuts. He even used aquatint to imitate the quality of woodblock lines, evident especially in the heavy delineation of the twigs and the thick outline framing the whole design. The irony of this work is that Arms employed intaglio techniques – etching and aquatint – that cut into the print matrix to replicate the effects of a relief technique – woodcut.

Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige I (Japanese, 1797–1858)

(Left)

***Swallows, Peach Blossoms, and Moon*, early 1830s**

Color woodblock print

Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Denman Waldo Ross Collection (06.1213)

(Right)

***Plovers, Waves, and Full Moon*, ca. 1830-44**

Color woodblock print

Publisher: Sanoya Kihei (Kikakudō)

Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich (47.18)



James McNeill Whistler



Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige I

James McNeill Whistler (American, 1834–1903)
Sketch after Cecil Lawson's
"Swan and Iris," 1882/1883
 Etching and drypoint
 Transferred from the University of Missouri (X-113)

An American artist who worked most of his life in England and France, James McNeill Whistler encountered Japanese material culture as imported goods, which he collected. He began in 1863 to include porcelain ware, fans, and kimonos in his paintings and to devise compositions after prints by Suzuki Harunobu, Torii Kiyonaga, and Hosoda Eishi. This etching and drypoint – and the unfinished painting by Cecil Gordon Lawson that inspired it – allude to the prevalent themes of birds and flowers in Japanese art and employ the traditionally Asian vertical orientation for landscape. The choice of the iris also indicates Japanese influence, as the Eastern culture had a particular fondness for the flower. The prominence of the iris in the foreground echoes *Horikiri Iris Garden* by Andō Hiroshige, from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, printed in 1857 (see illustration). Whistler's print was likely made as an homage to Lawson, who died in 1882, six months before his thirty-first birthday; the print was published in 1883 as the frontispiece to Lawson's memoir.

Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige I (Japanese, 1797–1858)
Horikiri Iris Garden, 1857
From the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, number 64
 Color woodblock print
 Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Anna Ferris (30.1478.64)



Mary Cassatt



Torii Kiyomasu I

Mary Cassatt (American, 1844–1926)
***Susan Seated before a Row of Trees*, 1883**
 Etching and drypoint
 Gilbreath-McLorn Museum Fund and Gift of Museum Associates (2004.9)

Mary Cassatt often portrayed women in her own intimate circle of family and friends, engaged in everyday activities. Susan—believed to be the cousin of Cassatt’s housekeeper and companion, Mathilde Valet—is featured in several paintings and prints from around 1883. In this sketch-like etching and drypoint she appears alone, but in other works she comforts a child or holds Cassatt’s lapdog. Cassatt is known primarily for tranquil and seemingly spontaneous images of women and children; however, she did not begin to focus on women in isolation and women with children until the 1880s.

Although this shift in subject reveals Cassatt’s Modernist interest in presenting “real life” in her art, she was also surely inspired by a genre of Japanese color woodblock prints that depicted women in private moments—reading, writing letters, attending to personal needs, or caring for children. Japanese prints also influenced Cassatt’s compositions, evident in the compression of space and representation of forms with black outlines and broad swaths of tonal value or color.

Torii Kiyomasu I (Japanese, active ca. 1696–1716)
Woman Reading the Akashi Chapter of the Tale of Genji
 Woodblock print with hand-coloring on paper
 Publisher: Igaya Kan'emon (Bunkidō)
 Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Denman Waldo Ross Collection (06.1334)



Pierre-Auguste Renoir



Kitagawa Utamaro I

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (French, 1841–1919)
Le Chapeau Épinglé (The Pinned Hat), 1894
 Etching

Museum purchase (71.107)

This portrayal of a young woman pinning an ornamented hat to another young woman's hair is drawn in part from a tradition in Japanese art of depicting attractive young women engaged in mundane activities. For the Japanese, such images were considered lyrical or sentimental, capturing the poetry of quiet, intimate moments. For Pierre-Auguste Renoir's European and American audiences, however, the elevation of such banalities as the subjects of fine art celebrated the leisure and gentility of the *bourgeoisie*, or middle class.

The two young women depicted here are most likely Julie Manet and her cousin, Jeanne Gobillard. Julie and Jeanne were part of a wider circle of artistic relations and friends, including Renoir, Eugène and Édouard Manet, Berthe Morisot, and Edgar Degas. The two girls figure in several other paintings and prints by these notable Impressionists.

Kitagawa Utamaro I (Japanese, 1753–1806)
Poem by Suikō Shōnin: Woman Having Her Hair Arranged, ca. 1787-88

Color woodblock print on paper

Publisher: Tsutaya Jūzaburō (Kōshodō)

Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, William Sturgis Bigelow Collection (11.25162)



Alphonse Mucha



Kitagawa Utamaro I

Alphonse Mucha (Czech, 1860–1939)
La Peinture (Allegory of Painting), 1898
 Color lithograph with gold and silver on silk
 Gift of Edzard Baumann in memory of L. and G.E.B. (77.401)

This colorful lithograph was part of a set of four images of allegories of the arts of painting, poetry, dance, and music. The representation of idealized female figures as personifications of the fine arts had been an iconographic mainstay of Western art for centuries before Alphonse Mucha's set of prints; however, he faced a particular challenge in presenting these themes as replicable images, for printing in multiple colors is a technically complex process.

Both the design and execution of this print correlate to practices of Japanese color woodblock printmaking. Each color was made with a separate matrix: woodblocks for the Japanese, lithographic stones for Mucha and his printers. In addition, the registration stone, like the registration block for Japanese prints, has the design's black outlines and was then used as the key to create the areas of color on the other stones for the print. Whether or not Mucha and his assistants were intentionally following Japanese processes is uncertain, but the effect of their process is strikingly similar to that of Japanese prints.

Mucha's decision to issue these prints on silk, rendering them far more luxurious than those on paper, is itself a fascinating instance of *Japonisme*, as these works allude to the Eastern art of painting on this fine fabric. The addition of silver and gold considerably augment the lavishness of this impression.

Kitagawa Utamaro I (Japanese, 1753–1806)
Elegant Brocade Pictures for the Arts (Furyu shogei no nishiki), ca. 1800
 Color woodblock print on paper
 Gift of Alvin John Accola in memory of his wife, Katherine Mize Accola (68.42)



Henri Rivière



Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige I



Katsushika Hokusai

Henri Rivière (French, 1864–1951)

Paris en Hiver (Paris in Winter), 1890

Color lithograph

Gilbreath-McLorn Museum Fund (2010.16)

This work presents notable similarities with Japanese color woodblock prints, in particular its forms outlined in black and filled in with multiple colors, albeit muted to convey a dreary winter's day. The isolated figure in a cityscape is also reminiscent of scenes of contemporary urban life portrayed in Japanese art. Indeed, the 'realist' subjects of Japanese *ukiyo-e* ("pictures of the floating world") include people and settings from the brothel and entertainment districts of urban Japan. These prints found a highly sympathetic audience in avant-garde artists, like Henri Rivière, who sought to represent the world around them in unabashed objectivity.

This bipartite color lithograph is the interior of an unfolded theater program for two plays staged on May 30, 1890, at Le Théâtre Libre (The Free Theater) in Montmartre in Paris: Henrik Ibsen's *Les Revenants* (*Ghosts*) and Henry Céard's *La Pêche* (*The Peach*). This image was reused on programs for other productions in the theater's 1889–1890 season, as evidenced by another impression preserved in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The realism of Rivière's lithograph is appropriate for the themes of the plays, particularly the scathing social commentary of Ibsen's *Les Revenants*.

(Left)

Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige I (Japanese, 1797–1858)
Numazu: Ashigara and Fuji in Clear Weather after Snow, 1855

From the series *Famous Sights of the Fifty-three Stations*, also called the *Vertical Tokaido*

Color woodblock print on paper

Publisher: Tsutaya Kichizo (Koeido)

Gift of Doris Carpenter (78.32)

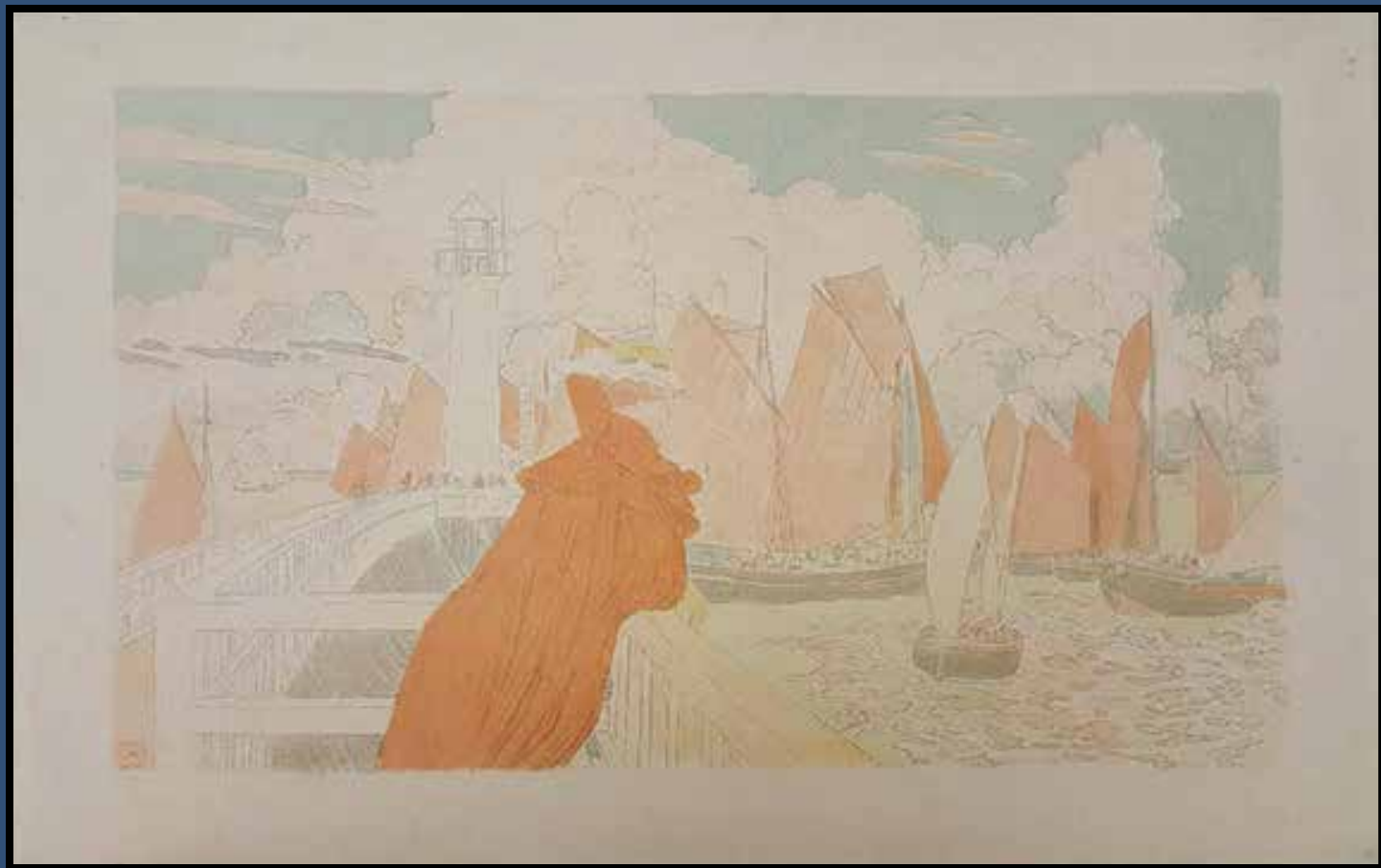
(Right)

Katsushika Hokusai (Japanese, 1760–1849)
Peddlers in Snow, 1849

From *Album of Pictures by Hokusai (Hokusai gafu)*, volume 3

Color woodblock print

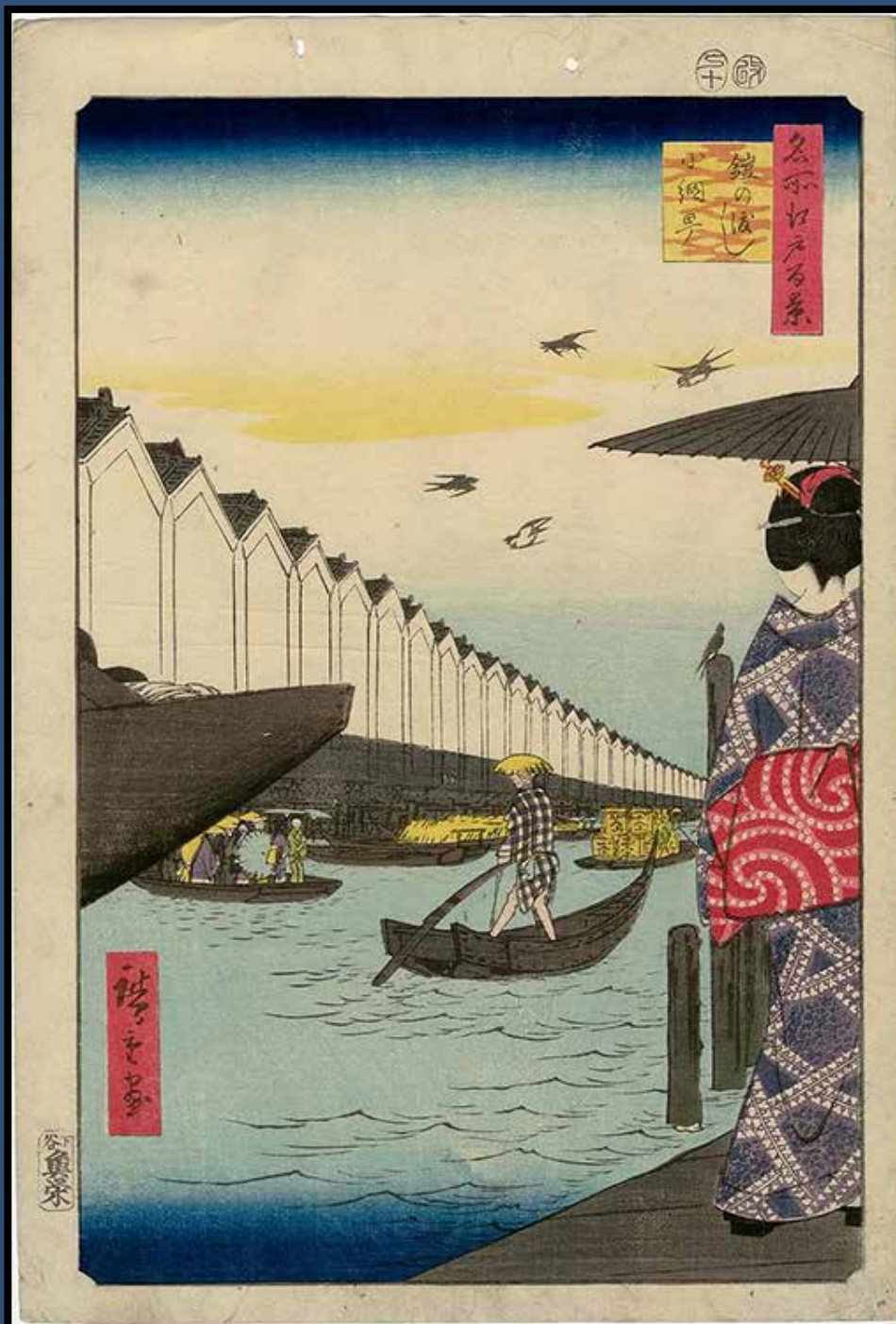
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Mrs. Jared K. Morse in memory of Charles J. Morse (53.2829a-b)



Théo van Rysselberghe



Suzuki Harunobu



Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige

Théo van Rysselberghe (Belgian, 1862–1926)

By the Sea, ca. 1898

Color lithograph

Gift of Barbara Stratton Bolling and Deborah S. Booker
in memory of Arthur Mills Stratton (78.39)

A native of Belgium, Théo van Rysselberghe produced several coastal scenes from the Low Countries during his career; however, this luminous composition probably represents a balmy seascape from Bordeaux or Saint-Tropez, both of which he visited in the late 1890s. This color lithograph demonstrates his indebtedness to Japanese woodblock prints through the linear definition of forms, fields of color, and abrupt juxtaposition of foreground and background elements.

A leader in Modernist circles in both Brussels and Paris, Van Rysselberghe was a founding member of the Belgian avant-garde society *Les XX* (or *Les Vingt*, The Twenty), which held annual exhibitions of members' works in Brussels at the Palace of Fine Arts and at the Museum of Modern Art (now the Fin-de-siècle Museum, opened 2013). He corresponded regularly with his close friend and fellow Neo-Impressionist Paul Signac, and their letters and critiques of each other's work reveal their mutual admiration for Japanese prints.

(Left)

Suzuki Harunobu (Japanese, 1725?–1770)

Double-Flowered Cherry: Motoura of the Minami Yamasakiya (Minami Yamasakiya uchi Motoura, Yaezakura), ca. 1768–69

From the series *Beauties of the Floating World Compared to Flowers (Ukiyo bijin hana ni yosu)*
Color woodblock print

Art Institute of Chicago, Clarence Buckingham Collection (1925.2116)

(Right)

Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige (Japanese, 1797–1858)

Yoroi Ferry, Koami-chō (Yoroi no watashi Koami-chō), 1857

From the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo (Meisho Edo hyakkei)*

Color woodblock print

Publisher: Uoya Eikichi

Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, William Sturgis Bigelow Collection (11.35833)