

Japanese Works on Paper

Jacob Barham, Eoin Donovan, and Sara Wheat

In the Edo period (1603-1868) in Japan, many artists found careers in various mediums creating art for the middle class. Edo, known now as Tokyo, became the capital of Japan when the Tokugawa family took control in 1603. The Tokugawa shoguns brought 250 years of stability to Japan, allowing artists, craftsmen, entertainers and merchants from Osaka and Kyoto to present their artwork among average citizens.

Two of the three works are woodblock, which is a way to print text, images and patterns. Woodblocks were used as early as the eight century and were a convenient method of producing text.

Another popular medium for royals and citizens alike came to be ink on silk mounted on paper. These works generally expressed nature, as this was a popular theme for art at the time. This medium varied slightly through the classes, an example would be the materials used. The middle-class might have wood rollers on a piece of art, whereas the rich might have decorated rollers made of ivory.

Ito Shinsui, Japan (1898-1972)

Night at Ikenohata

1922

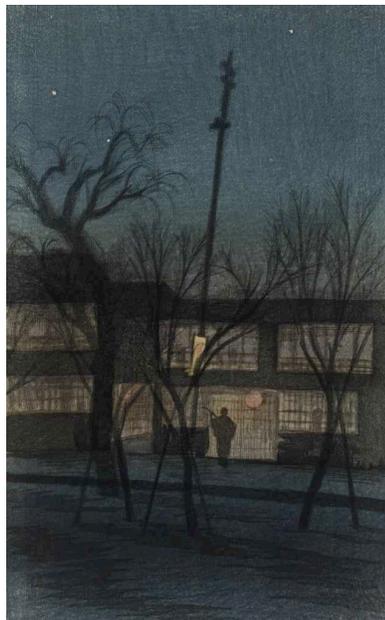
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, ed. 10/100

2012.285

In this woodblock print, Ito Shinsui makes an image of the shadow of a musician performing on a shamisen, a traditional Japanese three-stringed instrument. In the background, the warm glow of lights from the inside of an entertainment center can be seen. In this collection, the publisher, Watanabe Shozaburo, wanted Ito Shinsui to make new designs while still using old methods such as woodblock printing.

Woodblock is a technique for printing text, images, or patterns. In woodblock printing, a block of wood is cut away with a knife or chisel. Woodblock spread throughout East Asia and originated in China as a method of printing on textiles and later on paper.

- Eoin Donovan



Shiokawa Bunrin, Japan (1808-1877)

Fireflies by a Twilight Stream

1875

Ink on silk mounted on paper with ivory roller

2004.1692

In this night piece by Shiokawa Bunrin, a stream flows amongst bamboo and fireflies. Created at start of the Meiji Period, this piece corresponds well with the past of the artist. Born in Kyoto in 1808 as the son of a samurai, Shiokawa's art career began with the death of his father. In Fushimi, he studied under Toryo at the age of fourteen. Little is known of his career before the mid nineteenth century. The final progression of his career was his promotion to the imperial court.

- Jacob Barham



Katsuma Ryusai, Japan (1711-1796)

Luck of the Sea Volumes 1 and 2

1778

Ink on paper

2010.1866.1 and 2010.1866.2

This book is titled *Luck of the Sea*, and is a textbook translated from Dutch to Japanese Kanji. The textbook writes about sea life, which was popular among the Japanese. The book references a sea creature briefly on each page. The pages categorize types of fish. The pages displayed have illustrations of sea life as well as text.

Dutch studies books were translated into Japanese because the Japanese wanted to learn from European countries. In Japan, if you knew about things from other countries, you were considered very wise, an important characteristic in Japan. Publications like *Luck of the Sea* and other western books on anatomy are known as rangaku, or Dutch studies. Scholars who taught rangaku were referred to as rangakusha, or scholars of Dutch studies.

- Sara Wheat



Lion's Den

Harrison Manley, Russell Pokluda, and Sacha Waters

These objects are groups together because they are all objects associated with ritual. The *Guardian Lion* was used to guard the entrances to temples in India, the *Wedding Necklace* was used to wish the bride and groom a happy marriage, and the *Crown* is used placed on statues of deceased leaders in Javanese religious ceremonies. All of these objects were important and respected by the people who used them. Our group placed these objects together with the idea of the lion guarding the gold.

Guardian Lion

Khmer Region

10th Century, Angkor Period

Pink sandstone

2008.1119

Stone lions such as this were used as guardian figures in Indian temples. They were usually presented in pairs and placed along staircases or terraces. They were used to ward off evil spirits, and they represented power, courage, confidence and pride. Large temples such as Angkor-Wat sometimes had one hundred or more of these, as they were thought to counteract sin as well as spirits.

Khmer artists could not study lions, as the lion was never a native animal of India. They used their imaginations as a substitute, and drew much of their inspiration from dragons, hence the scales and slightly reptile-like profile.

- Sacha Waters



Wedding Necklace, (Kazhuththu Uru)

19th century

Gold

2004.2384

The *Wedding Necklace* was a gift from the bride's family and the groom gave the central pendant. The necklace symbolized hope for a strong marriage.

The necklace is very detailed, and on the central pendant, you can see a bride and groom riding a cow. Cows are sacred in India. On the wedding day, the groom placed the necklace around the bride's neck. The wife then wore the necklace for her entire life, or until her husband died. She then removed the necklace in a burial ceremony.

- Russell Pokluda



Crown

Javanese

9th - 10th century

Gold, amethyst, and rock crystal

2004.2229

Javanese is the native language of Indonesia. This crown was made in Indonesia by people who speak Javanese. The face on the crown is the face of a demon. The crown is ceremoniously put on statues of Hindu gods to celebrate them.

- Harrison Manley



Contemporary Asian Sculpture

Myles Davidson, Adam Dunn, and Russell Pokluda

The art in this section is a contemporary take on art from the cultures of India, Japan, and China. Each piece re-imagines an ancient object or concept.

- *Untitled* by Subodh Gupta shows the importance of the culture of food and cooking in India.
- *Pagoda 409, Tyrrhenian Sea, Priano, 1994* by Hiroshi Sugimoto references the pagoda, a type of building found in Japanese Buddhist Temple complexes.
- *Artificial Rock #83* by Chinese artist Zhan Wang represents a cave. The artist was influenced by scholars during the Song Dynasty who found rocks and proclaimed they were naturally formed sculpture.

Subodh Gupta

India, born 1964

Untitled

2008

Stainless Steel

2011.546

This piece is a contemporary work of art. It is made of materials that you would find in an Indian kitchen. Food is very important in Indian culture. It is used in every day life and religious festivals.

The lighting for this work of art shines and reflects off the art. Almost anywhere you walk in the gallery, this work of art shines in the dark gallery and attracts you towards it. I chose this work of art because it shines no matter where you walk in.

- Myles Davidson



Hiroshi Sugimoto

Japan, born 1948

Pagoda 409, Tyrrhenian Sea, Priano, 1994

From the series *Five Elements*

Optical glass, cypress wood pedestal, and unknown adhesive

2012.262

The piece is a contemporary take on the Japanese pagoda. A pagoda is a part of a Japanese temple complex traditionally used for Buddhist worship.

Hiroshi Sugimoto is primarily a photographer. If you look at his photographs, you can see that they capture light in a similar way as this sculpture. The Tyrrhenian Sea is a sea off the coast of Italy. It is a common subject of Sugimoto's art and was his inspiration for peace.

- Adam Dunn



Zhan Wang

China, born 1962

Artificial Rock #83

Stainless steel and mahogany

2013.277

During the Song Dynasty (960-1279), scholars collected rocks that resembled mountains or caves because they believed the rocks were home to immortals. In the 1990s, Zhan Wang began to reclaim history and culture that was being destroyed in Beijing.

Artificial Rock #83 is a wavy silver sculpture of stainless steel. It reflects light and the reflections create different colors. The opening resembles the opening of a cave. The recreated "Scholar's Rock" is mounted on a carved mahogany base.

- Russell Pokluda



Chinese Ceramics

Angelina Ciaravino and Maddie Nguyen

A wide variety of new ceramic techniques were created during the reign of three significant rulers in China, emperors Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong. This began with the decision of Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722) to reopen the imperial porcelain factory in Jingdezhen around the early 1680s. Emperor Kangxi's decision led to the rebirth of ceramic production in China. Each ceramic piece's style was influenced by the ruling emperor's personal taste. The lavish style and form of the ceramics made in the Qing Dynasty represented the political, academic, and cultural interests of the three emperors.

Bowl

China

1723-1735

Porcelain painted in overglaze famille noir and rose enamels

2013.501

At the time when this beautiful Chinese ceramic bowl was made, the production of ceramics had developed to their highest level of quality. With the intense, bright enamel colors of the tendrils and floral blooms, the deep black enamel behind it intensifies it even further. The city in which this bowl was made is located in southeastern china where the production of ceramics began in the sixth century. This piece was made during the rule of Emperor Yongzheng.

- Maddie Nguyen



Carved Puzzle Vase

China

1736-1795, (Qianlong Period)

Ceramic with celadon glaze and gilt

Under this petite vase, there is a seal that reads "Qing Dynasty, made during the reign of Qianlong." This seal helps us know when it was made and who was ruling at that time. Many Chinese ceramics will have a seal to identify the time it was made. This Chinese ceramic vase has a flanged base, which is known as a zun vessel, and was used to hold ritual offerings. Other designs on this vase would be the fancied fronds, which Emperor Qianlong admired. This vessel represents a jigsaw puzzle. The two segments seem like puzzle pieces, except they have small supports that keep the two segments from touching. The line in the center of the vase represents lingzhi mushrooms, which relate to longevity in the Daoist tradition.

- Maddie Nguyen



Famille Rose Box and Cover

China

1736-1795

Ceramic with pink-ground enamel

2013.510

This Chinese ceramic piece is more than just a designed box. The artists used these designs to provide a message. The clouds on the top of the cover represent the lingzhi fungus. If the fungus was consumed, it was believed to give immortality. On the side of the box, the dragons symbolize long life. These dragons are designed to resemble ritual vessels.

- Angelina Ciaravino



Lotus Leaf Cups

China

18th century

Ceramic with pale blue glaze

2013.489A and 2013.489B

The elegant pale blue cups were made to represent the real lotus leaf. Tiny veins in the cups add to the realistic look. The pair of leaf cups may have similarities but there are slight differences in the details. As you can see, the curves along the rims, and the veins on the outside of the cups are not exactly identical.

- Angelina Ciaravino

