




Visions of Modernity: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Japanese Woodblock Prints

## Label Copy

	<p><b>Hashiguchi GOYŌ</b>          Japanese, 1880-1921  <i>Hot Spring Inn</i>, 1920          Color woodblock print          Lent by Janet Way Vlasach          L.2001.1.3</p>
<p>Goyō established his own studio and publishing house in 1918 in order to maintain more technical control of the production of his prints. His flawless attention to detail and juxtaposition of luscious, colorful flora surrounding this woman in a white summer robe accentuate her paleness, creating a cool and refreshing effect. The ability to work directly with carvers and printers allowed Goyō to achieve his artistic vision.</p>	
	<p><b>Hashiguchi GOYŌ</b>          Japanese, 1880-1921  <i>Woman in a Summer Kimono</i>, 1920          Color woodblock print with mica          Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way          1991.147.10</p>
<p>Goyō produced only fourteen prints during his short-lived artistic career, all of which are considered “new print” masterpieces. Grasping her transparent summer robe, Goyō’s model is seated before a mirror, staring at the viewer in a challenging, self-aware pose rather than looking at her own reflection. Her direct gaze projects a psychological presense absent in earlier <i>ukiyo-e</i> prints of beautiful women (<i>bijin</i>). Her kneeling pose and the three-dimensional treatment of her body, visible beneath the pattern of her robe, captures the spirit of <i>shin-hanga</i>.</p>	
	<p><b>Hashiguchi GOYŌ</b>          Japanese, 1880-1921  <i>Woman with a Round Lacquer Tray</i>, 1920          Color woodblock print with mica          Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way          1991.147.6</p>
<p>Seated with her hands resting delicately under a serving tray, this woman appears as if she is posing for a photograph, likely influenced by Western portraiture. Her drooping shoulders and servile demeanor are reminiscent of the depiction of servants commonly seen in older prints, reflecting past ideals of feminine character.</p>	

	<p><b>Itō SHINSUI</b>          Japanese, 1898-1972  <i>Rouge</i> from the series “Twelve Forms of Modern Beauty”, 1922          Color woodblock print with mica          Lent by Janet Way Vlasach          L.2001.1.6</p>
<p>Shinsui is recognized today as one of the leading <i>shin-hanga</i> artists who specialized in romanticized depictions of beautiful women (<i>bijin</i>). <i>Bijin</i> prints were highly sought after by American and European collectors guided by <i>Japonisme</i>—the influence of Japanese art, fashion, and aesthetics on Western culture during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This print, part of a series produced by “new print” publisher Watanabe, was issued in a limited edition as part of a new commercial tactic influenced by Western practices to increase collecting appeal.</p>	
	<p><b>Kaburagi KIYOKATA</b>          Japanese, 1878 – 1973  <i>Woman of Tsukiji (Tokyo)</i>, ca. 1930's          Color woodblock print          Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way          1991.147.17</p>
<p>Kiyokata was a leading painter specializing in the beautiful women (<i>bijin</i>) genre. This rare print was designed from a painting he created a few years earlier, exemplifying the synthesis of Japanese and Western traditions. The misty background creates a naturalistic setting for this woman in the midst of a leisurely stroll. Subtly glancing behind her, her elongated body and gently turned head evoke earlier <i>ukiyo-e</i> artistic figural conventions.</p>	
	<p><b>Yoshida HIROSHI</b>          Japanese, 1876-1950  <i>Night in Kyoto</i>, 1933          Color woodblock print          Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way          1991.147.18</p>
<p>Hiroshi began his artistic career as a watercolorist and oil painter, traveling to Europe and the United States between 1899 and 1925 to view renowned paintings and places, create sketches, and sell his art. Best known for his naturalistic manipulation of light, among other surface effects derived from Western etchings, he specialized in dramatizing ordinary cityscapes and scenes from daily life. Here, by emphasizing the reflective qualities of the rain, Hiroshi heightens the intensity of a seemingly common evening in Kyoto.</p>	

**Itō SHINSUI**

Japanese, 1898-1972

*Shirahama Beach in the Morning*, early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century

Color woodblock print

Lent by Janet Way Vlasach

L.2001.1.7

Well known for his *bijin* (beautiful women) prints, Shinsui was also interested in portraying landscapes. Here, the artist depicts a rural seaside residence located along the Izu peninsula west of Tokyo. Shinsui often based his landscape prints off of watercolor sketches. This watercolor aesthetic is apparent in the brushy texture of the thatched roofs and foliage on the hill.

**Kawase HASUI**

Japanese, 1883-1957

*Evening Snow in Terajima Village*, from the series “Twelve Episodes of Tokyo”, 1920

Color woodblock print

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way

1991.147.26

Covered in a blanket of heavy snow, the impoverished district of Terajima in Tokyo is transformed by Hasui into a quiet, charming village. A single electrical post proudly stands at the center of the image, signifying modernity and softly illuminating the surrounding houses.

**Kawase HASUI**

Japanese, 1883-1957

*Lingering Snow at Inokashira Park* from the series “Twelve Episodes of Tokyo,” 1920

Color woodblock print

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way

1991.147.26

Hasui, like many artists and writers of his time, felt the ills of urban society and yearned for the serenity of Japan’s remote countryside. This led him to seek out commonly overlooked locations near the city to depict in his prints. It is hard to imagine the bustling streets of Tokyo that lie beyond the rows of tall cedars surrounding the tranquil lake in this scene.

**Kawase HASUI**

Japanese, 1883-1957

*Misty Morning, Yotsuya Approach (Tokyo)*, 1932-3rd month

Color woodblock print

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way

1991.147.22

Hasui was the most prominent landscape print designer of the “new print” movement. He traveled throughout Japan in search of serene settings, in both the countryside and the city proper, that nostalgically recall Japan’s preindustrial past. Here, Hasui depicts a tree on a hill the Tokyo neighborhood of Yotsuya, which was heavily industrialized beginning in the 19th century. The compositional dominance of the tree and the foggy haze serve to obscure the industrialized skyline in the distance.

**Yoshikawa KANPŌ**

Japanese, 1894-ca.1945

*Actor Gado Kataoka in the role of Miyuki*, 1924

Color woodblock print with mica

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way

1991.147.15

Actors were a favored subject in earlier *ukiyo-e* prints, and continued to be popular among “new print” artists. Kanpō chose to depict actors in a particularly emotive moment within a well-known scene. Here the male actor Gado Kataoka is impersonating the female character Miyuki in a mood of sweet sorrow. Miyuki fled from her parents’ house after being separated from her lover. She is shown here destitute and blind, holding a pick for the *koto* (zither) she is about to play for her client.

**Natori SHUNSEN**

Japanese, 1886-1960

*Nakamura Ganjirō I as Sakata Tōjurō*

from the series “Portraits of Actors”, ca. 1926

Color woodblock print

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way

1991.147.12.6

By the 1920’s, kabuki theatre—formerly a pastime of the working class—had gradually elevated into a form of entertainment for the wealthy due to the increasing popularity of film. Shunsen portrays the moment when the character Sakata Tōjurō, a young aspiring performer, attempts to seduce a woman simply to test his acting abilities and is slyly watching to gauge her reaction.



**Natori SHUNSEN**  
Japanese, 1886-1960  
*Ichikawa Sadanji II as Narukami Uejin*  
from the series "Portraits of Actors", ca. 1926  
Color woodblock print  
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way  
1991.147.12.9

Actor Ichikawa Sadanji II is depicted here in the role of Narukami Uejin, an evil priest, during a climactic scene where he discovers that he has been deceived by a beautiful princess. His mask-like makeup, scowling mouth, and piercing eyes radiate fury. Shunsen exaggerates this intense emotion compositionally by emphasizing the actor's face with its imposing frontal view and expansive size. The actor's bushy, black *hyakunichi* wig (indicating his demonic character) also provides a stark contrast to his pale face, further thrusting it towards the viewer.

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**Natori SHUNSEN**  
Japanese, 1886-1960  
*Nakamura Kichiemon as Badarai Mitsuhude*  
from the series "Portraits of Actors", ca. 1926  
Color woodblock print  
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way  
1991.147.12.1

Shunsen's portrayal of actors builds upon older *ukiyo-e* prints by adding a psychological dimension and a sense of naturalism derived from Western portraiture. The actor Nakamura Kichiemon is portrayed here as Badarai Mitsuhude, a loyal retainer falsely accused of treason and tortured while under house arrest. This print captures the moment when Mitsuhude can no longer suppress his rage and decides to rebel.