

Mizuno Toshikata (1866-1908)

Beauty Sketching in a Field

Japan, Meiji period, 1903

Color woodblock print

Gift of Philip H. Roach, Jr., 2001

(26915)

As the student of the last major ukiyo-e artist Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839-1892), and the teacher of one of the foremost *nihonga* painters of the early 20th century, Kaburaki Kiyokata (1878-1972), Toshikata played a key role in the transition from traditional ukiyo-e to modernized Japanese woodblock prints. Reportedly Toshikata was uncomfortable with his early connection to ukiyo-e, which had not yet been widely recognized as a legitimate “art form” in Japan in the early 20th century.

This young schoolgirl sketching in *plein air* presents a modernized image of femininity. By the Taishō period (1912-1926), many girls’ schools were established, and reddish- brown pantaloons (*ebicha -hakama*), which were more functional than traditional kimono, became wildly popular with female students. Many of them also had hairstyles called *hisashigami*, a modified Western pompadour, and carried Western-style parasols.

Mizuno Toshikata (1866-1908)

Spring–The Parting of School Chums
from the series

The Seasons and their Fashions

Japan, Meiji period, 1889

Color woodblock print

Gift of Philip H. Roach, Jr., 1997
(26381)

The series *The Seasons and their Fashions* was published for the Mitsukoshi Department store in Tokyo, possibly as a kimono advertisement. Once again, Toshikata depicts beautiful schoolgirls, this time dressed in kimono designed by Mitsukoshi. The subjects became role models symbolizing modern elegance and maturity for many young middle- to upper-class schoolgirls.

Ikeda Shōen (1888-1917)
Schoolgirls Homeward Bound
from the series
Young Beauties of Layered Mist

Japan, Meiji period, c. 1910

Color woodblock print

Gift of Philip H. Roach, Jr., 1996

(26242)

Ikeda Shōen (1888-1917) was one of Mizuno Toshikata's most prominent female students. Like her teacher, she designed many images for woodblock prints. The series *Young Beauties of Layered Mist*, published by the well-known publisher Akiyama Buemon, resembles Toshikata's series *The Seasons and their Fashions*, a print of which is on display nearby.

Both artists were transitional figures between traditional ukiyo-e and the various movements to modernize Japanese painting and prints in the early part of the 20th century, and they show a similar sense of color, line, and composition that continues the aesthetic of the Meiji period (1868-1912).

Arai Yoshimune (1873-1945)

Dandelions and Clover

Japan, Shōwa period, c. 1930

Color woodblock print

Gift of Philip H. Roach, Jr., 1995

(26001)

Done around the same time as *Tipsy* on display nearby, Yoshimune's print presents a distinctly conservative and nostalgic image of femininity that reveals the complexity inherent in the "good wife, wise mother" (*ryōsai kenbo*) paradigm.

Increased education and encouragement from the government to participate in the construction of a modernized society led to more opportunities for women to express self-confidence and play an active role in the public forum.

At the same time, though, modernization was balanced by a longing for the idealized past, and traditional Confucian doctrines on the relationship between the sexes were at the heart of new models of feminine behavior. Presenting an eminently traditional scene of women engaged in the socially passive "feminine" activity of picking flowers, subtly updated by elements like the park bench and their hairstyles, Yoshimune offers an image that effectively conveys the contradictions confronting women in early 20th century Japan.

Hashimoto (Yōshū) Chikanobu

(1838-1912)

Beauty with Eyeglasses

from the series *True / New Beauties*

Japan, Meiji period, 1898

Color woodblock print

Gift of Philip H. Roach, Jr., 1992

(24012)

Chikanobu was an early Meiji (late 19th century) ukiyo-e artist. As its title suggests, this print attempts to depict a new type of woman reflective of Japan's efforts to modernize itself into an industrial nation on equal status with Europe and the United States. She sits on a Western-style chair, wearing a ring and sporting a Western-inspired hairdo.

Most noticeable are her eyeglasses, which make her appear intelligent and fashionable. However, certain characteristics, such as her slanted eyes and the use of flat colors (such as those seen in Edo-period ukiyo-e) mark this as an early transitional work still deeply indebted to ukiyo-e.

Many late 19th century Japanese artists struggled to find ways to update and modernize traditional Japanese art, ultimately resulting in the *shin hanga* and *nihonga* movements, examples of which can be found nearby in the Robert F. Lange Foundation Gallery of Japanese Woodblock Prints.

Kaburaki Kiyokata (1878-1972)

Yuriko (left) and Yayoi (right),

from the novel *Yuriko*

Japan, Taishō period, 1914

Color woodblock print

Gift of Philip H. Roach, Jr., 2004

(27993)

Kaburaki Kiyokata was an apprentice of Mizuno Toshikata. Accordingly, Kiyokata's early training was firmly rooted in ukiyo-e, handed down from Toshikata's teacher Tsukioka Yoshitoshi through Toshikata to his student, who in turn taught some of the key artists of the early *shin hanga* movement (like Kawase Hasui, whose works are on display in the Lange Gallery nearby).

At the same time, Kiyokata was an important influence in the modernization of traditional Japanese art, and he became a top-ranking *nihonga* painter who specialized in *bijinga* (pictures of beautiful women). Kiyokata also was active designing book illustrations (*kuchi-e*), including many nostalgic images of femininity.

Kiyokata's two *kuchi-e* on display here were created for the novel *Yuriko*, written by Kikuchi Yūhō. In the story, Yuriko is originally from an established family, but becomes poverty-stricken after her father dies. She has tuberculosis and is told that she has but a few years to live.

Chieko (depicted in the next print), the widow of a baron, has an affair with Toshio, a wealthy Congressman, and they have a two-year-old son. Chieko does not want her son to be illegitimate, so she forces Toshio marry Yuriko (in name only) in the hopes that the boy will become heir to Yuriko's family fortune (which Yuriko, as a woman, could not inherit).

However, Chieko's plan goes awry when Toshio and the boy begin to develop feelings for Yuriko, who, in contrast to the conniving, social-climbing Chieko, is described as kind, beautiful, and frugal. In short, Yuriko is the ideal "good wife, wise mother." Novels such as these, called *katei shōsetsu*, were written for female audiences and were intended to contribute to domestic harmony.

Kaburaki Kiyokata (1878-1972)

Chieko* from the novel *Yuriko

Japan, Taishō period, 1913

Color woodblock print

Gift of Philip H. Roach, Jr., 2001

(26914)

Yamakawa Shūhō (1898-1944)

***Autumn* from the series**

Four Subjects of Women

Japan, Shōwa period, 1927

Color woodblock print

Gift of Philip H. Roach, Jr., 2003

(27481)

Shūhō, born in Kyoto, learned to paint from Kaburaki Kiyokata. Although his depiction of women is usually conservative, Shūhō also portrayed modern women (*moga*). The print is a good example of a *moga*, depicting a vibrant young woman wearing fashionable clothing and a chic hairstyle called the "radio roll."

Her expression is certainly not demure, which was one of the qualities expected of a proper lady. Her clothing, with Western card designs, demonstrates the appeal of Western culture and fashion, also implying larger social changes. Despite the public ideal of women as traditional "good wives/wise mothers" promoted at the time, Shūhō's print illustrates the changing status of young women in Japanese society, and their growing independence.

Watanabe Ikuharu (1895-1975)

Second Month, Early Spring, from the series Comparison of Shōwa Beauties

Japan, Shōwa period, 1930

Color woodblock print

Gift of Philip H. Roach, Jr., 2003

(27482)

This print is part of a series depicting the twelve months. The composition, a close-up of a woman hearkening back to woodblock portraits of beauties popularized by Kitagawa Utamaro (1753-1806) in the late 18th century, is appropriate to the traditional seasonal subject. The woman's dress is also conservative, but it has been modernized with a novel sense of color and textile design popular at the time. Similarly, the subject has been subtly updated through her hairstyle, which (like the changing hairstyles of 18th and 19th century ukiyo-e before) places the print firmly within the time frame of the early Shōwa period (1926-1989).

Born in Nagoya, Ikuharu studied with the important Kyoto *nihonga* painter Yamamoto Shunkyō before returning to his hometown to become an influential local artist.

Kobayakawa Kiyoshi (1889-1948)

***Tipsy* from the series**

Modern Styles of Women

Japan, Shōwa period, 1930

Color woodblock print

Gift of Philip H. Roach, Jr., 2001

(26926)

A student of Kaburaki Kiyokata, Kiyoshi was a regular contributor to the government-sponsored Teiten exhibitions (modeled after the Paris Salon sponsored by the Académie des Beaux-Arts).

Tipsy is an atypically controversial subject for the artist.

Boldly proclaiming her status as a confident, liberated *moga* not only through her dress and hairstyle, but also through her inebriation (indicated by the cocktail on the table), her adoption of Western vices like cigarette smoking, and her suggestive stare directly focused on the viewer, *Tipsy* is one of the most iconic images of the social transformations in which Japan was swept up in the years prior to the Second World War.