

Kitaoka Fumio (1918-2007)

Devastation

Japan, Shōwa period, 1946

Color woodblock print

Gift of the artist through Mr. B. Higashikawa, Manager of
Japan Artist Engraving Society, 1948

(12374)

Kitaoka Fumio was a member of Onchi Kōshirō's (1891-1955) circle. During the war period, Kitaoka took a position teaching art in Manchuria, where he was influenced by the Chinese social realist style. Later, after he returned to Japan, he depicted his own war experiences.

Unlike other artists active in the postwar period, Kitaoka used his art to express the terrible events he had witnessed. He used obscure colors, disturbing patterns and depicted depressed people, as seen in this print. Two other prints exhibited here by Kitaoka depict timeless, unidentified, and dream-like scenes. Overall, his oeuvre seems to represent something troubling and unreal, which perhaps was a reflection of the wartime trauma endured by Kitaoka.

Onchi Kōshirō (1891-1955)

Forme No. 10: Pilgrimage to Colors and Forms

Japan, Shōwa period, 1949

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1955

(13564)

Yamaguchi Gen (1896-1976)

Poetry of Early Autumn

Japan, Shōwa period, 1947

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1957

(14055)

Yamaguchi Gen studied with Onchi Kōshirō (1891-1955). Onchi's influence shows in his use of various materials in his artwork, such as leaves, wood, and rope. Yamaguchi once said that although he was not a communist, he was a liberal who fought militarism as long as possible.

Yamaguchi could not pursue his artistic vision during the war period. Instead of creating art to protest the political situation, he stopped producing work for a while. To him, art was not a medium to convey political and social messages. Rather, it was purely a vehicle for aesthetic appreciation—he depicted shapes, colors, and compositions that were emotionally and visually appealing to him.

Yoshida Fujio (1887-1987)

Orchid Flower

Japan, Shōwa period, c. 1950

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1957
(14105)

The wife of Yoshida Hiroshi (1876-1950), a well-established landscape painter and print artist, Yoshida Fujio was perhaps overshadowed by her husband's fame. During their travels in the United States (1899) and in Europe (1903-1905), the couple learned of the West's admiration for Japanese prints and began to produce them.

Both of the Yoshidas studied carving and printing. The close depiction of this orchid flower demonstrates the influence of *Art Nouveau* in its swirling lines, natural subject matter, and the simple use of bold—but less—color.

Hatsuyama Shigeru (1897-1973)

The Crying Tree

Japan, Shōwa period, c. 1950

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1957

(14111)

Hatsuyama Shigeru (1897-1973)

Young Hunter in Red

Japan, Shōwa period, c. 1950s

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1957

(14116)

Hatsuyama Shigeru (1897-1973)

Japanese Lanterns

Japan, Shōwa period, 1952

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1957

(14118)

Hagiwara Hideo (1913-2007)

Affectation

Japan, Shōwa period, 1961

Color woodblock print

Gift of Felix Juda, 1962

(14811)

While a student at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, Hagiwara learned the art of woodblock printing from Hiratsuka Un'ichi (1895-1997), a student of Onchi Kōshirō (1891-1955). His works are known for their avant-garde abstract style. By the early 1980s, Hagiwara was receiving awards at several international competitions and had earned a reputation worldwide.

One of his innovative methods was pre-printing the reverse side of the paper to provide a base for colors later printed on the recto. Many of his abstract prints have subtle color graduations and tones intended to express particular states of mind or situations.

Hagiwara Hideo (1913-2007)

Dispassionateness

Japan, Shōwa period, 1961

Color woodblock print

Gift of Felix Juda, 1962

(14812)

Hagiwara visualized his work beforehand and began carving directly and spontaneously without using preliminary sketches. His method is reminiscent of traditional Zen ink painting, in which there is spontaneous flow from the artist's imagination, through his brush, to the paper below.

Onchi Kōshirō (1891-1955)

Poem No. 7: May Landscape

Japan, Shōwa period, 1948

Color woodblock print

Purchase, 1976

(16703)

To keep the spirit of the creative print movement alive during the wartime, in 1939 Onchi organized an artistic group called *Ichimokukai*. The Japanese characters in the name can be read as either “First Thursday Society” or as “Best Wood Society.” This was a clever pun, in which “Thursday” referred to the day of the week on which the artists met, while “Wood” referred to the woodblock medium that they used.

Onchi invited young artists to his home on the first Thursday of each month. They met from 2:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m. to exchange their ideas about prints. Even during the darkest moments of the war, many artists were encouraged by Onchi and their fellow *Ichimokukai* members. Despite Japan’s defeat, the group continued to give artists renewed hope and enthusiasm for future artistic endeavors.

Onchi Kōshirō (1891-1955)

Object No. 4

Japan, Shōwa period, 1954

Color woodblock print

Purchase, 1976

(16708)

Onchi Kōshirō was the leader of the *sōsaku hanga* (“creative print”) movement. From the 1920s, he had devoted himself to making abstract prints. In the post-war period, he continued inventing different methods, using leaves, ropes, wood, and other materials. During this period his output was typically of larger, limited edition works.

Known as a poet, music lover, and book illustrator in addition to being an abstract artist, Onchi’s works expressed his emotions, originality, and creativity. He enjoyed the serendipity of how his prints turned out, regardless of how he initially intended them to be. Each print was a new artwork to him, even though all came from the same blocks.

Shinagawa Takumi (b. 1908)

Yellow Facing Forms

Japan, Shōwa period, 1952

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1983

(18836)

Shinagawa Takumi studied woodblock printing under Onchi Kōshirō (1891-1955). Shinagawa was influenced by Picasso's cubist style and ideas. Picasso used the unique qualities of the lithographic process to create works that could not have been done in any other medium.

“That is what a woodcut artist must do when he makes a woodcut,” said Shinagawa. In other words, creative print artists should not attempt merely to reproduce images but to make individual and original woodblock prints of the highest quality, works that could not have been made in any other medium.

Hatsuyama Shigeru (1897-1973)

Flowers, Birds

Japan, Shōwa period, 1953

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1984
(19236)

When he was young, Hatsuyama Shigeru was an apprentice, first to a goldsmith and then to a textile dyer. In 1919 he began working as an illustrator for a children's magazine. Over the next 20 years, he created a number of illustrations for both adults and children.

Hatsuyama started making woodblock prints as a hobby in the late 1920s. When he was pressured to make propagandistic illustrations during the war, Hatsuyama abandoned illustrations and devoted himself to woodblock printmaking. His prints, often fanciful, provided a welcome escape from the sobering real life issues of war, defeat, and social unrest.

Hatsuyama Shigeru (1897-1973)

Tree with No Flowers

Japan, Shōwa period, c. 1955

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1984

(19237)

Hatsuyama Shigeru (1897-1973)

Small Bird, Falling Water

Japan, Shōwa period, c. 1955

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1984

(19241)

Hatsuyama Shigeru (1897-1973)

Five Birth Forms

Japan, Shōwa period, 1947

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1984

(19243)

Hatsuyama Shigeru (1897-1973)

Flowers, Birds

Japan, Shōwa period, c. early 1950s

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1984
(19244)

During the Pacific War (1941-1945), many artists refused to use their skills for war propaganda. Instead, they continued making prints depicting subjects far removed from the social and political turbulence of the time, as can be seen in Hatsuyama's works. He was best known for his illustrations accompanying children's literature. According to Oliver Statler, a collector and independent scholar of modern Japanese prints, "Most of his prints fall into a realm of elfin fantasy created in delicate line and color....He (Hatsuyama) particularly likes to interpret humans in terms of plants and animals and vice versa, as in *Flowers, Birds*."

Hatsuyama said, "People who as children loved my illustrations buy my prints out of loyalty. They may be moved by nostalgia too, nostalgia for the happy days of their childhood, when a touch of fantasy was all that was needed to create a bright new world where there was always a happy ending."

Kitaoka Fumio (1918-2007)

Driftwood, Cloud and Bird

Japan, Shōwa period, 1958

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1984
(19245)

Hagiwara Hideo (1913-2007)

Uta Kata

Japan, Shōwa period, 1959

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1991

(24580)

Hagiwara Hideo (1913-2007)

Beach

Japan, Shōwa period, 1958

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1991

(24581)

Yamaguchi Gen (1896-1976)

Deep Attachment

Japan, Shōwa period, 1957

Color woodblock print

Gift of James A. Michener, 1991

(24665)

Kitaoka Fumio (1918-2007)

Fishing Boat and Green Crow

Japan, Shōwa period, 1964

Color woodblock print

From the Estate of Milton Cades, 2000
(26878)