



NEWS RELEASE

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Pristine Collection of Modern Japanese Woodblock Prints On Exhibition This Fall at the Toledo Museum of Art

TOLEDO, OHIO—The Toledo Museum of Art helped introduce modern Japanese prints to American audiences in 1930 and 1936 with two exhibitions of works by contemporary Japanese artists who had revived the traditional art of the woodblock print for a new era. The Museum also produced an authoritative catalog that accompanied the exhibition on a nationwide tour of 10 museums.

Now the Toledo Museum of Art is revisiting the 1930 landmark show in the exhibition *Fresh Impressions: Early Modern Japanese Prints*, on view Oct. 4, 2013–Jan. 1, 2014 in the Canaday Gallery.

This new exhibition underlines the importance of the early-20th-century resurgence of woodblock printmaking in Japan—known as the *shin hanga* (“new prints”) movement, which combined traditional Japanese techniques and subjects with Western-inspired elements—and showcases the Museum’s role in popularizing the genre in the United States and Japan.

Chief Curator Carolyn Putney, who also serves as the Museum’s curator of Asian art, organized the new exhibition, which features 343 prints by 10 leading artists of the *shin hanga* movement.

The Museum also has published a new major catalog that reproduces all 343 prints together in full color for the first time. All but five of the prints are owned by the Museum, most of them donated by local business leader and print collector Hubert D. Bennett in 1939.

Rarely shown since the 1930s, the prints are not only in pristine condition but also are considered to be among the finest and most comprehensive collections of *shin hanga* at any American museum.

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The exhibition also presents objects depicted in the prints but not included in the original 1930 show, such as kimono, Kabuki costumes, samurai swords and armor.

A companion exhibition in the Works on Paper Gallery, *Ebb & Flow: Cross-Cultural Prints*, covers the period from the 1930s to the present and explores the global influence of these modern Japanese printmakers.

“The Toledo Museum of Art’s momentous 1930 exhibition inspired many American collectors and museums to add examples of these ‘new prints’ to their collections,” Museum Director Brian Kennedy noted. “Now a new generation of visitors can experience this rare opportunity to view these incredibly vibrant and compelling images for themselves.”

The *shin hanga* movement began in Japan around 1915 and is noted for combining traditional Japanese woodblock technique with an interest in Western aesthetics and a vivid, modern color sensibility. This early-20th-century resurgence of Japanese woodblock printmaking has been described as “a period of Renaissance” in the field.

The prints encompass a variety of subject matter, including traditional landscapes, seascapes, rivers and lakes, beautiful women (*bijinga*), actors (*yakusha-e*), the natural world and wildlife, cities, towns and temples, as well as Western-inspired still life and genre scenes.

The 10 artists in the exhibition are Hashiguchi Goyō (1880-1921), Itō Shinsui (1898-1972), Kawase Hasui (1883-1957), Miki Suizan (1887-1957), Natori Shunsen (1886-1960), Oda Kazuma (1882-1956), Ohara Shōson, also known as Ohara Kōson (1877-1945), Yamamura Toyonari, also known as Yamamura Kōka (1885-1942), Hiroshi Yoshida (1876-1950) and Yoshikawa Kanpō (1894-1979).

Shin hanga was introduced to the American public in the 1920s through several smaller exhibitions organized to benefit artists affected by the Great Kantō earthquake of 1923. But it was not until TMA’s 1930 show, *A Special Exhibition of Modern Japanese Prints*—co-organized by Toledo curators J. Arthur MacLean (1879-1964) and Dorothy L. Blair (1890-1989), in collaboration with *shin hanga* artist Yoshida—that the movement’s scope was fully examined.

The original catalog, which was fully illustrated in black-and-white and featured artist biographies and descriptions of colors, signatures and seals, became an invaluable resource on the work of modern Japanese printmakers for scholars and enthusiasts; it was reprinted and sold out twice.

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Blair, who is the credited author of the original catalog and the subject of Putney's essay in the new publication, was a pioneering authority on Asian art and culture in a field dominated by men. In 1927 she spent a year studying in Japan at Kyoto Imperial University—the first woman and foreigner accorded that privileged status.

The 352-page catalog accompanying *Fresh Impressions*, with essays by Putney, scholars Kendall H. Brown and Koyama Shukō and artist Paul Binnie, was published with the assistance of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

The exhibition is made possible by members of the Toledo Museum of Art and supported in part by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and by the Ohio Arts Council's sustainable grant program, which is funded in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Admission to the exhibition and to the Museum is free. The companion catalog can be purchased through the Museum Store and online at toledomuseum.org in early October.

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The Toledo Museum of Art is a nonprofit arts institution funded through individual donations, foundation grants, corporate sponsorships and investments. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund programs at the Toledo Museum of Art through a sustainable grant program that encourages economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. Admission to the Museum is free. The Museum is open Tuesday and Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, Noon to 5 p.m.; closed Mondays and major holidays. Friday evening hours are made possible by Fifth Third Bank.

The Museum is located at 2445 Monroe Street at Scottwood Avenue, just west of the downtown business district and one block off I-75 with exit designations posted. For general information, visitors can call 419-255-8000 or 800-644-6862, or visit toledomuseum.org.