

Sukima: Vertical Glimpses of the Floating World (Japanese Print Rotation), June 1, 2018–November 1, 2018

“Floating world pictures,” or ukiyo-e (浮世絵), thrived in Japan during the Edo period (1603–1868), mainly in the form of mass-produced color woodcuts. The students who curated this exhibition chose to present a selection of ukiyo-e prints in vertical format. The Japanese word *sukima* (隙間) refers to a crack or gap, such as the narrow space created by a partially opened sliding door. These prints produce the impression of glimpsing through a door ajar, exciting the viewer’s imagination. Tall, narrow ukiyo-e prints (about 28 inches high by 5 inches wide) were called *hashira-e* (柱絵), or pillar images, because they originally hung on pillars in the interiors of traditional homes as affordable substitutes for painted scrolls. Pillar prints flourished in the 1700s and early 1800s, later giving way to designs stretching over two or three vertically stacked sheets (each about 15 inches by 10 inches). The extended vertical shape prompted designers to create daring compositional arrangements across all major ukiyo-e genres: pictures of beautiful women and actors, warriors and ghosts, close-up views of nature, and images reflecting popular beliefs. All these genres are represented here.

This exhibition was organized by a class of RISD undergraduate students led by Professor Elena Varshavskaya, as part of an ongoing collaboration between RISD faculty and the RISD Museum. Students selected the works for display from the museum’s collection, conducted art historical research, and authored essays and catalogue entries for the volume accompanying the exhibition.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Suzuki Harunobu, Japanese, 1724-1770
Parody of Immortal Kinko (Kinko sennin), ca. 1768
Polychrome woodblock print
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.1050



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Fahri of Bursa, Turkish, d. 1617

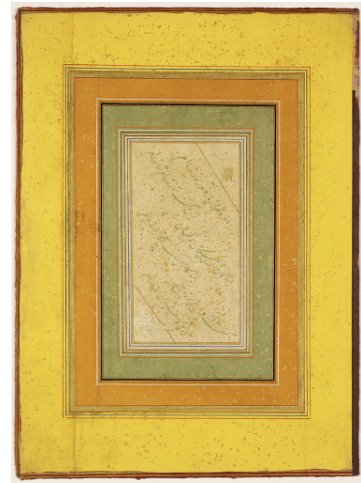
Papercut from a Poetry Album, late 1500s - early 1600s

Script incised through cream-colored paper to reveal green backing paper

Anonymous gift 17.489

This papercut bears couplets of Persian lyric poetry that eloquently speak of the beloved. The letters were cut out of the cream-colored sheet, which was placed on top of a green sheet so the text appears in green.

In all likelihood, this work was originally bound into an album containing other excerpts from Persian poems and perhaps also miniature paintings and drawings.



Fahri of Bursa, Turkish, d. 1617

Papercut from a Poetry Album, late 1500s - early 1600s

White paper script on blue paper

Anonymous gift 17.500

This album sheet is signed by Fahri of Bursa, a celebrated Ottoman Turkish cut-paper artist. In this example, the white letters of the papercut calligraphy are pasted onto a blue paper. The strong contrast between the script and background allows the text to be read easily.



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Suzuki Harunobu, Japanese, 1724-1770

Listening to the Cricket on the Veranda (Engawa no mushikiki), ca. 1770

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1086



Suzuki Harunobu, Japanese, 1724-1770

Courtesan and Kamuro (Yujo to kamuro), ca. 1770

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1087



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Isoda Koryūsai, Japanese, active ca. 1764-1788
Golden Pheasant on Pine (Matsu ni kinkei), ca. 1780
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1090



Kitao Shigemasa, Japanese, 1739-1820
Urokogataya Magobei, Japanese, publisher
Dragon and Tiger (Ryuko), 1770s
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1093



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Utagawa Toyoharu, Japanese, 1735-1814

The Seven Gods of Good Fortune in Their Treasure Ship (Shichifukujin takarabune), 1770s

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1095



Torii Kiyonaga, Japanese, 1752-1815

Nishimuraya Yohachi, Japanese, publisher

Beauty and Willow (Bijin to yanagi), ca. 1780

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1120



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Katsukawa Shuncho, Japanese, fl. ca. 1770's-1790's
Courtesan and Kamuro (Yujo to kamuro), early 1790s
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1127



Katsukawa Shuntei, Japanese, 1770-1820
The Warriors Sato Tadanobu and Yokawa Kakuhan (Sato Tadanobu; Yokawa Kakuhan), ca. 1800
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1158



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Kikukawa Eizan, Japanese, 1787-1867
Courtesan on Parade (Oiran dochu), 1830s
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1167



Keisai Eisen, Japanese, 1790-1848
Courtesan with a Letter (Fumi o motsu yujo), 1830s
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1169



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Utagawa Kunisada, Japanese, 1786-1865

The Warrior Matano Goro Kagehisa Dropping a Rock on the Youth Sanada Yoichi Yoshisada (Matano Goro Kagehisa Sanada Yoichi Yoshisada), 1810s

Polychrome woodblock print

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1299



Toyohara Kunichika, Japanese, 1835-1900

Fukuda Kumajiro, Japanese, publisher

Umezawa to, block carver

Actors Onoe Kikugoro V as Okiku and Ichikawa Danjuro IX as Asayama Tessan in The Mansion of Plates and the Cursed Makeup Mirror (Sarayashiki kesho no sugatami), 1892

Polychrome woodblock print

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2003.39.5



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Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Crane's Nest and Rising Sun (Hinode sugomori no tsuru), 1845
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.639



Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797-1858
Sanoya Kihei, Japanese, publisher
Hawk on Pine (Matsu ni taka), 1852
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.640



RISD MUSEUM

Utagawa Kuniyoshi, Japanese, 1797-1861
Maruya Seijiro, publisher
Hawk on Pine (Matsu ni taka), 1830s
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. 34.642

