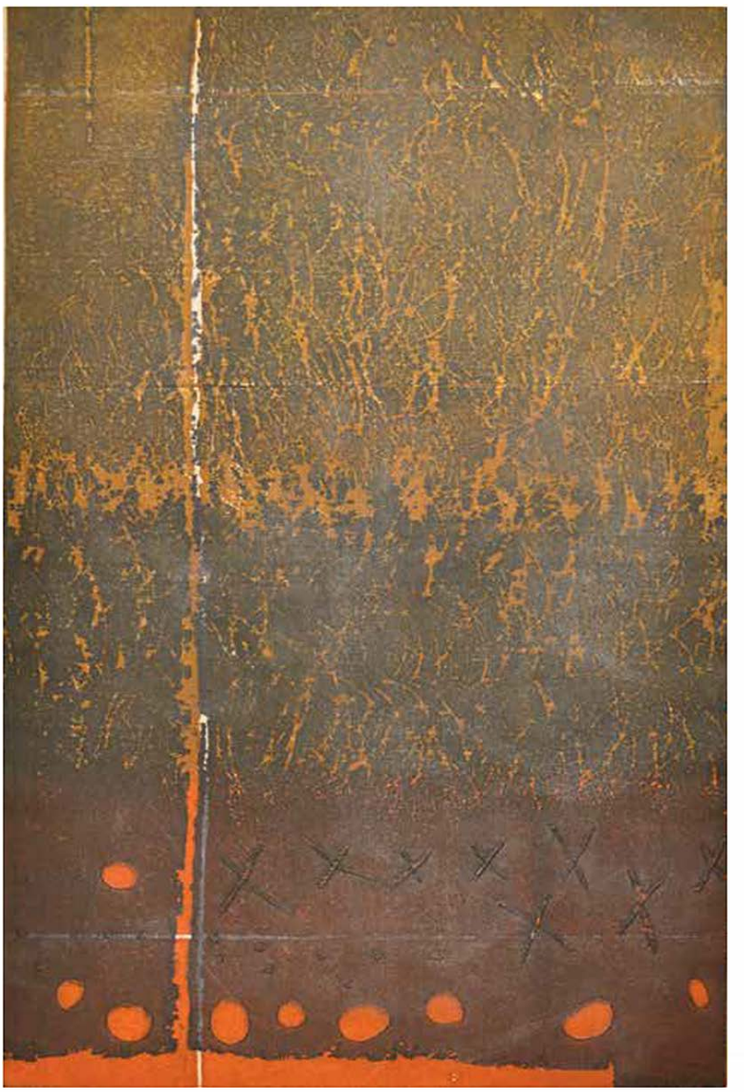
ABSTRACT TRADITIONS

Postwar Japanese Prints from the DePauw University Permanent Art Collection



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Japanese Postwar Prints – Repurposing the Past, Innovation in the Present
Pauline Ota

Sōsaku Hanga and the Monozukuri Spirit
Hiroko Chiba

HAGIWARA Hideo
Ancient Song No. 8 / 1965
Woodblock print on paper
36-1/4 x 23-3/4 inches
DePauw Art Collection: 2000.7.8
Gift of the Estate of Dr. Leland D. Stoddard ’40

1.
SHINODA Toko
Untitled / late 20th century
Lithographic print on paper
27-9/16 x 21-3/4 inches DePauw Art
Collection: 2016.5.1 Gift of David T. Prosser
Jr. ’65

JAPANESE POSTWAR PRINTS – REPURPOSING THE PAST, INNOVATION IN THE PRESENT

Pauline Ota

INTRODUCTION

In art, as in life, the past can inspire creativity in the present. Though not always readily apparent, many of the prints represented in this exhibition result from an artist's fruitful dialog with the past. Printmaking itself exemplifies a centuries-old tradition in East Asia.[1] In seventeenth century Japan, the dominant print form was the woodblock print or *ukiyo-e*. To generate an *ukiyo-e* print, a team of skilled individuals engaged in a multi-step process, which at its core required the manipulation of a surface (woodblocks) through which multiple identical images were created.[2] The Japanese postwar prints of this exhibition however differ from the *ukiyo-e* print in a number of ways. One type of postwar print, sōsaku hanga or creative prints, for example, can be distinguished from *ukiyo-e* in their production process and raison d'être. The *sōsaku hanga* artist designs the image, processes the surface on which the image will be produced, and prints the image; the artist alone executes all aspects of the printmaking process. And, the artistic product stands not as an object for mass reproduction and broad dissemination, but rather as a unique creation expressing a larger theme or idea.[3] This creativity in support of a central concept identifies *sōsaku hanga* as a modern art form, one that was fully engaged in twentieth century discourses. In short, *s*ōsaku hanga are understood as "works of original artistic expression."[4] At the same time, *s*ōsaku hanga, as well as the other prints included in this exhibition, can often be described as *repurposing* the past, from their method of creation to their subject matter.[5] This is not to imply an intentional engagement with tradition on the artist's part (though at times that indeed was the case); rather, the past might serve as a foil against which the artist could assert an individual creative impulse, a response to societal conditions, or a sense of identity through the celebration (or denial) of preserved artistic conventions. To study Japanese postwar prints therefore often demands an analysis that employs *visual historicism* – referring to the identification and interpretation of visual phenomena of the past for the purposes of commentary or critique – to borrow the scholar John Szostak's term.[6] Moreover, these prints also arise from a transcultural interchange between Japan and the Euro-American West, an artistic exchange that has a long history, dating back to pre-modern times. Thus, these postwar prints are not just part of a Japanese art movement, but also, in their dialog with techniques and designs prevalent outside Japan, they represent groundbreaking contributions to the contemporary print genre internationally, as well as to the larger realm of postwar contemporary art.

UKIYO-E, THE WOODBLOCK PRINTS OF EARLY MODERN JAPAN, AND POSTWAR PRINTS

In order to approach Japanese postwar prints with an analytical arsenal that allows for visual historicism, it is important to discuss the printmaking culture of Japan's early modern or Tokugawa period (also known as the Edo period, 1603-1868), which immediately preceded the modern or Meiji era (1868-1912). Contemporary prints rely upon one or a combination of four production processes – relief, intaglio, planographic (lithograph), and stencil; the traditional print form in Japan however is the woodblock print, resulting from the relief method applied to blocks of wood.[7] The commercially produced woodblock prints of the Tokugawa period, *ukiyo-e* or pictures of the floating world arose from the vibrant popular culture of the time.[8] People of all walks of life enjoyed *ukiyo-e* prints, which featured images of famed beauties, Kabuki actors, cityscapes, scenic views of famous places, and so much more. During the mid-nineteenth century, *ukiyo-e*'s popularity spread to Western Europe and the United States, the evidence of which can be found in the private collections and museum inventories of today.[9]

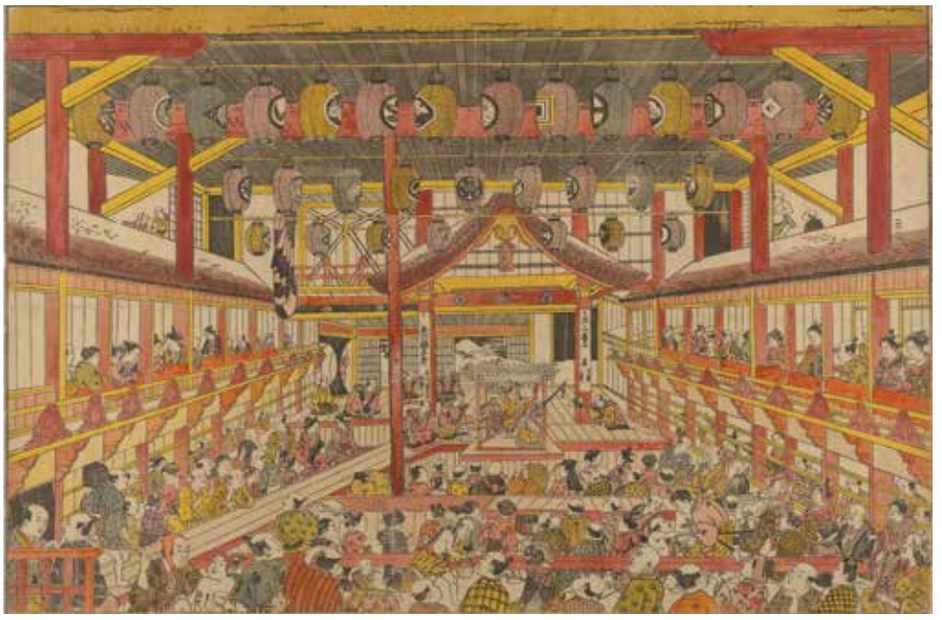
Production of an *ukiyo-e* print was a group effort.[10] An artist designed the print. Then, a key drawing representing that design was handed off to the block carver, who pasted the drawing onto a block of wood, cut along the grain, and carved away the back surface until a reverse relief of the image remained. All areas that would not be printed in black would be scooped out – the carver cut along each side of the outlines. This sculpted piece of wood was called the key block. A printer would then ink the key block with *sumi* (a Japanese black ink) and apply a sheet of paper, gently rubbing the back of it with an implement called a *baren* to ensure even application of ink. The resulting work was the key print with which the woodblocks for each color would be carved. The printer would apply a sheet of paper first on the key block, then on the color blocks (woodblocks would be carved on both sides for efficiency, and thus were used to print two different colors, one on each side), following a guide mark or *kentō* composed of raised ridges typically found near a corner of the block and approximately one inch below the edge of the print-to-be.[11] Experienced printers aligned paper with impressive accuracy. The colors employed on these prints were water-based vegetable and mineral pigments. Such color woodblock prints or *nishiki-e* (brocade pictures) were mass produced, fairly inexpensive, and extremely popular.[12] In short, *ukiyo-e* printmaking was a commercial venture, which relied upon a team of skilled individuals, managed by a publisher.

In the twentieth century, *sōsaku hanga* artists repurposed this traditional form of printmaking, converting the finished print from a commercial object to a singular work of art through the consolidation of labor into the hands of the individual artist – she became designer, carver, and printer. In 1904, Yamamoto Kanae (1882-1946) produced a self-carved and self-printed effort, *Fisherman*.[13] With this work, Kanae embraced the creative potential of the print medium while concurrently rejecting the collaborative format of pre-modern

ukiyo-e, as well as the mass production of the image. Kanae envisioned such prints as a "people's art," due to the medium's origins in the more populist woodblock tradition; thus, the self-carved, self-printed work was promoted initially through art programs targeted at peasants and farmers.[14] But, as *s*ōsaku hanga developed into an art movement, it achieved success first in the international art world and then in Japan as a fine art. As Alicia Volk has demonstrated, the relationships built between *s*ōsaku hanga artists and interested Americans during the U.S. occupation of Japan following the end of World War II proved crucial to the wider dissemination and international success of the movement.[15] The artists, Yoshida Hiroshi (1876-1950) and Onchi Kōshirō (1891-1955), one of the leaders of the *s*ōsaku hanga movement along with Hiratsuka Un'ichi (1895-1997), hosted printmaking demonstrations for Americans in their homes. Onchi's First Thursday Society (Ichimokukai) welcomed artists, the art historian Fujikake Shizuya (1881-1958), Oliver Statler (1915-2002) who would author *Modern Japanese Prints: An Art Reborn* in 1959, William C. Hartnett (n.d.), director of recreational activities for the Occupation forces, and later, the collector and novelist James Michener (1907-1997).[16] These interactions in Japan stimulated American interest in Japanese printmaking, particularly *sōsaku hanga*.

By the early 1950s, *sōsaku hanga* was achieving international recognition. Saitō Kiyoshi (1907-1997) received first prize for his woodcut *Steady Gaze* (and Komai Tetsurō (1920-1976) won second prize for *Momentary Illusion*, a copperplate etching) at the 1951 Sao Paolo Biennale.[17] Saitō and Komai were the only Japanese awarded honors – their fellow countrymen exhibiting paintings and sculptures received no acknowledgement from the jury. Japanese print artists, particularly those producing *sōsaku hanga*, continued to be successful at international venues, prompting Onchi Kōshirō to form the International Print Association (Kokusai Hanga Kyōkai) in 1953 and Japan to host the 1957 International Print Biennial in Tokyo.[18] Through these triumphs, Japanese printmaking became entrenched in the larger realm of contemporary art. Visually engaging with the societal concerns and the international art movements of the times, *sōsaku hanga*'s zenith of popularity occurred from the 1950s to the 1970s.[19]

In their repurposing of the *ukiyo-e* tradition, *sōsaku hanga* artists explored new methods and the impact of these experimental methods on the finished print. As the art historians Helen Nagata and Helen Merritt explain, "while the *ukiyo-e* tradition emphasized perfecting techniques, the creative print [*sōsaku hanga*] movement stressed the discovery of effects through techniques."[20] Artists also explored other print production processes, particularly in the postwar period. For example, Shinoda Tōkō's (1913-) untitled print is a lithograph, not a woodblock print (figure 1). Moreover, although she designed the image, Shinoda relied upon the master lithographer Kihachi Kimura (1934-2014) to print the work, thus engaging with the division of labor common in the pre-modern era.[21] Indeed a number of the artists represented in this exhibition not only created *sōsaku hanga*, but also various other types of prints, as well as sculptures and paintings. Shinoda herself, like many print artists, is also a painter.[22]



2.
Okumura Masanobu (1693-1768).
Interior of Nakamura-za theatre in Edo, 1745 (ca. 11th month). Depiction of renowned actor Ichikawa Ebizo performing 'Ya no ne Goro'. Published by Okumura Genroku.
Hand colored woodblock print on paper. 43.8 x 65 cm. Obj. Ref. No. 1910,0614,0.2
British Museum, London, Great Britain

3.
Shiba Kokan (1747-1818), *Ryogoku Bridge* (Tweelandbruk, Bridge between Two Lands).
Hand-colored, copperplate etching print. 1787.

POSTWAR PRINTS AND TRANSCULTURAL DIALOG

Many modern Japanese printmakers participated in a transcultural dialog with the Euro-American art world, training in Western art academies and familiarizing themselves with the ideas arising from various Euro-American art movements. Ties between postwar printmaking and modern painting, as evinced by the work of Shinoda Tōkō among others, were particularly strong.[23] As Bert Winther-Tamaki has convincingly explained, the impact of Japanese and U.S. artistic exchange produced a rich hybridity often denied due to identity politics.[24] The case of abstract expressionism, about which Winther-Tamaki argues for the clear influence of Japanese calligraphy and metaphysical ideas on what is consistently touted as a uniquely American form of modernism,[25] is particularly germane to a discussion of postwar Japanese prints for two reasons: first, because of the engagement of print artists with modern painting, mentioned above, and second, because of the calligraphic quality evident in a number of abstract, postwar prints, a few of which will be discussed below.

In fact, such transnational discourses on the subject of prints, albeit indirect, occurred as far back as the eighteenth century. In Japan, Okumura Masanobu (1686-1764) created prints evincing a slightly flawed form of single point perspective known as *uki-e* (floating pictures) in the mid-eighteenth century (figure 2).[26] Within a decade after Masanobu's passing, Maruyama Ōkyo (1733-1795) would produce *megane-e* (eyeglass pictures), which are prints or small paintings designed for viewing through an *optique* or a peep box;[27] *megane-e* demonstrate the mastery of perspectival technique, which was highly valued in Euro-American visual culture but not in East Asia.[28] Masanobu and Ōkyo learned about this Western method of representation through imported imagery and self-study. The Tokugawa period's policy of national seclusion (*sakoku*) prevented direct interaction between Japanese and Euro-American artists. Nonetheless, foreign books and prints facilitated the mastery of the intaglio print method on copperplates, which required the processing of a metal plate in order to create not only the finished image, but also the various textures evident within it.[29] Shiba Kōkan (1747-1818) experimented with and produced copperplate etchings, relying upon his knowledge of metalworking, a skill typically applied to the decoration of sword guards (figure 3).[30] It was Aōdō Denzen (1748-1822) however, who with the support of his feudal lord, created copperplate etchings that surpassed Kōkan's in overall quality, realism, and detail.[31] Thus, it can be said that Japanese postwar print artists not only reaped the benefits of a transcultural exchange, but also repurposed Tokugawa-era engagement with European compositional strategies and printmaking methods, supplementing them through the study of modern Euro-American artistic techniques and motifs in order to serve their own agendas.

FOUR POSTWAR PRINTS – REPURPOSING THE PAST, INNOVATION IN THE PRESENT

The vast majority of the works in this exhibition are abstract prints, an art form particularly suited to the woodblock medium "… because it was conducive to the creation of flat, monochromatic shapes and varied textures."[32] Irrespective of the print method however,

the abstraction serves as a means of artistic expression, which at times references or honors the past. In *Dice, Utamaro* (figure 4), an etching employing the intaglio method,[33] Ōuchi Makoto (1926-1989) includes two motifs that consistently appear in his works: the cube and *ukiyo-e* imagery. Ōuchi was a lifelong fan of Kabuki theatre and often included references to representations of Kabuki actors or beautiful women by famed *ukiyo-e* artists in print designs.[34] Floating slightly to the left of center, a yellow-orange cube dominates the composition with a bluish-green-backed fish posed in the midst of a backflip to the cube's right. Just above the cube, a horizontal bar of stylized waves (a decorative motif also dating back to the pre-modern period) runs across the print. Four pink petals, one above the stylized waves and three below it, also appear. Three of the petals are placed in a manner that if connected by lines would form a triangle, suggesting a linkage between the cube, the fish, and the waves. A sense of flatness pervades the image, which is broken by the three-dimensional cube; indeed, it is the cube that provides the clue as to the possible larger meaning of the work.

Three sides of this cube can be seen. On one face, a woman with a pre-modern, upraised hairstyle appears to be lost in thought with her right hand resting on her chin. She closely resembles the subject of the famed *ukiyo-e* artist Kitagawa Utamaro's (1753?-1806) print "Reflective Love" from the series *Anthology of Poems: the Love Section* (Kasen koi no bu) of 1793/94 (figure 5). On the other face, two upside-down images are side-by-side. A slender strip with a set of four wigs vertically aligned appears next to the representation of another woman in pre-modern attire looking down at what seems to be a letter. The former refers to the equivalent of *ukiyo-e* paper dolls – the wigs could be cut out and placed upon similarly cut out figures of Kabuki actors, for example.[35] The second alludes to another Utamaro print, "Love that Meets Each Night" from the same series *Anthology of Poems: the Love Section* of 1793/94. On the top face of the cube, part of a red seal enclosed in a circle is visible; given that the two other faces of the cube refer to specific works by Utamaro, it is likely that the seal is one that was employed by this *ukiyo-e* artist.

What then is the connection between all of these compositional elements? The key lies in the title of the Utamaro print series that is referenced in Ōuchi's work, *Anthology of Poems: the Love Section*. The underlying theme could be interpreted as love. The two women depicted appear to be caught up in love affairs – one is thinking about her lover while the other has received a letter from a paramour. Romantic love, however, is fleeting, like blossoms after a full bloom; the emotion, all too often, falls away like flower petals. The Japanese word for love, "koi," also is a homonym for the name of the well-known fish, one of which seems to be depicted in the print, just to the right of the cube. Lastly, like the waves in the ocean, lovers come and go, with a former flame cast aside for a new love interest just as actors might dispose of one wig in favor of another. Ōuchi himself has described the cubes in his prints as representing man-made confinement, a loss of freedom.[36] Love can also be thought of as a prison of sorts, though many might disagree. In the end, Ōuchi's design can be understood

4.
OUCHI Makoto
Dice, Utamaro / 1948
Etching on paper
25 x 30-1/16 inches
DePauw Art Collection: 2000.7.54
Gift of the Estate of Dr. Leland D. Stoddard ’40

5.
Kitagawa Utamaro I, Japanese, (?)–1806
Publisher: Tsutaya Jūzaburō (Kōshodō), Japanese
Reflective Love (Mono omou koi),
from the series Anthology of Poems:
The Love Section (Kasen koi no bu)
Japanese, Edo period, about 1793–94
(Kansei 5–6)
Woodblock print (nishiki-e);
ink and color on paper
Vertical ōban; 39 x 26.1 cm
(15 3/8 x 10 1/4 in.)
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
William S. and John T. Spaulding Collection
21.6415
Photograph © 2016 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

6.
MAKI Haku
Work 73-49 (Moon-Water) / mid-20th century
Woodblock print and embossing on paper
9-11/16 x 17-1/2 inches
DePauw Art Collection: 2000.7.38
Gift of the Estate of Dr. Leland D. Stoddard ’40

7.
Franz Kline (1910-1962).
Mahoning, 1956
Oil and paper on canvas
80 3/8 × 100 1/2in. (204.2 × 255.3 cm)
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase, with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art 57.10
Photograph by Sheldan C. Collins

in many different ways – this visual repurposing of the past is multivalent. The image can be about the expressive power of flattened forms set in the expanse of white, empty space; the composition might be read as a clever discourse on love, relying upon the symbolism of *ukiyo-e*; or, the work is simply about freedom and confinement, a subject commensurate with the climate of the Cold War and associated conflicts that pervaded the latter half of the twentieth century. Ōuchi's innovation lies in his ability to suggest so much with so little, as well as to bring the past skillfully into the present.

While Ōuchi engaged with the art of Japan's Tokugawa era, Shinoda Tōkō and Maki Haku (born Maejima Tadaaki, 1924-2000) incorporated the calligraphic forms of *kanji* or Chinese characters into their designs. Maki, who trained under Onchi Kōshirō, created simple works of elegance, relying upon the at times playful rendering of *kanji* with *sumi* ink to articulate emotion.[37] From the 1960s onward, a splash of color was added to compositions as evident in *Work 73-49 (Moon-Water)* (figure 6) dating to the 1970s.[38] *Moon-Water* features the character for water (水) dynamically rendered on the print with a confident hand and a prominent, egg-shaped mass of yellow-orange that represents the moon, tilting in parallel to the *kanji* beside it. The use of Chinese characters for ink play and for personal expression dates back centuries to Japan's Muromachi period (1392-1573), but Maki's use of double paper, embossed using a still-wet cement block, is a modern innovation.[39] The textured, pure white paper further enhances the dynamic character and splash of color in *Water-Moon*. Shinoda's untitled lithograph (figure 1) instead suggests the brushstrokes making up a kanji, possibly even depicting a Chinese character or two, albeit in highly abstracted form. The artist's use of oil-based black ink (which differs from *sumi* ink) and the planographic method produces a subtle, but powerful, bubbling effect on the final image. The result is a work of concise, abstract expressionism in print – Shinoda lived in New York from 1956-1958 and interacted with the art dealer Betty Parsons (1900-1982), as well as the painters Jackson Pollock (1912-1956), Franz Kline (1910-1962), Robert Motherwell (1915-1991), and Willem de Kooning (1904-1997), all of whom likely had an impact on her artistic vision.[40] If Maki's work is dynamic, then Shinoda's can be described as an embodiment of confident understatement (perhaps a Japanese woman's response to an art world dominated by white men?). Both repurpose the modern ink play of the recent past – which in turn was a transcultural repurposing of traditional Japanese calligraphy – engaging with a visual discourse with the work of the abstract expressionists such as Franz Kline (figure 7). It is their experimentation with materials and method, however, that marks Shinoda's and Maki's contributions to contemporary printmaking, as well as to the contemporary art world.

In contrast to the minimalist compositions of Shinoda Tōkō and Maki Haku, Mizufune Rokushū (1912-80) created richly layered and complex woodblock prints such as *Shade Bone* (figure 8). Although he studied printmaking with one of the leaders of the *sōsaku hanga* movement, Hiratsuka Un'ichi, Mizufune is known more for his sculptures in his native Japan.[41] His two-dimensional work tends towards the thoughtful and experimental, rather than bold.[42] Mizufune himself once explained:

> I like the weak and tired objects that have been forgotten. I don't search out the gorgeous or the gay. I am inspired by the imperfect and the helpless. That is an Oriental thought (Buddhist philosophy) that controls my art expression.[43]

For example, *Shade Bone* (figure 8) results from a meticulous artistic process. When designing a print Mizufune worked with cut out pieces of colored paper, moving and layering them in various ways, much like a collage. Then, the artist would cut into the wood, working against the grain and leaving rough markings along the edges of the shapes. Lastly, for the printing process, Mizufune employed thick, opaque paints. The initial layer typically is a solid black across the entire paper upon which the rest of the colors were added.[44] This bottom layer of black is visible along the edges of *Shade Bone*, peeking out from the layer of grey pigment, which had been applied over the black. Indeed the paper is so saturated with layers of colors that it no longer lays flat – the weight of the pigments has rippled the print.

Such a combination of abstract shapes and thick lines with lighter shades of color contrasted against a darker one might affect a soothing calm in the viewer. The composition is centered in a sea of grey, but the thick black line running from the center right of the print across the middle of the amalgam of colors and shapes serves as an anchor, like a stabilizing hand grasping a clutch of forms. Above, a series of thick white lines constitute an arch of sorts before a blue background; within this sea of blue a vertical black line meets a short horizontal line, suggesting another arch. The overall effect is a rendering of infinite space receding into the blue. This contained sense of eternal space is balanced below with two somewhat parallel white lines placed before a mustard-brown backdrop and framing two circles, one above the other. The upper circle is lime green and set against a rectangular area of forest green. Below this lime green circle is a misshapen square of brown; underneath this is another circle of white. A slightly diagonal line of purple marks the bottom of the brown square, above which is a thick swath of black, the "foot" of the entire abstract ensemble. Taken together, the two circles, brown square, line of purple, and black swath suggest an Atlas-like support, balancing the open endlessness of the forms above. The composition is deceptively complex, yet pleasing. The shapes are indeed imperfect, evidence of Mizufune's cutting of the woodblocks appears on the final print, and the image is decidedly not gorgeous; yet, viewers can be drawn to the work anyway. True to the aims of the *sōsaku hanga* movement, Mizufune experimented with effects and placed a spotlight on them in *Shade Bone*. In repurposing the traditional woodblock print, Mizufune also seems to have engaged in a dialog with modernist painting discourses dominant during the postwar years, particularly in his interest in the layering of thick pigments vis-à-vis the abstract expressionists. Compared to the spare elegance of Maki's *Work 73-35 (Space)* (figure 9) of the 1970s, *Shade Bone* seems quite dense. Mizufune's achievement lies in the sense of calm that belies this complexity, situating this print in a different artistic sphere, one worlds away from the frenetic energy of, for example, a Jackson Pollack drip painting.

8.
MIZUFUNE Rokushū
Shade Bone / mid-20th century
Woodblock print on paper
23-1/2 x 17-1/4 inches
DePauw Art Collection: 2000.7.44
Gift of the Estate of Dr. Leland D. Stoddard ’40

9.
MAKI Haku
Work 73-35 (SPACE) / mid-20th century
Woodblock print and embossing on paper
20-3/4 x 15-1/8 inches
DePauw Art Collection: 2000.7.36
Gift of the Estate of Dr. Leland D. Stoddard ’40

CONCLUSION

The past lives in the present. The Japanese postwar prints of this exhibition clearly demonstrate this notion in their expressive creativity, which results from the repurposing of traditional techniques and/or motifs. The artists who produced these prints also continued a dialog with their peers outside Japan – one begun long before the modern era – that enriched and inspired their work. Indeed these printmakers contributed significantly to the genre of contemporary prints. And, the larger realm of contemporary art is richer due to their efforts. While it remains to be seen what the lasting legacy of Japanese postwar prints will be, their variety and depth are evident in the sampling represented by this exhibition. When studying the simple beauty of one of Maki Haku's works, the elegant assemblage of an Ōuchi composition, the mesmerizing effects of a Shinoda lithograph, or the rich complexity of a sculptural print by Mizufune Rokushū, a sense of awe arises. These images demand careful scrutiny as they articulate a stimulating individualism, a response to the present that is emboldened by their engagement with the artistic past. It can be said therefore that the future of Japanese printmaking is quite promising indeed.

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1 The most prevalent pre-modern print form in East Asia, the woodblock print, is a Chinese invention. The oldest surviving woodblock printed Chinese works were found in the Library Cave at Dunhuang and date to the Tang dynasty (618-907). In Japan, the *Hyakumantō darani* (Million Pagoda Dharani, c. 764-770), a Buddhist text preserved at Hōryū-ji temple in Nara represents the earliest extant example of a woodblock printed text. See Hans Bjarne Thomsen, "Chinese Woodblock Prints and Their Influence on Japanese Ukiyo-e Prints" in *The Hotei Encyclopedia of Japanese Woodblock Prints*, volume 1, edited by Amy Reigle Newland (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005), 87.

2 Margaret K. Johnson and Dale K. Hilton, *Japanese Prints Today* (Tokyo: Shufunotomo Co., Ltd., 1980), 14.

3 It should be made clear that not all pre-modern Japanese prints were produced for commercial purposes. There were privately commissioned prints, known as *surimono*, as well as literary works, reproduced using moveable type, not woodblocks. See John T. Carpenter, *Reading Surimono: the Interplay of Text and Image in Japanese Prints* (Zurich, Leiden, and Boston: Museum Rietberg in association with Hotei Publishing, 2008).

4 Alexandra Munroe, "Art is My Life: Gaston Petit and the Jack and Suzy Wadsworth Collection of Japanese Prints" in *Expanding Frontiers: the Jack and Suzy Wadsworth Collection of Postwar Japanese Prints* (Eugene, OR: Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2015), 10.

5 John Szostak, "Visual Historicism as Creative Hermeneutics: the Cast of Neo-Rimpa" (Panel on "Repurposing the Past: Historicism in Contemporary Japanese Art," Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference, Seattle, WA, April 1, 2016).

6 Ibid.

7 Johnson and Hilton, 16-31. As discussed in this essay, pre-modern Japanese employed other forms of printmaking besides relief printing in woodblock, such as the intaglio method

on copperplates. But, before the modern era, the vast majority of printed matter was produced via the woodblock relief method.

8 *Ukiyo-e* include paintings as well. Nonetheless, the best known examples of *ukiyo-e* both within and without Japan remain woodblock prints. For a comprehensive overview of the subject see Amy Reigle Newland, ed., *The Hotei Encyclopedia of Japanese Woodblock Prints*, volume 1 & 2 (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005).

9 A recent exhibition at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts focused on this phenomenon, as well as Euro-American interest in other forms of Japanese art such as textiles and ceramics. See the exhibition catalog, Helen Burnham, *Looking East: Western Artists and the Allure of Japan* (Boston: MFA Publications, 2014).

10 Based on Helen M. Nagata and Helen Merritt, "Revisiting the History of Modern Japanese Prints" in *Revisiting Modern Japanese Prints: Selected Works from the Richard F. Grott Family Collection*, edited by Helen M. Nagata and Helen Merritt (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Art Museum, 2008), 12; Helen M. Nagata, "Ukiyo-e in the Eyes of the Creative Print Artist" in *Made in Japan: the Postwar Creative Print Movement*, edited by Alicia Volk (Milwaukee and Seattle: Milwaukee Art Museum in Association with the University of Washington Press, 2005), 24-25; and Shiho Sasaki, "Materials and Techniques" in *The Hotei Encyclopedia of Japanese Woodblock Prints*, volume 1, edited by Amy Reigle Newland (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005), 338-341.

11 In print parlance, the guide mark is known as the registration key. Registration or registry refers to the exact placement of the paper onto the color blocks over successive blocks. See Ronald G. Robinson, *Contemporary Printmaking in Japan* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1965), 14.

12 Julie Nelson Davis cites the writer Santō Kyōden (1761-1816) who recalled that a single sheet print cost 20 *mon* in the early nineteenth century; given that the a bowl of noodles was 16 *mon* and the price of entry to a public bath was 10 *mon*, Davis concludes that *ukiyo-e* prints were quite affordable. See Davis, *Utamaro and the Spectacle of Beauty* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 15.

13 Tsuji Nobuo辻惟雄, *History of Japanese Art*日本美術の歴史 (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2005), 384.

14 Nagata, "Ukiyo-e in the Eyes of the Creative Print Artist," 23 and Nagata & Merritt, "Revisiting the History of Modern Japanese Prints," 17.

15 Alicia Volk, "Japanese Prints Go Global: *Sōsaku Hanga* in an International Context" in *Made in Japan: the Postwar Creative Print Movement*, edited by Alicia Volk (Milwaukee, Seattle: Milwaukee Art Museum in association with the University of Washington Press, 2005), 5-17.

16 Ibid, 7-9.

17 Ibid, 11.

18 Ibid, 6 and Maureen de Vries, "Printmaking During the War Years and After: 1931-1960" in *Waves of Renewal: Modern Japanese Prints, 1900-1960: Selections from the Nihon no Hanga Collection, Amsterdam*, edited by Chris Uhlenbeck (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2016), 89.

19 Anne Rose Kitagawa, "Expanding Frontiers in Japanese Art at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art" in *Expanding Frontiers: the Jack and Suzy Wadsworth Collection of Postwar Japanese Prints* (Eugene, OR: Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon, 2015), 17.

20 Nagata and Merritt, 16.

21 Johnson and Hilton, 54.

22 Ibid, 55-56.

23 Nagata and Merritt, 17.

24 Bert Winther-Tamaki, *Art in the Encounter of Nations* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 5-18.

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26 Oka Yasumasa岡泰正, "A Study of Chinese Optical Paintings And 'Uki-e' Japanese Perspective Prints – On 'An Essay Regarding Chinese Peepshow History' By E Ying中国の西湖景と日本の浮絵 一 阿英「閑話西湖景「洋片」発展史略」をめぐって," *Bulletin of the Kobe City Museum* 15 (1999): 1-22.

27 Also known as "Dutch glasses," an *optique* is a viewing device through which a perspective print or painting would be reflected on a piece of glass and then studied, enhancing the illusion of depth. Pictures created for the *optique* must therefore be reverse images. Peep boxes resemble *optiques*, but the image viewed is not reflected in a mirror; thus images for peep boxes are not executed in reverse.

28 Oka Yasumasa岡泰正, *A New Consideration of Megane-e* 眼鏡絵新考 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1992).

29 For a concise overview of the subject, see Akiko Walley, "Broadening the Scope: Early History of Intaglio, Lithography, and Screenprinting in Japan" in *Expanding Frontiers: The Jack and Suzy Wadsworth Collection of Postwar Japanese Prints* (Eugene, OR: Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2015),
20-27.

30 Calvin French, *Shiba Kōkan: Artist, Innovator, and Pioneer in the Westernization of Japan* (New York: Weatherhill, 1974) and Tsukahara Akira, "The Early Copperplate Prints of Shiba Kōkan and Aōdō Denzen" in *Japan Envisions the West*, edited by Yukiko Shirahara (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 2007), 119-133.

31 Tsukahara, 128-133 and *The Age of Aōdō Denzen*亜欧堂田善の時代 (Tokyo: Fuchu Art Museum, 2006).

32 Alicia Volk, "Points of Appreciation for Sōsaku Hanga" in *Made in Japan: The Postwar Creative Print Movement*, edited by Alicia Volk (Milwaukee and Seattle: Milwaukee Art Museum in association with University of Washington Press, 2005), 61

33 Akiko Walley notes that the content of Ōuchi's work, which typically references pre-modern motifs, leads one to expect the employment of woodblocks; nonetheless, Ōuchi defies expectations by working with the intaglio or planographic technique. See Walley, "Ōuchi Makoto大内マコト 1926-1989" in *Expanding Frontiers: the Jack and Suzy Wadsworth Collection of Postwar Japanese Prints* (Eugene, OR: Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2015), 90.

34 Johnson and Hilton, 51-53.

35 *Comical Ukiyo-e: Humorous Pictures and the School of Kuniyoshi* 笑う浮世絵一劇画と国芳一門 (Tokyo: Ukiyo-e Ota Memorial Museum of Art, 2013), 136.

36 Johnson and Hilton, 52.

37 Francis Blakemore, *Who's Who in Modern Prints*, 5th edition (New York, Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1983), 99.

38 Daniel Tretiak, *The Life and Works of Haku Maki* (Denver: Outskirts Press Inc., 2007), 74. The seal on the print matches those identified as having been used by Maki in the 1970s.

39 Blakemore, 99.

40 Esther Weng, "Shoda Tōkō 篠田桃紅 Born 1913" in *Expanding Frontiers: The Jack and Suzy Wadsworth Collection of Postwar Japanese Prints* (Eugene, OR: Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2015), 62.

41 Helen Merritt and Nanako Yamada, *Guide to Modern Japanese Woodblock Prints: 1900-1975* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 93-94.

42 Blakemore, 116.

43 Johnson and Hilton, 72.

44 Adapted from Ibid, 78.

1.
KAWANO Kaoru
TWILIGHT / 1955
Woodblock print on paper
15-1/2 x 22-1/2 inches
DePauw Art Collection: 2000.7.21
Gift of the Estate of Dr. Leland D. Stoddard ’40

2.
MAKI Haku
Work 73-49 (Moon-Water) / mid-20th century
Woodblock print and embossing on paper
9-11/16 x 17-1/2 inches
DePauw Art Collection: 2000.7.38
Gift of the Estate of Dr. Leland D. Stoddard ’40

SŌSAKU HANGA AND THE *MONOZUKURI* SPIRIT

Hiroko Chiba

Hanga 版画 (block prints) is a long-standing art form in Japanese art history and one of the art forms that many Japanese personally experience. Some print *hanga* on their New Year greeting postcards. Some cut a potato and carve a picture on the flat surface as a signature seal (despite its perishability). *Hanga* was, and still is, part of the elementary school art curriculum in Japan. *Hanga*-making represents the long tradition of *monozukuri* – making things.

The concept of *monozukuri* traditionally implies the spirit of craftsmanship that has been the driving force behind traditional arts and crafts making throughout Japanese history. It stresses the importance of process, constant improvement, and details. The concept has been adapted in the contemporary manufacturing industry, including the automobile and technology sectors. In education, the approach is implemented early on as a curricular goal in arts and crafts which is found in the guidelines written by The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. The arts and crafts curriculum provides opportunities for children to find joy in creating and crafting art as well as appreciating great works.[1]

I believe I was introduced to the genre of *hanga* as a fourth or fifth grader. I still remember the excitement of getting a set of engraving tools – a small u-gouge and v-gouge, a wide gouge, perhaps a small knife, and a round *baren* (a disc used to burnish the back of a sheet to transfer ink) nicely wrapped with a bamboo leaf, all neatly lined up in a compact case. The subject for our *hanga* was typically a classmate, a scene from school or some form of still life. Our teacher instructed us on the three steps involved in the making of *hanga* – *drawing*, carving, and printing. *Hanga*-making is probably the first serious encounter with *monozukuri* for many Japanese children.

It was exciting to see how the carved wood was printed on the paper, despite the fact that the objects on the prints did not look quite the way we imagined. It was our *monozukuri*.
It was only much later that I learned there was an artistic movement called *sōsaku hanga*. The three steps involved in making *hanga* – self-drawing, self-carving, and self-printing – reflect the principle of the *sōsaku hanga* movement which took place in early 20th century Japan. The principle of "do-it-yourself" (in lieu of having a specialist carry out each step, as in the process of creating *ukiyo-e*[2]) gave a great deal of freedom to the artists in creating their art. This process was carried out by remarkable artists such as Yamamoto Kanae, Onchi Koshiro, Maki Haku, Takehisa Yumeji, Munakata Shiko, and many others.

I had the privilege of seeing the collection of *sōsaku hanga* at DePauw University before the exhibition was installed. The collection of *hanga* brought back memories of my childhood, while reminding me again of the craftsmanship and artistry that go into these works. For example, when I saw "Twilight" by Kawano Kaoru, I felt that our art teacher in grade school might have had something like this in mind when he taught us. The big fish in the dark blue-greenish water appears to be entering the sunlit balloon. It is a simple design, but the details of the carving make the *hanga* much more organic and animated. (Figure 1)

The works by Haku Maki were quite intriguing to me as well, especially as *moji* (characters or letters) art. "Work 73-113 (Flower)" and "Work 73-49 (Moon-Water)" remind one of beautiful calligraphy. The *washi*, hand-made Japanese paper, gives a natural feel. If we look closely at the works, we can tell the surface of the paper is uneven. Each line has its own dynamic and is intricately crafted. I can sense the artist's attention to detail during the process of making these works. (Figures 2 and 3)

I was also drawn to Hagiwara Hideo's works – "Withering Blast" and "Three Windows." I was intrigued by the thin lines that describe the movements of air. The curly lines in "Withering Blast" make the blue, black, and white objects appear as though they are dancing in the withering wind. The three windows witness various air movements – swirling, swiveling, turning, and tapping around them. There is something almost melodic about this use of line. (Figures 4 and 5)

When I saw these strong and beautiful works, I imagined the labor that went into the process of making the artwork, picking materials, conditioning the tools, thinking about details, imagining the outcomes, and the many other intricacies of *monozukuri*. Every *hanga* in the collection has a story to tell in its form – the melodic lines, piquant designs, vibrant colors, and unique gouge traces. Our imaginations are catalyzed to try and see the story being told by the artwork. The *monozukuri* spirit, very much alive in this exhibit, is deeply ingrained within the Japanese experience. I fancy whether my childhood *hanga*, had I kept them, would surprise me with the stories they told of the world a child lived in. After seeing the collection, I am tempted to revisit *hanga*-making (though admittedly, I am not certain how much better my current skills would be) for a new *monozukuri* experience – what stories would my creations tell now?

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1 The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports, and Technology, "Art and Crafts", Shogakko Gakushu Shido Youryo, last modified March, 2009, http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/youryou/syo/zu.htm.

2 Ukiyo-e were popular woodblock prints in the Edo period (1603-1868)

3.
MAKI Haku
Work 73-49 (Moon-Water) / mid-20th century
Woodblock print and embossing on paper
9-11/16 x 17-1/2 inches
DePauw Art Collection: 2000.7.38
Gift of the Estate of Dr. Leland D. Stoddard ’40

4.
HAGIWARA Hideo
Withering Blast / 1961
Woodblock print on paper
20-1/4 x 26-13/16 inches
DePauw Art Collection: 2000.7.12
Gift of the Estate of Dr. Leland D. Stoddard ’40

5.
HAGIWARA Hideo
Three Windows / 1966
Woodblock print on paper
22-5/16 x 29-3/8 inches
DePauw Art Collection: 2000.7.11
Gift of the Estate of Dr. Leland D. Stoddard ’40

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