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Gajin Fujita
American, born 1972

Crew, 2002

Spray paint, acrylic, and gold leaf on wood

Lent by the Ulrich Museum of Art L2011.165a-f

Gajin Fujita is a graffiti artist from East Los Angeles. He is a member of LA graffiti crews K2S (Kill 2 Succeed) and KGB (Kids Gone Bad). He holds an M.F.A. from the University of Nevada and a B.F.A. from Otis College of Art and Design. Fujita combines imagery derived from Japanese woodblock prints with graffiti styles and tagging techniques.

This painting is a tribute to Fujita's graffiti crew, picturing its members as Kabuki actors against the contemporary backdrop of a heavily tagged wall. Fujita playfully integrates other motifs that hint at his present-day interests. The black hat traditionally worn by Japanese aristocrats, seen here on the fellow in the center of the composition, bears the kangaroo insignia of the British clothier Kangol, whose fashions are popular among hip-hop groups like the Beastie Boys. Rather than a family crest, the same figure also sports the Oakland Raiders' logo, but Fujita mischievously changed the eye-patch from one eye to the other and altered "Raiders" to "Ronins." In historical Japan, *rōnin* were masterless warriors whose lords had died, suffered defeat, or fallen from political favor. As a result, *rōnin* were disenfranchised from the military hierarchy yet unable to integrate into society at large because of their status and training. So Fujita is likening today's subcultures, like graffiti crews, to the disaffected warriors of Japan's Edo period.

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Bidou Yamaguchi
Japanese, born 1970

Edobei, 2011

Wood, pigment, lacquer, and gofun

Lent by the artist L2011.171.2

Nō mask carver Bidou Yamaguchi launched out in a new, heretical direction in 2004. He began to fashion three-dimensional “masks” inspired by icons of Western art, like Leonardo da Vinci’s Mona Lisa. The masks compel us to reconsider these famous visages divorced from their settings and to question our assumptions about “appearance” and “reality.” Recently Yamaguchi has been inspired by the enigmatic woodblock print artist Tōshūsai Sharaku. As with his masks of Western masterpieces, he fastidiously reproduces every detail, including damage to the prints caused by mold and soiling. Part of the mystery and gravitas (conveyed by the Japanese term *yugen*) of historical Nō masks derives from their age. Even traditional masks depicting young women possess a numinous quality, owing in part to the masks’ timeworn appearance.

Based on a design by Sharaku, this mask represents the actor Ōtani Oniji in the role of Edobei, a manservant in the play *Koinyōbō somewake tazuna* performed at the Kawarasaki Theater in 1794. In the play, Edohei is a villainous thief and robber.

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Bidou Yamaguchi
Japanese, born 1970

Oni no Sadobō, 2011

Wood, pigment, lacquer, and gofun

Lent by the artist L2011.173.1

Nō mask artist Bidou Yamaguchi based this design on a print by Sharaku of the actor Bandō Zenji in the Kabuki play *Yoshitsune senbon zakura* performed at the Kawarasaki Theater in 1794. The play is based on the true story of the warrior brothers Yoshitsune and Yoritomo of the Minamoto clan in the 12th century. After a successful military campaign against the rival Taira clan, Yoritomo turned against Yoshitsune and sent his army to kill him. Yoshitsune evaded his brother's forces for several years by seeking refuge among his allies. During that time, he had to remain on guard for those who might betray him. This mask represents the character Oni no Sadobō, an evil monk who sought Yoshitsune's downfall. In Kabuki plays, Oni no Sadobō is a stock character referred to as a *namazu-bozu*, a "catfish monk," having a shaved head and long sidelocks that resemble catfish whiskers.

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Bidou Yamaguchi
Japanese, born 1970

Onayo, 2011

Wood, pigment, lacquer, and gofun

Lent by the artist L2011.173.2

This mask is based on a woodblock print by Tōshūsai Sharaku depicting the actor Sanogawa Ichimatsu III as the geisha Onayo of Gion in the play *Hana ayame Bunroku Soga* performed at the Miyako theater in 1794.

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Bidou Yamaguchi
Japanese, born 1970

Tsuneyo, 2011

Wood, pigment, lacquer, and gofun

Lent by the artist L2011.171.1

This mask reproduces the visage of Osagawa Tsuneyo II (1753–1808), a renowned *onnagata* (female impersonator), after a print of the actor designed by the enigmatic woodblock-print artist Tōshūsai Sharaku in 1794. Nō mask artist Bidou Yamaguchi has meticulously reproduced the print designer's conception, including the exact tilt of the actor's head. Yet, by re-creating the image in three-dimensional form, he forces us to reconsider our notions of "appearance" and "reality."

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Chiho Aoshima
Japanese, born 1974

City Glow, 2005

Animated film; five synchronized projections; 7 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Blum & Poe Gallery, Los Angeles L2011.126

In 2005, the Japanese artist Chiho Aoshima collaborated with the New Zealand–based animator Bruce Ferguson to create *City Glow*, her first animation. Aoshima is a member of Takashi Murakami’s Superflat movement, and her meticulously rendered imagery derives from the linear style prevalent in *manga* (comics) and *anime* (video animation) and, more distantly, in traditional Japanese painting and woodblock prints. In *City Glow*, Aoshima visualizes a cyclical narrative in which twenty-four hours elapse within the film’s seven-minute time frame. Anthropomorphic skyscrapers sway in the background while plants grow and blossom luxuriantly in the foreground. Aquatic bubbles and fairies further hint that this is no ordinary place. Aoshima transcends the “cult of cute” in Japanese popular culture by juxtaposing her paradisiacal futurist garden against an ominous night. Amid eerily glowing trees, she pictures a graveyard occupied by the spirits of baleful beauties. This netherworld is dominated by a terrible three-eyed goddess from whose mouth escapes a swarm of fluttering moths. Just when this dire vision threatens to overwhelm, Aoshima offers a Disney-like reprieve wherein a butterfly pulls back the curtain on a fantasy-affirming rainbow.

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Tabaimo

Japanese, born 1975

Hanabi-ra, 2003

Video animation; 4 minutes, 24 seconds

Lent by the Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama L2011.172

The Japanese artist Tabaimo distinguished herself early in her career. At the age of twenty-four, she was awarded the Kirin Contemporary Award Grand Prize for her graduation video production *Japanese Kitchen* (1999). Unlike the slick, computer-generated, fantastical imagery associated with *manga* (comics) and the Superflat movement, Tabaimo's images are hand drawn and tend to reflect the mundane elements of Japanese life. Her soft color palette and graphic textures, derived from traditional woodblock prints, give her imagery a comfortably nostalgic feel. This initial familiarity soon dissipates, however, as surreal and nightmarish vignettes begin to appear, suggesting that the normalcy is only a façade.

In *Hanabi-ra* (Flower Petals), the naked backside of a male figure tattooed with chrysanthemums copied from a print by the ukiyo-e artist Hokusai recalls the Japanese *senjo* (public baths), where nakedness reveals that which is typically hidden. The sense of benign déjà vu takes a surreal turn, however, when butterflies and bees visit the flowers and a carp swims through the man's body. As the petals fall from the flowers, and the man himself disintegrates, we're left to consider our notions of permanence and immutability.

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Emily Allchurch
British, born 1974

Tokyo Story series, 2011

Transparencies on lightboxes

Courtesy of the artist and GBS Fine Art, UK L2011.161.1–10

Emily Allchurch is a British artist living and working in London. She completed her M.A. at the Royal College in 1999. Allchurch established her reputation by creating photographic images that closely reference old master paintings and prints. Using an original artwork as a guide, she takes hundreds of photographs which she digitally splices together to resemble the original composition, but which are composed of contemporary elements that often reveal current social concerns or issues. Her *Urban Chiaroscuro* series (2007), for example, was inspired by Piranesi's etching of imaginary prisons, first published in 1749, but she explores ideas of social restrictions, urban blight, and dehumanization in modern European cities.

Long an admirer of Utagawa Hiroshige's series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, Allchurch traveled to Tokyo in 2009 and visited the places pictured by Hiroshige over 150 years ago. While many places have changed radically and bear no resemblance to Hiroshige's images, Allchurch photographed details of the urban landscapes she encountered. These she later used to construct her own views, following Hiroshige's compositional arrangements, dramatic cropping, and color gradations, while also manipulating every detail of the photographic data to create views that are at once familiar and strangely fresh. The resulting homage to Hiroshige is also a gentle social narrative, capturing elements of traditional Japanese life and culture that have endured through the country's tumultuous modern history as well as the ingredients that make Tokyo a thoroughly futuristic city.

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Emily Allchurch
British, born 1974

Tokyo Story 1: Lotus Garden (after Hiroshige), 2011

Transparency on lightbox

Courtesy of the artist and GBS Fine Art, UK L2011.161.1

Allchurch based this image on Hiroshige's *Iris Garden at Horikiri* from the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* series.



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Emily Allchurch
British, born 1974

Tokyo Story 5: Cherry Blossom (after Hiroshige), 2011

Transparency on lightbox

Courtesy of the artist and GBS Fine Art, UK L2011.161.5

Allchurch based this image on Hiroshige's *Suijin Grove* and *Masaki on the Sumida River* from the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* series.



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Emily Allchurch
British, born 1974

Tokyo Story 8: Temple (after Hiroshige), 2011

Transparency on lightbox

Courtesy of the artist and GBS Fine Art, UK L2011.161.8

Allchurch based this image on Hiroshige's *Kinryūzan Temple, Asakusa* from the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* series.



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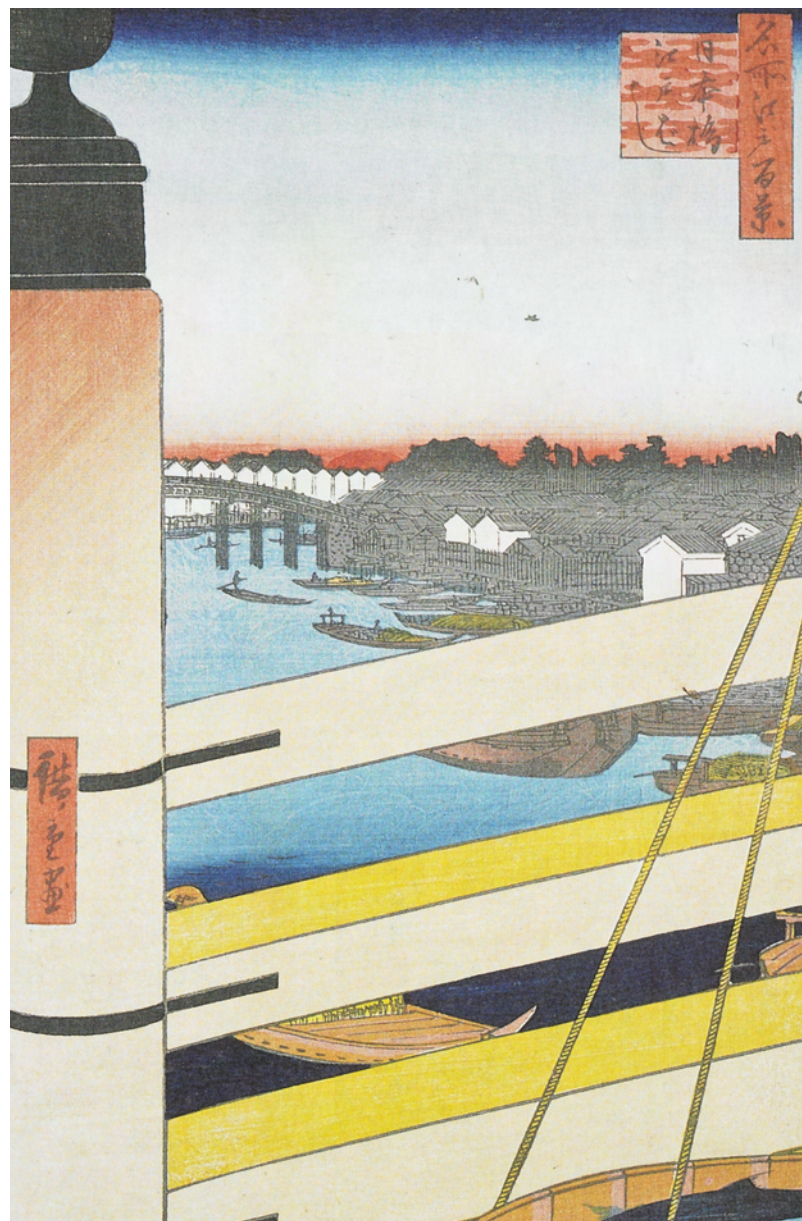
Emily Allchurch
British, born 1974

Tokyo Story 2: Bridge (after Hiroshige), 2011

Transparency on lightbox

Courtesy of the artist and GBS Fine Art, UK L2011.161.2

Allchurch based this image on Hiroshige's *Edo Bridge from Nihonbashi Bridge* from the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* series.



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Emily Allchurch
British, born 1974

Tokyo Story 3: Night Harbour (after Hiroshige), 2011

Transparency on lightbox

Courtesy of the artist and GBS Fine Art, UK L2011.161.3

Allchurch based this image on Hiroshige's *Eitai Bridge and Tsukuda Island* from the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* series.



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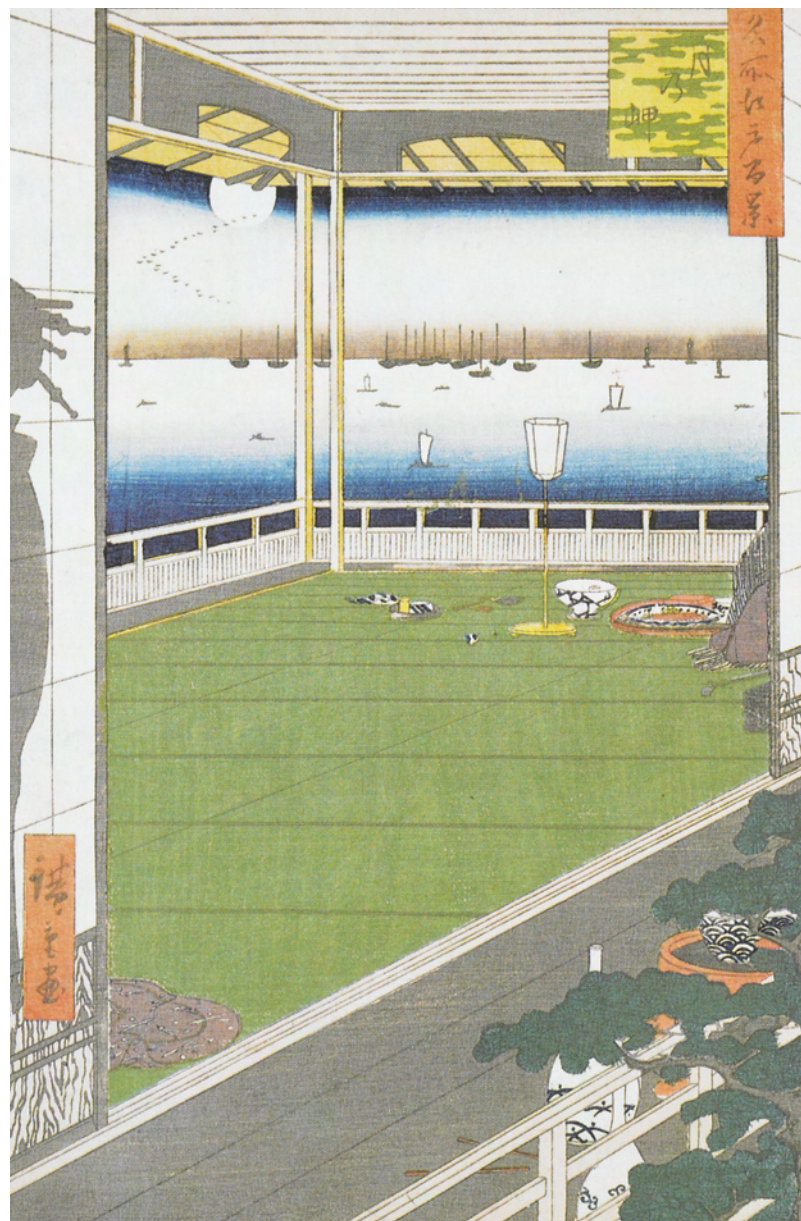
Emily Allchurch
British, born 1974

Tokyo Story 4: Interior (after Hiroshige), 2011

Transparency on lightbox

Courtesy of the artist and GBS Fine Art, UK L2011.161.4

Allchurch based this image on Hiroshige's *Moon Cape* from the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* series.



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Emily Allchurch
British, born 1974

Tokyo Story 6: Shrine (after Hiroshige), 2011

Transparency on lightbox

Courtesy of the artist and GBS Fine Art, UK L2011.161.6

Allchurch based this image on Hiroshige's *Dawn at Kanda Myōjin Shrine* from the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* series.



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Emily Allchurch
British, born 1974

Tokyo Story 7: Nightfall (after Hiroshige), 2011

Transparency on lightbox

Courtesy of the artist and GBS Fine Art, UK L2011.161.7

Allchurch based this image on Hiroshige's *Dawn in the Yoshiwara* from the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* series.



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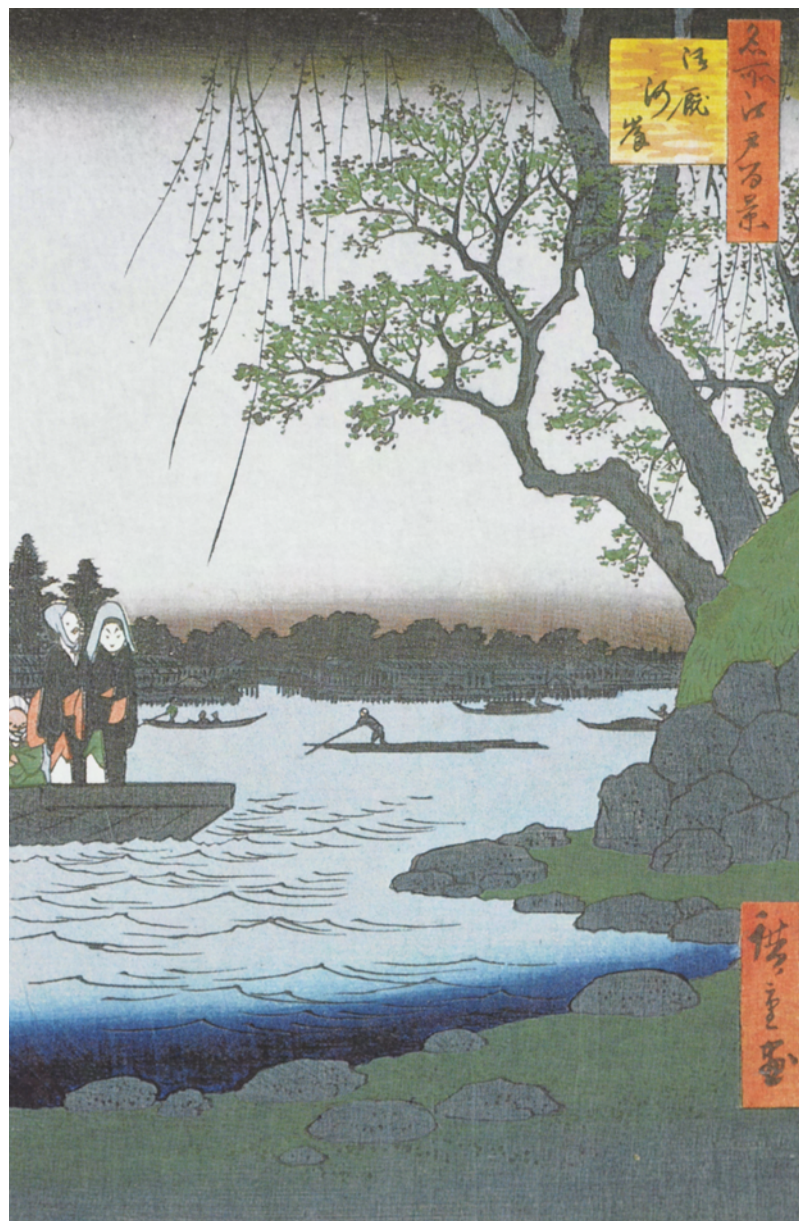
Emily Allchurch
British, born 1974

Tokyo Story 9: Bankside (after Hiroshige), 2011

Transparency on lightbox

Courtesy of the artist and GBS Fine Art, UK L2011.161.9

Allchurch based this image on Hiroshige's *Ommaya Riverbank* from the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* series.



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Emily Allchurch
British, born 1974

Tokyo Story 10: Willow Landscape (after Hiroshige),
2011

Transparency on lightbox

Courtesy of the artist and GBS Fine Art, UK L2011.161.20

Allchurch based this image on Hiroshige's *Yatsumi Bridge* from the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* series.



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Yoshitomo Nara
Japanese, born 1959

Rescue Puppy

From the series *In the Floating World*, 1999

Acrylic and color pencil on printed matter

Courtesy of Eileen Harris Norton L2011.158.5

Hiroshige's original print from his *Eight Views of Omi* series (ca. 1834) shows the ancient pine of Karasaki, which grew on a promontory on the shores of Lake Biwa and was famous for its wide-spreading branches. Here, Nara inserted his trademark giant white puppy, pitifully clinging to the land spit. Nara's meaning is clear from the bone-shaped cartouche along the bottom of the print, which reads "Drowning. . . . must survive . . ."

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Yoshitomo Nara
Japanese, born 1959

Full Moon Night

From the series *In the Floating World*, 1999

Acrylic and color pencil on printed matter

Courtesy of Eileen Harris Norton L2011.158.4

For this image, Nara adulterated a print from Utagawa Toyokuni's *Famous Views of the Eastern Capital* (ca. 1834) which shows gentlemen en route to the Yoshiwara pleasure quarter. Nara has transformed Toyokuni's large, luminous moon into the visage of a malevolent little girl who drips blood from her mouth onto the head of one of the travelers. While one of the men exclaims "Blood!" the alarmed palanquin bearers nearby seem to hurry away from the frightening scene.

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Yoshitomo Nara
Japanese, born 1959

Mirror

From the series *In the Floating World*, 1999

Acrylic and color pencil on printed matter

Courtesy of Eileen Harris Norton L2011.158.6.

Perhaps making a comment on self-perception, Nara here adulterated an image by Kitagawa Utamaro from the series *Seven Women Applying Makeup by the Mirror* (ca. 1790). Scrawled above, "A face in the mirror!!" seems to suggest the surprise of seeing the reflection of a chubby-cheeked girl.

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Yoshitomo Nara
Japanese, born 1959

Goldfish

From the series *In the Floating World*, 1999

Acrylic and color pencil on printed matter

Courtesy of Eileen Harris Norton L2011.158.7

In adulterating an image by Chōkōsai Eishō, Nara completely obliterated the head of the ukiyo-e courtesan Shiratsuyu and replaced it with the glowering head of an unhappy little girl. He seems to be commenting on the sometimes painful nature of fashion by replacing the courtesan's hairpins with nails.

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Yoshitomo Nara
Japanese, born 1959

No Fun!

From the series *In the Floating World*, 1999

Acrylic and color pencil on printed matter

Courtesy of Eileen Harris Norton L2011.158.2

In this print, Nara transformed a beauty from Kitagawa Utamaro's series *Ten Types in the Physiognomic Study of Women* (on view in this exhibition) into a punk princess with nose and nipple rings and a spiked collar. His commentary, "No Fun!" scrawled over Utamaro's title and on the woman's bath cloth, is ambiguous, suggesting either that the woman herself is not an enjoyable companion or that the profession of Utamaro's woman (prostitute) is abhorrent.

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Yoshitomo Nara
Japanese, born 1959

No Nukes

From the series *In the Floating World*, 1999

Acrylic and color pencil on printed matter

Courtesy of Eileen Harris Norton L2011.158.3

Adulterating Shōtei Hokuju's view of Mount Fuji seen from the Fuji River on the Tōkaidō road, Nara makes a statement about the use of nuclear armaments. An anthropomorphic Mount Fuji seems distressed by a mushroom cloud rising in the background, while a giant magical peace symbol floating downstream may offer hope for a better future.

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Yoshitomo Nara
Japanese, born 1959

Punk Ebizō

From the series *In the Floating World*, 1999

Acrylic and color pencil on printed matter

Courtesy of Eileen Harris Norton L2011.158.1

Yoshitomo Nara is well known for his drawings, paintings, and sculptures showing cartoon-like children with glowering expressions and menacing weapons. These images seem to embody the alienation and societal disenfranchisement prevalent among adults who grew up as latchkey children and whose reality was defined by cartoons, comic books, animated films, and punk and rock music. Nara has also cited ukiyo-e prints as having exerted an influence on his work. In his 1999 series *In the Floating World*, he adulterated famous woodblock images, coloring on top of offset-printed reproductions. Some of his images are benignly humorous; others carry a more biting social commentary beneath their juvenile façades.

To transform Tōshūsai Sharaku's image of the Kabuki actor Ichikawa Ebizō IV into a punk idol, Nara gave him an earring, shoulder spikes, a skull ring, and spiky hair. Nara's makeover may not be entirely fanciful. The present Ichikawa actor, Ebizō XI, can trace his lineage of Kabuki actors back to the 17th century. A heartthrob among Kabuki fans, he is also a crossover actor who has starred in several films. In adulterating Sharaku's image, Nara may have been thinking of the young and somewhat rebellious Ebizō XI.

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Yoshitomo Nara
Japanese, born 1959

White Fujiyama Ski Gelande

From the series *In the Floating World*, 1999

Acrylic and color pencil on printed matter

Courtesy of Eileen Harris Norton L2011.158.8

Some of Yoshitomo Nara's adulterations of woodblock prints are benignly playful and seem to reflect his love of unstudied doodling. Here he converted Hokusai's iconic Red Fuji into a snow-covered "White Fuji," adding a child skier and a snowman.

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Julian Opie
British, born 1958

Olivier, Racing Driver, 2002

Vinyl on wooden stretcher

Courtesy of Steve Smelt, Los Angeles L2011.159

The British artist Julian Opie draws inspiration from the contemporary world around him, picturing assertively urbane individuals in a pared-down, linear style that derives, in part, from his admiration of Japanese woodblock prints. A voracious print collector, Opie curated an exhibition of works by Utagawa Hiroshige at the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, England, in 2008. He first received widespread recognition for his style in 2000, when he designed an album cover for the British rock band Blur picturing the group's four members. Opie works from photographs, of people or landscapes, and through a reductive process, renders his subjects in bold but sensitive linework, and areas of bright, unmodulated color—characteristics also found in Japanese prints. The scale and precision of his images, realized as silkscreen and vinyl output as well as in electronic formats, have a distinctly contemporary feel.

This image features Olivier Panis, the renowned French racing driver.

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Iona Rozeal Brown
American, born 1966

A3 Blackface #59, 2003

Acrylic on paper

Courtesy of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts L2011.169

New York–based Iona Rozeal Brown is an artist and a DJ who sees parallels between the amped up sexuality and materialism of hip-hop culture and the hedonistic pursuits of the rising class of urban commoners during Japan’s Edo period. Aware of Japanese art and culture from a young age, Brown took a particular interest in the late 1990s when she learned of the popular phenomenon of *ganguro* (literally, “face-blackening”). Japanese youth, seeking to emulate their black hip-hop idols, began to darken their skin, crimp their hair and weave it into cornrows, and sport urban street wear. Trips to Japan in 2001 and 2005 brought Brown face-to-face with *ganguro* youth, and the series *A3* (Afro-Asiatic Allegory) is her ongoing attempt as an African American artist to come to terms with this cultural appropriation.



Inspired by a composition in Kitagawa Utamaro’s series *Twelve Types of Women’s Handicraft* (1798), Brown pictured two women wearing *ganguro* makeup. The “hairdresser,” already wearing an elaborately braided and arranged coif, sets about braiding the other’s hair. Her wrap is adorned with a scattered pattern of Afro picks, and the seated woman wears a pink hoodie trimmed in matching fur.

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Iona Rozeal Brown
American, born 1966

A3 Blackface #67, 2003

Acrylic on paper

Courtesy of Richard Prince, Washington D.C. L2011.157

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Iona Rozeal Brown
American, born 1966

One for the Money, Two Faux the Show (Still Pimpin'), after Katsukawa Shun'ei's *The Actor Ichikawa Komazo III*, 2006

Acrylic and gold leaf on panel

Courtesy of the University of Virginia Art Museum L2011.170

In 2005, Brown was awarded a grant that enabled her to live in Japan for six months. During that time she studied Kabuki theater. Later, some of her compositions came



to reflect her awareness of *yakusha-e* (actor prints). This composition is based on a design by Katsukawa Shun'ei picturing the Kabuki actor Komazo III in a distinctive, twisting pose. Rather than holding a sword, as in the original, Brown's hip-hop fan holds a bag emblazoned with a dollar sign. He wears baggy trousers and a loose, open shirt. His face is darkened with *ganguro* makeup and he sports a white do-rag.

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Akira Yamaguchi
Japanese, born 1967

Horse Stable, 2004

Oil and watercolor on canvas

Courtesy of Museum of Modern Art, Shiga, Japan L2011.168a-j

Akira Yamaguchi's aerial views are reminiscent of early genre painting in Japan which featured glimpses of city life through parted clouds—a pictorial device also used by ukiyo-e artists. Here, Yamaguchi pictures a theme once popular among warrior patrons: stables with prized stallions. But in Yamaguchi's constructed world, the horses are animal-machine hybrids. The figures, too, seem to have been culled from different time periods, some wearing traditional garb while others sport polo shirts. The comfortable integration of the modern, even futuristic, with the traditional and historical seems more humorous than apocalyptic, suggesting the reality of present-day Japan.

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Gus Foster
American, born 1940

Station 27: Kakegawa, 1991

419° panorama, color coupler print

Lent by the artist L2011.174.1

Panoramic photographer Gus Foster first became intrigued with Japanese woodblock prints in the 1960s. In May 1991, he embarked on a journey inspired by Utagawa Hiroshige's famous *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*. Carrying a 35-mm Globuscope, 100 rolls of film, a compass, maps, a sleeping bag, and a backpack of supplies, Foster crossed Tokyo's Nihonbashi bridge and began walking the 306 miles to Kyoto. Following the Tōkaidō, now a superhighway, he hiked about ten miles a day, photographing a terrain that Hiroshige would scarcely recognize. Nothing prepared Foster for the staggering degree of urban growth and industrialization he encountered. Nevertheless, he remained committed to his goal of creating the most compelling panoramic images possible. While Hiroshige's lyrical woodcuts show the landscape in all four seasons, Foster's images capture the specifics of time and place with machine-made precision and objectivity. And yet, each picture suggests Foster's remarkable skill at finding scenes that, when presented in panoramic form, become more than the sum of their parts.

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Gus Foster
American, born 1940

Station 50: Tsuchiyama, 1991

419° panorama, color coupler print

Lent by the artist L2011.174.2

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Takashi Okazaki
Japanese, born 1974

Afro Samurai, 2009

Japanese *manga* compilation

A longtime fan of hip-hop and soul music, *manga* artist Takashi Okazaki cast an African American protagonist, Afro, in a story that he set in feudal Japan but which includes futuristic elements like robots and automatic weapons. The plot revolves around Afro's journey to avenge his father's death at the hands of Justice the Gunman and to reclaim the "number one headband," the talisman that identifies the wearer as the most powerful warrior in the world.

Okazaki first published *Afro Samurai* in serialized form in the independent art magazine *Nou Nou Hau* between September 1999 and May 2000. The story was animated and released as a five-episode series on Spike TV in 2007, with the actor Samuel L. Jackson providing the voice of Afro. After the release of the *anime* series, Okazaki remade the original serialized version of *Afro Samurai* into a two-volume *manga*, published in North America in 2008. A single-volume edition (shown here) was released in Japan in 2009.

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Shinichirō Watanabe

Japanese, born 1965

Illustrated by Masaru Gotsubo

Samurai Champloo, 2004

Japanese *manga* compilation in two volumes

In his *Samurai Champloo* films and *manga*, Shinichirō Watanabe mixed the cultural influences from Okinawa, American hip-hop, modern Japan, and *chanbara* (samurai swordplay movies). The plot revolves around a young woman named Fuu who enlists the aid of two rival fugitives, Mugen and Jin, to find her long-missing father. In the animated films, swordplay is often rhythmically synced to hip-hop music.

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