

## GALLERY EAST

*Japanese Prints and Picture Books*

*featuring the work of Hokusai, birds, flowers, ghosts and the erotic world of ukiyo-e*

### MEDIA RELEASE

Exhibition Dates: 13 March – 8 April 2018

Floor Talk: 2pm Saturday 17 March 2018

15 Royston Street Paddington NSW 2021

Open 7 days 10am to 6pm



Japanese woodblock prints of the 18th and 19th Centuries record an exotic, vibrant, colourful and highly sophisticated society in a form which constitutes a significant element in the history of world graphic art. The imagery takes the viewer into a world of Kabuki plays and actors, courtesans and beautiful women, heroes of legend, historical battles, the Japanese landscape, and erotica. Moreover, their design and the colour woodblock printing technique had an extraordinary and lasting influence on Western art and graphic design.

**Shunga: The erotic art of Japan** Free from guilt or sin, the erotic art of Japan was a source of sexual stimulation, instruction and a ribald earthy humour. At its core, it glamorised the human body, primarily the actor celebrities of the Kabuki theatre and the courtesans of the Pleasure Quarters; the exaggerated dimensions of the genital organs an expression of their role as objects of sexual fantasies and of heightened pleasure.

The erotic art of the great ukiyo-e artists of Japan has, over the past few decades, become recognised as one of the greatest evocations of sensual pleasure in world art. The work of lesser artists, on the other hand, may well qualify for the critical judgement of a former curator of the Victoria and Albert Museum who described the imagery as being 'quite beyond all European canons of good taste'.

**Japanese illustrated books** For three hundred years until the end of the 19th Century, woodblock illustrated books were the creative medium for painters of all the major art schools. Little known outside Japan, these superlative volumes are now recognized as the finest illustrated books in the history of world graphic art.

This exhibition includes three illustrated books by Katsushika HOKUSAI, (1760 – 1849) one of the great draftsmen of world art and the most highly regarded Japanese artist in the West. His long life was devoted to a constant and daring exploration of design and painting. He is responsible for many of the great masterpieces of ukiyo-e, including *The Great Wave* and his illustrated 3 volume book, *100 Views of Fuji*, of which three individual sheets are included in the exhibition.

*Japanese Prints and Picture Books* is current until 8 April 2018.

For more details or images contact:

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