

Japanese woodblock printing, and what European painting borrowed.

Woodblock prints of the Edo period, roughly 1660 to 1860, made for a mass urban market in Japan by a team: publisher, designer, block carver and printer.

PERIOD

about 1660 to 1860

MADE BY

a team of four

- Pictures of the floating world: theatre, city, travel.
- Moronobu, Utamaro, Sharaku, Hokusai, Hiroshige.
- Flat colour areas, strong outline, no cast shadow.
- Radical cropping and high, asymmetric viewpoints.
- Multi-block colour printing, registered by hand.
- A commercial product, priced like a bowl of noodles.

LOOK FOR IT

Hokusai's Great Wave, about 1831, was one sheet from a series of thirty-six views.

Japonisme reversed the flow: Degas, Cassatt, Van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec took cropping and flat colour from these prints.