

## JAPANESE POSTERS, GRAPHICS AND DECORATIVE ARTS

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**Abstract:** In the second month of 1856, the censors approved five prints by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858) the series title One Hundred Views of Edo (Meisho Edo hyakkei). And so began the story of one of the most famous landscape series of Japanese woodblock printing. While the city of Edo, renamed Tokyo in 1868, had already been chosen as the subject of numerous paintings, printed books and other woodcut series, there had never been a series with so many views as promised in the title of this one. The promise was more than kept: by the time of the appearance of the final pictures in the tenth month of 1858, a total of 120 individual prints, issued in instalments, did indeed constitute the most comprehensive topographical series among ukiyo-e, “pictures of the floating, fleeting world”. The term ukiyo goes back to the Buddhist notion of the world’s illusory and transitory nature. In the course of the late 17th century, the term was extended to secular contexts, referring now not only to the pleasures of the theatres, teahouses and brothels, but also other popular entertainments in the cities of Kyoto, Osaka and Edo. The last part of the word “e” simply means picture. Many ukiyo-e functioned as advertisements for theatrical performances or sum tournaments, or they feted the celebrities of entertainment culture. Portraits of actors in the latest roles, along with those of the most popular trend-setting courtesans, were among the best-selling motifs. Advertisement is a need for the modern daily life. Nevertheless, in 1894, Audrey Beardsley thought that the artists who mean art doing posters, betray art itself. Since today, in the capitals like Tokyo, Paris, London, Vienna, Belgrade, Skopje, Athens, Istanbul and world around, 30 seconds TV spots are shaping out taste, positions, and views, it seems very difficult to understand the role of posters and advertising during the XIX century. Nowadays, the campaigns are mainly transmitted by television channels. On the other hand, posters have lost their initial importance and are used generally in traffic or as info panels for some event. Today’s posters are done on the basis of one unique medium: photography. Japanese decorative art realized a huge influence on the European one. What are the historical phases of posters and graphics inspired by Japan? Who are the big masters of Japanese graphics and prints?

**Keywords:** prints, ukiyo-e, Edo, Hiroshige, Hokusai, Impressionists, graphics, decorative arts

### 1. THE JAPANESE TECHNIQUE OF WOODWORKING

In the years 1860, before the appearance of colorized lithography, posters throughout European cities were in black and white technique, dominated by texts, and they were glued through each other. This sad and dreary situation lasted until the moment several renowned artists began to adopt the new type of combination between Japanese and young lithographs in color. That was how the golden era of the poster was created. The most significant moment in the history of the development of the new epoch occurred in France, primarily influenced by the taste and talent of the Impressionists who massively use the colors of wine-grain. One striking similarity between the technique of using western lithography and the complex art of engraving in the wood of the Japanese masters of stunts can be ascertained.

Japanese graphics on wood were the result of teamwork. Usually the author of the original drawing handed over his work to the apprentice-worker in charge of finishing the reproduction. He put on a flat plate of exotic wood (merisier) processed with a saw in the direction of the layout of the fiber of the tree. The next team worker shaped the nuances of the colors through the opposite layout of the block trees. They answered separately for each pigment. In this way, a wide range of colors of 16 shades was obtained, much more than in Europe. The blocks responded perfectly to each other thanks to the kent, that is, the type of markers that secured the continuity of each shade.<sup>45</sup>

Named by the term *polyautographie*, originally derived from the Greek expression that denotes numerous originals, lithography was discovered by Alois Senefelder in 1798. In contrast to all previous techniques, no artist works on a technique comprised in engraving on the surface, but the image is produced on the very surface of the backbone, by using the incompatibility between the water and the fatty matter. The drawing is drawn on a calcareous stone using a pencil with a massive pencil or with an ink tool. Then the stone is covered with one solution based on nitric acid and Arabic rubber before it is mixed. Then it approaches the surface by rolling soaked with ink and penetrating into the greasy surfaces, but not in the wet stone. For lithographs in color, a special stone is used for each color. By mixing two colors you get a third.

<sup>45</sup> Donald Preziosi - The art of art history, a critical anthology, Oxford, University Press, coll, Oxford history of art, 2018

## 2. UKIYO-E AS A NOVELTY FOR EUROPEAN GRAPHICS

In 1868, Claude Monet realized the graphics *Rendez-vous des chats*, one of the first lithographs used as a poster for an ad used for the book by one of his friends. It was necessary to wait 1870 to see the new Japanese stamps that were in circulation since 1850 as having influenced the new art. The main subject of ukiyo-e was kabuki, the last of the three newly created forms of the Japanese theater that was religious as well as from the theater of puppets or bunraku (bunraku). The thrill of these theaters were often repainted on posters, and the most famous was Edo's kabuki.



One of the biggest poster authors was Toshosai Sharaku, who made 144 posters in only nine months, but mysteriously disappeared. Otherwise, the ukiyo-e illustrations showed other people as well as life in Yoshiwara, a quarters reserved by Edo. The visitor here reveals a hierarchy of merchants, servants, musicians, geisha and prostitutes who came incognito as well as various actors. Illustrated topics have caused great interest in Europe, so the first great poster artist Jules Cheret 1836-1932, inspired by the Japanese, created the *La Daiphane* poster for the promotion of toiletries and the beauty of the woman with the protective name of the actress Sarah Bernard.

## 3. THE MASTER OF INSPIRATION FROM THE JAPANESE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

In the time of Gilles Scheres, known as *La Belle Epoque* (1865-1914), public places such as *Foley Berger*, *El Dorado*, *Olympia*, often featured in the works of Shere, Gursart-Sam (Goursart 1863-1934). If we consider Shere to be the father of the poster, who even rejoices with admiration for policemen treating them as ordinary citizens, the great master of the poster became his student Toulouse-Lautrec Toulouse-Loutrec (1864-1901). In the opinion of his friends Toulouse-Lautrec, he regarded the Japanese as brothers as they were as low as him and at the same time were normal. The greatest inspiration of Toulouse-Lautrec was not Shere, but Pierre Bonnard (Pierre Bonnard, 1867-1947). It was exactly Bonnard that transformed into an aerial foam, the most celebrated stylized Japanese graphics *The Great Wave* of one of the greatest Japanese artists of the 19th century Hokusai. Fascinated by the success of this graphics, Toulouse-Lautrec focused on Bonard and Hokusai.

The name of Toulouse-Lautrec will always be associated with the symbol of *Moulin Rouge*, the glorious cabaret of Montmartre, where on October 6, 1889 the French *Can-Can* was made. Lautrec was ready to exchange his best creations with those of the Japanese. He supplied Japan colors and other materials, and even devised his own monogram, a type of seal through which he mimicked the Japanese sword symbol. The influence of the Japanese on Lautrec was so great that his album *She* (1896), a collection of lithographic works intended for the public houses of Montmartre, was a kind of imitation of the public houses in the Yoshiwara district.

Lautrec also made the glorious work of the Japanese *Divan* (*Le Divan japonais*) by ordering a cafe-restaurant, a poster that preserved the primitives of Japanese. Another artist, Eugene Graset (1841-1917), who was also a great architect, worked for the reestablishment of the medieval all in Craxon. He began to work on lithographic works inspired by Japanese artists Toyoquni and Sharaku. In 1899, Jacques Villon 1875-1963, one of the first abstract artists, another close friend of Lautrec, fell under the strong influence of Japanese in his own graphic creations. It is similar with the posters of Aubray Beardsley (1872-1898) and the Scottish Tom Purvis (1888-1957). Their common denominator was the inspiration from the Japanese.<sup>46</sup>

## 4. DECORATIVE ARTS

In 1851, the Shogun of Satsuma proposed to send items to an exhibition organized at Crystal Palace in London, but the proposal was not implemented. In 1862 the Universal Exhibition, the first British diplomat in Japan, Sir

<sup>46</sup> Brigitte Koyama-Richard, *Japon reve*, Edmond de Goncourt et Hayashi Tadamasa, Paris, Hermann, 2001

Rutherford Alcock, chose a representative collection of Japanese industrial art that was to be found at the exhibition. However, due to the Prince's sudden death, these items were delayed to be presented in London. The exhibition from Paris in 1867 had to be opened so that Japan could officially be presented as a student country. Soon on both sides of La Manche, Japanese subjects get a lot of fans. Unlike the Chinese porcelain, the Japanese differed according to the purity of the motives, the simplicity and elegance of the forms and motives. At the same time, in the domain of painted decoration, the grotesque objects or those that were part of the fantasy are less affective. Flowers and flower ornaments are of some sort elegance. In general, color drawings are much more ambitious and prettier than those of the Chinese.

As soon as these items from Japan were introduced by the Europeans, these moments began to imitate them. The system of plagiarism has especially been affirmed in the domain of ceramics. In 1866-1867, at the request of Eugen Rousseau, who worked in glass, he asked Felix Brockmond to design a lunch service to be made at Creil et Montereau factories. The latter served with the samples of Manga created by Hokusai. On the other hand, plagiarism of this kind in England was introduced by Richard William Binns. Together with James Hadley (James Hadley 1837-1903) they created numerous ceramic works, vases, porcelain services decorated with significant Japanese ornaments.



##### 5. DISHES BY FELIX BROCKMOND- WITH ORNAMENTS FROM JAPANESE

In Vienna a presentation of this type of artwork was presented with numerous vases of various shapes, decorated with motifs from Japan, signed by Hardley. At this exhibition, Royal Worcester received the first prize for the services rendered, by means of a manufacture. A team was conceptually led by W.S. Coleman.<sup>47</sup>

The first studio studios in Britain were installed in Middlessex in Fulham and Sauthall, under the direction of the brothers Martin. They developed a different style from the affiliated Worcester or Milton. Between 1873 and 1914 produced more original works titled Martiware. The brothers who made this team were: Robert Wallace, Edwin Bruce, Waletr Fraser Charles Douglas. In 1874, Lady Laura Trevelyan, she bowed an engraved Japanese piece in a tree that even more attracted them to Japanism. Inspired by this wooden graphics, they have created a special decorative style based on flowers, insects, reeds and high grasses. In 1900 they visited the Universal Exhibition in Paris where they saw the wonderful creations of Alexander Bigo, Felix August, Lashanal and others. Upon returning to England, they realized several of the arrayed ceramic-porcelain vases and other items inspired by the Japaneseism of French artists. Alfred Stevens 1823-1906, known for the intimate portraits of elegant women, a friend of Baudelaire, Manet and Degas, made the work *La Duchesse* (1888) with numerous Japanese ornaments in the background of the painting.



Alferd Stevens - La Douceaux with Japanese motifs

The great popularization of Japanese artistic concepts strengthened the interest in the Japanese and the affirmation of the new Art (L'Art nouveau). In the L'Art nouveau style, Emil Gaille's work is also on the work of

<sup>47</sup> Kenya Hara( 2007) Deigning Design,Lars Muler Publishers,reed.2008

several important works from the domain of the furniture design. Under the influence of Japanese, he grows into one of the largest artists with glass. He borrowed insects and flowers in the creation of his art objects and created one of the best works of Japanese art. Among them are presented small objects his vases of the accident, objects with subtle texture, whose decoration reflects the spirit of the inscribed texts in the form of graphics. Among them are impressive glasses of Willon, Baudelaire and Victor Hugo. Poetic quotes are combined with engraved decorations on glasses with elements of Japanese.

After 1888, the influence of Japaneseism in industrial art was encountered everywhere. From Krakow to Copenhagen and St. Petersburg there are the ornaments of the iris, fish, lizards.



**6. Kutushika Hokusai:** In 1888, creator Pietro Krohn of the Bing and Grondahl manufactory from Copenhagen, then Arnold Krog, made fantastic and decorative porcelain vases and services under the influence of Japanese. On the other hand, the artist Theodor Deck who moved to Paris proved to be the most significant innovator in the artistic industry of European Japanese. The Japanese also expanded in the production of linen fabrics, silk and other fabrics with Japanese decorations, decorated with fantastic ornaments that enriched the tender and attractiveness of the fabric. On these fabrics there are colorful Japanese flowers, bird-endemics as stylized motifs that give the specific aesthetics and soul of the fabric. In this rugged mosaic there are other unusual exemplars of the rich Japanese flora and fauna that flow through the textile work of the British William Morice. Similar motives are also encountered with his partner and Japanese Tomas Wordle, as well as in the design of Scheurer from Miluz (East France) whose products were exported to Japan. In the same style, and the great creator Charles Frederick Worth, he produced a piece called Les Hirondelles from which he wore the dress for the ball. These are just a small part of the numerous works of industrial art that developed under the influence of Japanese.<sup>48</sup>

Regardless of the fact that over time, japonism in decoration has lost exoticism and primacy, it continues to affect decorative arts around the world.

## 7. THE JAPANESE IN THE DOMAIN OF FURNITURE DESIGN

The first traces of the influence of the Japanese in the design of European furniture are found in the middle of the 16th century, thanks to the Portuguese sailors who visited the Japanese archipelago. Then they discovered one thing that fascinated them and that was the lacquering of the furniture. Basically, this type of furniture was also found in the export of metallic materials from China, but what Japan offered was much more perfect. The manufactures of foreign arches furniture, called the Japanese by nanban (barbarians from the south) as personification for foreigners from Europe until the self-isolation of Japan. In the previous period, numerous chests, work tables and ornaments were embroidered. Towards the end of the 18th century, a Dutch East India company that implanted in Dejima, stopped trading with Japanese lacquered furniture that became a non-performing and non-commercial work. The European wood designers decided instead to import lacquered furniture from Japan, began to carry wooden furniture in the sun-rise and then process it there. Their re-importation has become very long before due to the length of the processing of the wood and its varnishing.



Furniture: Van Reisen Burg



Furniture: Viardo

<sup>48</sup> Richard Osborne et Dan Strugis, Art theory for beginners, London, Zidan Press, 2006

Since the turn of the 18th century, the production of varnished furniture has increased slightly. European timber designers have decided to transport laminated panels in Europe in the future to create fashionable furniture. The old counterpart began to produce chests, bureaux, ornaments, tops of various furniture, and among the designers are Bernard Van Reisen Burg (1700-1760) and Jacques Diboia (1694-1763) who worked in the French courtyard for Louis 15. To be adapting to the then fashion trends of the processing of furniture in the style of Rococo lacquered panels were cut on furniture, often divided into two comedies. For example, Japanese cabins on both sides, often transformed and glued to adapt to furniture. The whole décor was unified with the help of a lacquer that mimicked the Japanese lacquer, which was produced by the brothers Martin. Their arch allowed numerous simulations to be realized, which were cheaper and cheaper than the authentic Japanese panos.<sup>49</sup>

With the development of Japanese fashion in the second half of the 19th century and the effectuated exhibitions, part of the European wood-processed designers proposed catalogs for making complimentary "Japanese rooms". Among the European cities in this domain are Berlin with Campbell and Pulling, or Wagner. These works in Paris arrived late sometime between 1880 - 1890 and saw great success. The realization of this furniture was realized by lacquered panels originating from Tonkin or Japan. In this direction, the designer Viardo used Chinese and Japanese ornaments. The use of bronze ornaments is one of the characteristics of these works, and some symbols like dragons, a piece of hair on the back carries some element, meanders, a head of dogs from Fo, complement the design of modern furniture. Thanks to the immense reputation of the World Exhibition, Viardo became an indispensable for the great merchants and prominent figures such as President Clemenceau or Clemens de Eneri who ordered a number of furniture, chests, cabinets made under the influence of Japanese.

Bamboo's house by Perret and Vibert

## 8. THE "BAMBOO HOUSE"

The "Bamboo House" was created in 1872 by Alfred Peret on the Fourth of Sepetmury No. 30 in Paris. Later the house was taken over by the son of Alferd, with the same name and Ernest Viber as of 1886. At the beginning specialized in making bamboo and rotten furniture, under the influence of the cultural heritage, the house expanded towards the end of the 19th century in the ear of Japanese fabrics such as fabrics, porcelain, bronze, ivory, jade, varnishes and the production of Japanese furniture. The range of products proposed by Peret and Viber did not confine itself to furniture inspired by Asian masters, but at the same time offered items from the style of Louis 14 and later from Art nouveu. Thanks, however, to the incrustated parts of the Japanese lacquer pads, otherwise close to the design ideas of Viardo in a stylish way, the Bambus House is beginning to be affirmed as one of the most important and best in Western Europe. Among the most important and prestigious clients were Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Emperor Eugenia, Princess Matilda, Count of Montmorency, Japanese Marshal Yamagata, Queen of Portugal, King of Greece Georges.

The Perret-Vibert house has beautiful bronze collections, a porcelain of the most significant and most productive epochs of Japan and China.



Design of the bamboo house at Perth-Vibert

The works of Jupiter of Duvinage / Giroux and Fantin-Latour / Puvis des Chavannes / Lievre

**9. Ferdinand Duvénaze** established his own image of the paintings in 1863. In 1867, he teamed up with the prestigious house Giroux, created by his cousin Alfonso Girou who offered more products such as tables and chairs, objects of curiosity, furniture de luxe. In May 1874, he puts out the "combined mosaic" of Japanese inspiration, in which ivory is applied to wooden lacquered panels with motifs of the animal and vegetal kingdom. Their products

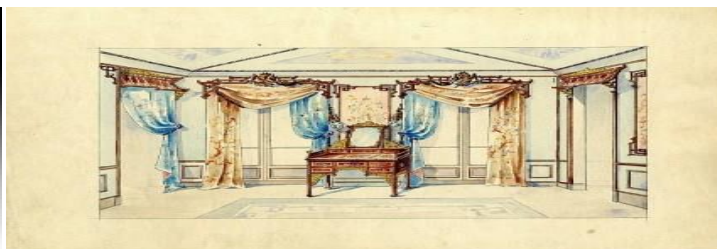
<sup>49</sup> Hal Foster(2002) *Design et crime, Les Praires ordinaires* 2008

under the influence of Japanese were especially visible and had great success during the Universal Exhibition in Paris. Today, more pieces are located in the museum d'Orse, which keeps the reputation of this house.

Henri Fantain-Latour started his career as a painter, portraitist and illustrator, which allowed him to intervene in the historical works of art exhibited at the Imperial Louvre Museum, then on several works in the Sauvageot collection that were designed and etched in 1863 or decorative arts of all ages. From the beginning of 1870, Eduard Lievre activated himself in the industrial design of decorative arts and collaborated with several Parisian renowned houses such as: Christoffle, the most prized master who worked with bronze Barbedienne, the Marnihac Marbleac Marine and Art Bronze Company, etc. . Using his talent in extremely diverse domains, from items made in gold, ceramics, bronze, furniture, Lieverv experienced a high designer reputation. His style is "an affinity for historicism," filled with influences from neo-Renaissance, Islamic, Egyptian, Chinese, and Japanese elements and introduces him into the history of art and design. His style recognizes the symbols of the dragon, chimeras, lotus flowers, elephant heads, arabesques. One of his more important works is the Japanese aquarium made in bronze according to his design drawings by Ferdinand Barbadeen.<sup>50</sup>



Lievre - Japanese aquarium



Perth / Vibert: Salon

Gradually Eduard Lievir overcomes the imitation of the past and approaches new innovative creations and motives that approaches modern trends. He was a great success and among his most prominent clients were the actress Sarah Bernard, the trader Sigfrid Bing and others.

The abundance of the described varied samples illustrates the dominance of the stylized eclecticism of Lievre at the end of the 19th century. His furniture creations are enriched with a composite formula. Thus, the japanism openly exploited by Viardo, Peret, Viber, Duvinage and Lievre serves as a pretext for the expression of creative freedom, which gathers the Gothic and Rococo style with the Japanese-Chinese style. The mentioned anchored pieces in the new designer formulas dating back to the ancient eras, with the affirmation of Art nouveau, today attract the attention of the sweets as well as the interest of esthetes, designers and collectors around the world.

## CONCLUSION

On the occasion of the second World Exhibition in Paris, in 1867, Japan participated for the first time with its own stand at the famous Champ de Mars. Thousands of items were presented, artistic creations handmade or manufactured, graphics, gravures, wood prints, etc. As a consequence of Japan's opening towards the world after 1868 in the era of Meiji Dynasty several art collectors and artists such as Henry Cernuschi, Theodore Duret, Emile Guimet or Felix Regamey travelled to Japan and contributed to the expansion of Japanese art throughout Europe and the whole world. Japonism becomes lively and Japanese famous artists such as Hiroshige, Hokusai, Utamaro, Tokugawa spread their print graphics all around the world. At the same time, the new and unusual typical Japanese decorative art becomes very popular. In 1867, Gabriel Viardot starts the production of furniture inspired by Japanese style. In 1870, Edouard Lievre, in his Paris workshop, presents many luxury furniture items inspired by Japanese tradition. He collaborated with the famous brand "Christoffle" and with artists such as Edouard Detaille and Paul Sormani. That is how japonism took life in many artistic fields, including decoration, design, prints and applicative art. In the period between the two World Wars, and especially after the Second World War, japonism was marginalized for a while but it reconquered its adepts progressively: the high fashion and Prêt à Porter industry opened widely their doors to Japanese inspiration. As a conclusion, japonism survived because it allowed the transposition of natural forms to different artistic decorative supports.

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