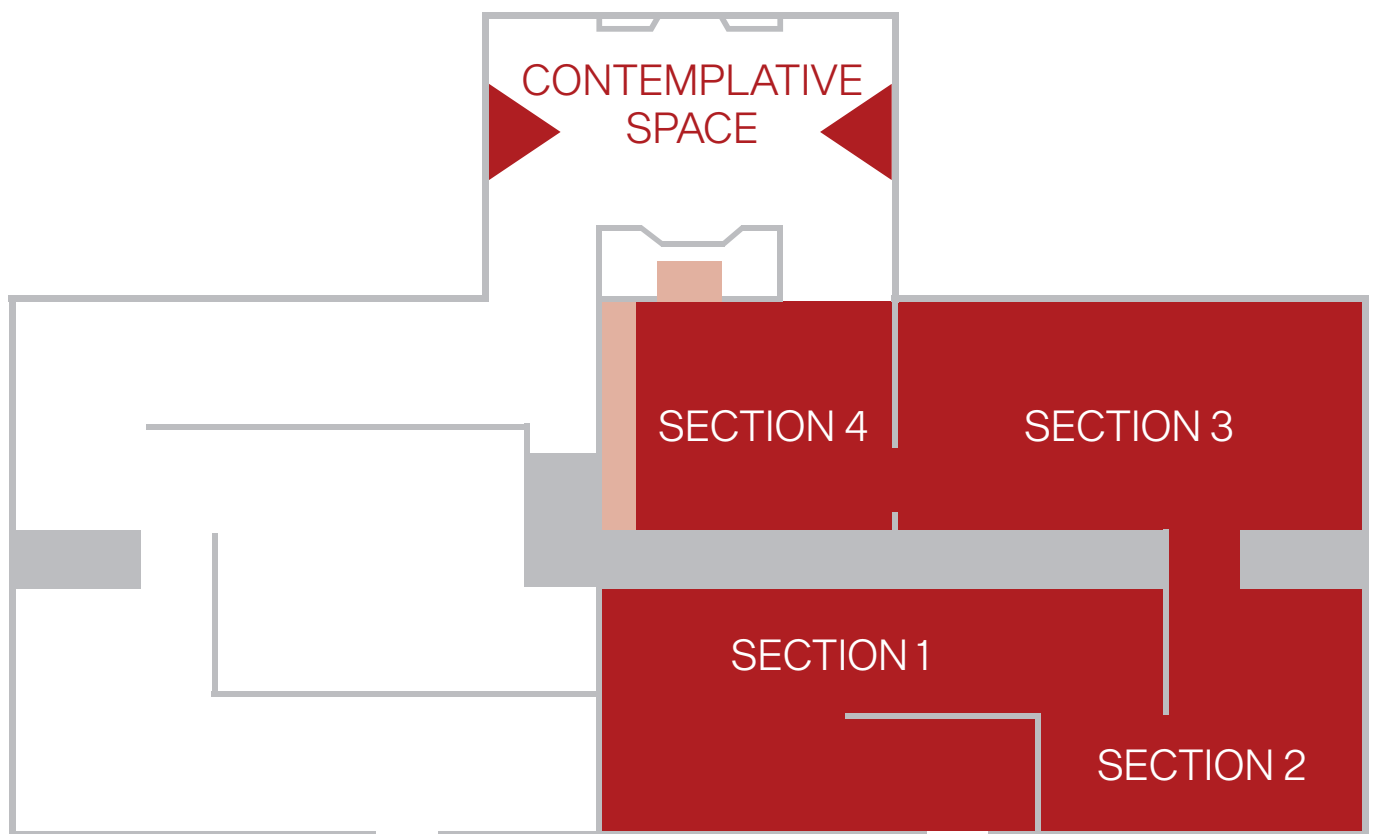


Life IN EDO



PLAN OF THE GALLERY

SECTION 1

Travel

Utagawa Hiroshige

Procession of children passing Mount Fuji

1830s

Hiroshige playfully imitates with children a procession of a daimyo passing Mt Fuji. A popular subject for artists, a daimyo and his entourage could make for a lively scene. During Edo, daimyo were required to travel to Edo City every other year and live there under the alternate attendance (*sankin-kōtai*) system.

Hundreds of retainers would transport weapons, ceremonial items, and personal effects that signal the daimyo's military and financial might. Some would be mounted on horses; the daimyo and members of his family carried in palanquins.

Cat. 5

Tōshūsai Sharaku

Actor Arashi Ryūzō II as the Moneylender Ishibe Kinkichi

1794

Kabuki actor portraits were one of the most popular types of *ukiyo-e* prints. Audiences flocked to see their favourite kabuki performers, and avidly collected images of them. Actors were stars, celebrities much like the idols of today. Sharaku was able to brilliantly capture an actor's performance in his expressive portrayals.

This image illustrates a scene from a kabuki play about a moneylender enforcing payment of a debt owed by a sick and impoverished ronin and his wife. The couple give their daughter over to him, into a life of prostitution. Playing a repulsive figure, the actor Ryūzō II made the moneylender more complex: hard-hearted, gesturing like a bully – but his eyes reveal his lack of confidence. The character is meant to be disliked by the audience, but also somewhat comical. Sharaku has tried to show all this in his design.

For this portrait, Sharaku used the *kira-zuri* technique – which involves adding mica to pigments to create a sparkle effect in the background. If you

tilt your head to catch the light just right, you can still see the flicker of the mica in the gray background of this print.

Cat. 37

Katsushika Hokusai

Miya

Spring Enjoyment of Fifty-three Stations

1804

Three slender women arrive in Miya, 41st station on the Tōkaidō. Plum blossoms bloom; this could be late winter or early spring. To get to the next station, travellers had to take a ferry across Ise Bay. On the left is Kuwana Castle.

It was difficult and inconvenient for women to travel in the Edo period. They had to obtain special permits. The man behind is probably a porter hired to carry luggage.

Cat. 4

Keisai Eisen

Fujieda

around 1842

Fujieda was the 22nd station on the Tōkaidō; this print must be from a series featuring the route. Women grooming or trimming their toenails is a relatively common subject in ukiyo-e prints. In this one, the woman uses grip scissors more commonly used for cutting threads.

Cat. 14

Utagawa Hiroshige

Shirako on the side road to Ise Shrine

Shank's Mare on the Tōkaidō Road

late 1830s

This print is based on the comic novel *Shank's Mare*, published in serial format (1802–09). The story follows Yajirobē and Kitahachi on a journey of adventure and misadventure along the Tōkaidō. The novel was a phenomenal success and is credited with promoting the love of travel during the Edo period.

Here they are in Shirako, Ise. Kitahachi rented a horse. But as he got on, a heated argument frightened the horse, which in turn threw Kitahachi off its back.

Cat. 7

Utagawa Hiroshige
Shōno: Driving rain
Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road
around 1833

One of the best-known from this series, in this print, Hiroshige ingeniously captures the sensation of a violent rainstorm. The tops of bamboos bending under the wind and rain, silhouetted in shades of grey, communicate a world turned suddenly dark and stormy. Shōno was 45th station of the Tōkaidō.

Cat. 12

Utagawa Hiroshige
Mishima: Morning Mist
Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road
around 1833–34

This print depicts a scene at Mishima (Shizuoka Prefecture), 11th station of the Tōkaidō. The composition and technique create the illusion of atmospheric perspective, playing with strong colours on the front group versus the dark shadowy silhouettes of people and architecture at the background. The torii (gates) of Mishima Taisha Shrine can be seen in the background.

Cat. 9

Utagawa Hiroshige
The Ōi River between Suruga and Tōtōumi provinces
Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji
1858

For the defence of Edo City, it was a strategic decision to not build bridges across major rivers. In the case of the Ōi River, even ferry boats were

forbidden. Travellers had to make their way across via other means. Water levels varied and sometimes a traveller could wade across. Others hired palanquin bearers or porters to carry them and their belongings across. Because of this, the Ōi River was regarded as the most difficult part of the Tōkaidō.

His second on the subject, this series depicts Mt Fuji in differing seasons and weather conditions, from a variety of different places and distances.

Cat. 15

Utagawa Kunisada

Kuwana

Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road
around 1815

This print depicts Kuwana, 42nd station. To get to Kuwana, a traveller had to take a ferry across the bay from Miya. On the left is Kuwana Castle. The shape of the paper suggests this print was designed for a fan (*uchiwa*). The figure admiring the castle is probably a kabuki actor.

Cat. 18

Utagawa Sadahide

Lord Mashiba Hisayoshi builds the Castle of Himeji in Harima province
1862

This print shows the 1581 re-modelling of Himeji Castle under Hashiba Hideyoshi. To explain the name in the title, “Mashiba Hisayoshi” was the kabuki character name for Hashiba Hideyoshi.

Hideyoshi was a vassal of daimyo Oda Nobunaga, who presented the castle to him after a great military victory. Hideyoshi significantly re-modelled the castle, including building a three-storey keep. Later, Tokugawa Ieyasu granted Himeji Castle to his son-in-law Ikeda Terumasa. Ikeda completely rebuilt and expanded the castle, adding three moats and transforming it into the castle complex that still stands today.

Cat. 19

Beauty

Kitagawa Utamaro II

Eastern fashioned willow by the river

1804–18

This print is by the first disciple of Utamaro, who inherited the name of his teacher upon his passing. Here Utamaro II depicts two courtesans preparing themselves. One has a roll of paper under her chin, while her hands are busy with setting her hairpins.

Cat. 21

Utagawa Toyokuni II x Utagawa Kunihiro

Hair dressing: Monkey

Elegant Eastern Fashion: Twelve Zodiac Animals

1830s

As the title suggests, this print pairs a zodiac animal with a fashionable woman. The beautiful woman attempting to set up her hair was drawn by Toyokuni II; the monkey was executed by Kunihiro, both were artists of the Utagawa school.

Cat. 25

Utagawa Toyokuni I

Woman wiping her face in front of a mirror

around 1820

This courtesan wears a long undergarment. Her relaxed posture and partial state of undress suggests she has just taken her bath. Behind her is the kimono she had been wearing. Courtesans usually took a bath in the morning. She is about to put on her make-up, as suggested by the implements on the dressing table.

Cat. 23

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III
Looking Cool
Thirty-two Aspects in Modern Style
1859

This woman is fresh from a bath. She wears an indigo tie-dyed yukata; the colour gives cool vibes to the composition. One inscription gives the name of the artist: Kunisada. Next to it is: “Yokokawa Horitake”, the woodblock carver.

Take a closer look at the woman’s hair and hairline. The fine details would not be possible without the work of a skilful woodblock carver. From late Edo period onwards, some master woodblock carvers started to include their names on the blocks.

Cat. 27

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III (1786–1864)
The careful type
Thirty-two Aspects in the Modern World
around 1820

The 32 aspects in the title is a reference to the “32 signs of a Great Man” described in Buddhist texts. *Shimahi*, inscribed at the top of the mirror, describes what the woman is doing: “getting ready” or “dressing oneself”. The woman is likely a courtesan, and her body is partially bare so she can apply white powder make-up. Her hair is tied in *tsubushi-shimada*, a hairstyle made popular by the courtesans, geisha, and female kabuki characters.

Cat. 26

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III x Utagawa Kuniyoshi II
Imagawa-bashi
One Hundred Beautiful Women at Famous Places in Edo
1858

In this collaboration print, the top image by Kuniyoshi depicts Imagawa Bridge, one of the famous spots in Edo. There were many ceramics and Chinese export ware traders in that neighbourhood. Kunisada drew the

woman washing her hair. She has folded down the upper part of her kimono to avoid getting it wet.

Cat. 31

Utagawa Kuniyoshi
Woman with a razor
Women in Benkei-checked Fabrics
around 1845

Between 1840 and 1845, new censorship policies by the Tokugawa Shogunate made it illegal to depict historical figures and events. Unfortunately for many kabuki actors and ukiyo artists – including Kuniyoshi, such figures were part of their usual repertoire and sources of inspiration. Many artists turned to genres of travel, landscapes, and scenes of daily life.

To continue depicting historical figures and avoid breaking the rules, Kuniyoshi used the idea of *mitate-e* (analogues) for his prints. The historical character Benkei was immensely popular among Edo people. A warrior monk, he had served as a retainer of the famous samurai warrior Minamoto no Yoshitsune. In a kabuki play, the costume worn by the actor playing Benkei was in this checked pattern. Because of the play's popularity, this design became known as Benkei-checked fabric.

This series shows different women wearing Benkei-style kimono, posed to recall scenes from Benkei's life. Thus, each woman becomes an "analogue" of Benkei to get around the prohibition of depicting historical figures. The prints also include a poem about a legendary incident in Benkei's life.

Cat. 32

Keisai Eisen
Woman brushing her teeth
Modern Figures
1830–44

This woman's toothbrush is double-sided, with a large brush and a finer one, for smaller gaps between teeth. The red pigment on the brush is tooth powder. She holds the packet in her left hand. In the early 1800s, there were many makers of toothbrushes and dental care products. By this time, Edo people were extremely cautious about having healthy teeth.

Cat. 34

Ochiai Yoshiiku
Comparison of slender hips like willows in snow at the Yanagiya Bathhouse
Annual Customs of the Present Day
1868

Here is a scene in a bathhouse at the start of the Meiji period (1868–1912). A man at the top seems to be troubled by the commotion on the floor. He is the *sansuke*, a male worker who stokes the boiler, checks the temperature of the water, collects fees, and provides scrubbing and grooming services to the customers. This attendant was the only person exempted from the gender segregation in bathhouses.

Cat. 35

Cats

Kitagawa Utamaro
Servant boy dreaming of a monster cat
around 1794–95

In this print, the girl is playing a prank by doodling on the dozing boy's face. The scene above shows the boy's dream: a cat wears a headcloth, loose kimono, and carries an umbrella. The style of dress on the humanoid cat and its standing posture allude to streetwalkers (*yotaka*). Also, the word *neko* (cat) was used for unlicensed prostitutes in the streets.

Cat. 39

Utagawa Kuniyoshi
Beauties with a cat by the goldfish pond
around 1851

This triptych shows three women relaxing on a veranda in the evening. Goldfish swim in the pond behind. The pet cat of the woman at left seems to be intrigued by the goldfish.

Cat. 52

Utagawa Kuniyoshi
The habit of listening to gossip
Forty-eight Habits of the Floating World
around 1847–48

As the title indicates, this woman loves gossip. She leans forward, as though listening attentively. On the right is a *nagahibachi*, a box-shaped heating device with a brazier and a fireside board. This is also known as *nekoita*, “cat’s board”, a favourite place for cats to warm themselves during the cold seasons.

The text above gives responses of the listener: “I see...”, “Is that so?”, “What happened?” and more.

Cat. 53

Utagawa Kuniyoshi
Belated gratitude gift
Falsehood and Truth: Both Sides of the Heart
around 1847–48

Here, a beautiful woman is depicted twice; the main image shows a falsehood, the inset reveals the truth. Above, a troubled woman wonders about the intent behind a sudden gift of fresh fish from a woman who had not been in touch for some time. The main image, however, shows the same woman looking down gleefully at the tray she has accepted with full gratitude. A snarling pet cat stands behind her, probably frightened by the large lobster.

Cat. 55

Utagawa Kuniyoshi
Morning sleep makes waste
Sixteen Wonderful Considerations of Profit
around 1846

In this series a beautiful woman is paired with a *rakan*, an devoted follower of the Buddha.

They are referred to as Buddhist saints 尊者 (*sonja*). But in this series, Kuniyoshi plays a word pun and represents them as “damaged saints” 損者 (*sonja*). The woman here has been rising late. The print reminds us of the profits and benefits of being a hard worker, who will be rewarded for his or her work, and warns against being a lazy person.

Cat. 56

Utagawa Kuniyoshi
Master sculptor Hidari Jingorō
around 1847–50

The legendary sculptor Hidari Jingorō is at work in his studio. He is best known for his skill at carving Buddhist figures so convincingly that they were said to come to life. All the sculpted figures are probably portraits of kabuki actors. Due to the Tenpō Reforms of 1842, however, actor prints were illegal. Kuniyoshi found a clever way to get around the regulations.

The sculptor sits on the floor in the middle print, working on a figure. This is a self-portrait of Kuniyoshi, artist of the print. Kuniyoshi is turned away from the viewer. But viewers would know it's him: the towel slung over his shoulder and his cushion have the artist's paulownia crest (also used as a seal after his signature on each sheet), and he is accompanied by one of his numerous calico cats.

Cat. 57

Utagawa Kuniyoshi

The amazing phenomenon of popular Ōtsu-e paintings around 1847–48

During the Tenpō Reforms (1842–46), actor prints were illegal; afterwards, they were permitted as long as the actors' names and crests were not included. Kuniyoshi poked fun at the regulations by producing humorous works in which the familiar faces of top actors appeared in surprising guises: as cats, goldfish, graffiti, or, as in this triptych, Ōtsu-e folk paintings. Ōtsu pictures are small works sold as good-luck charms to travellers passing through the town of Ōtsu, the last stop on the Tōkaidō before Kyoto.

The artist Iwasa Matabei (1578–1650) was thought to have been the founder of the ukiyo-e school, and to have painted Ōtsu-e. Neither of these claims is now believed to be true, but they became the basis for a popular kabuki play featuring him as the main character. In this scene where his creations come to life, Kuniyoshi has drawn himself as Matabei. His face is hidden by one of the sheets of paper from which the figures have escaped. The fan beside him has his paulownia crest (also used as a seal after his signature on each sheet – more clearly seen here than in the previous print) and he is accompanied by one of his numerous calico cats; these clues alerted viewers to his identity.

Cat. 58

Utagawa Kuniyoshi

Lily

Elegant Selection of Six Flowers around 1843

The Japanese title of the series, *Fūryū Rokkasen* is a play on the term *Rokkasen* (Six Poetry Immortals), used for famous poets of the mid-9th century. Kuniyoshi picked six popular flowers and paired each with a beautiful woman. The flowers – lilies here – are potted in exquisite blue-and-white porcelain vases. The cat without a collar (probably wild) is snarling.

Cat. 61

Utagawa Yoshiharu

Courtesan Kiyokawa of the Okadaya Brothel

Assortment of Beauties of the Highest Popularity in Temporary Quarters in Fukagawa

1865

In this print, the famous courtesan Kiyokawa of the Okadaya brothel plays with her cat. Her kimono is decorated with butterflies dancing in the field of dandelions. Known as *tanpopo* in Japan, dandelions were a favourite plant to cultivate during the Edo period.

Cat. 62

Katsushika Hokusai

Sketches by Hokusai, vol. 14

After 1849

This is one of the 15 volumes of *Hokusai Manga*, also known as *Sketches by Hokusai*. Subjects include landscapes, flora, and fauna, everyday life, and the supernatural. The first volume was published in 1814; the final three after his death.

This spread shows a wolf and a cat. Although labelled as a wolf, it looks more like a wild dog. During Edo, there was a species (now extinct) called Japanese wolf (*Nihon ōkami*) or Honshū wolf.

Cat. 65

Utagawa Kuniyoshi

Hazy Moon: The Tale of Cats, vols. 3, 4, and 6

1845, 1846, 1848

These prints come from *Hazy Moon: The Tale of Cats*, a serial novel with pictures, made in collaboration with one of the most popular authors of the late Edo period, Santō Kyōzan. Both Kuniyoshi and Kyōzan were cat lovers. In the novel, kabuki actors are impersonated by cats.

The plot centres on the adventures of a female cat named Koma. She falls in love with a male tabby cat, elopes with him, they get separated, and she becomes a pet of a princess.

Cat. 59a–c

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III
Cherry blossoms at Genji's Rokujō Mansion
1854

This is a spring scene from *False Murasaki's Rural Genji*, a parody of the *Tale of Genji*. Ashikaga Mitsuuji, "rural" Prince Genji, stands holding a fan. He is participating in a cherry blossom viewing festival.

The woman standing at the right is Onna Sannomiya (Third Princess, given in marriage to Genji). In the original, she is spotted by Genji when she steps out onto her veranda to catch her cat. In this print, she holds a cat on a leash – a playful reference to that story. But here Sannomiya giggles in delight at the sight of Mitsuuji distracted by his own folding fan.

Cat. 50

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi
Looks annoyed: Appearance of girl in the Kansei period
Thirty-Two Aspects of Women
1888

This series depicts women of different backgrounds and occupations, each associated with a mood or character trait. The title might refer to the cat's look of annoyance at being caressed by its owner. The woman is probably from a wealthy merchant family. The cat's collar is made of similar fabric as the women's *juban* (inner kimono).

Cat. 63

Dogs

Suzuki Harunobu
Renshi
Five Elegant Colors of Ink
around 1769

Harunobu presents this woman as a poet. Morning glories bloom in the garden. The woman's kimono has a design of abstracted morning glory blooms. The poem above reads: Morning glories/once again/the faces/I am always seeing by Renshi.

Is the dog or the morning glories in the garden the “morning faces” she sees? Or is it her male companion, perhaps still asleep behind the curtain?

Dogs at first were a luxury, received as gifts from Western and Chinese merchants. Eventually, they were kept as pets by wealthy merchants and courtesans. Small dogs became favourite pets of daimyo and court ladies.

Cat. 66

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III
Young woman carrying a child on her back
Starlight Frost and Modern Manners
around 1820

This print depicts a young woman babysitting a child while a dog tries to play with her. The boy wears a kimono with a *mimasu-tsunagi* design (three nested squares). It is the clan *mon* (emblem) of Ichikawa Danjūrō, a famous kabuki actor family.

Cat. 69

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III
Street musician
Street in Spring
early 1820s

A mother and child are greeted at the entrance of their house by a dog, probably a stray from the streets, hoping for a treat. The inset picture shows a street performer couple. It was a common sight in early spring to see a female street performer, in new kimono and woven hat, playing the shamisen for *Tori-oi Matsuri*, a bird-chasing festival. The festival is to pray for abundant crops and the health and wellbeing of the family, particularly children. Like today, these street performers hoped to receive money for their performances.

Cat. 71

Keisai Eisen

Reading books

Eight Favorite Things in the Modern World
around 1823

A Japanese Chin leans in as a woman reads a folded letter. Eisen used the pile of books above to promote his own illustrated books. On top is *Kaido chazuke*, with illustrations by Eisen. The open one below is *Eight Dog Chronicles*, an epic tale in 106 volumes, published over 28 years (1814–42). The stories revolve around eight samurai who are half-brothers, all descendants of a dog and each with the word “dog” in their names. Most were illustrated by Yanagawa Shigenobu (1787–1832), Eisen took over after his death.

Cat. 74

Utagawa Kuniyoshi

Spring night

1843–45

A woman walks in the street on a spring night. A stray dog wanders past. The words of a traditional waka song by Edo poet Ryūtei Kyōraku surround here.

Cat. 73

Utagawa Kunimaru

In front of the bathhouse

1818–30

From the right, the women are described as Monnosuke *kidori*, Kumesaburo *kidori*, and Kikunojō *kidori*. *Kidori* means to imitate, and these are names of kabuki actors. Famous kabuki actors were the movers and shakers of the fashion world, especially the *onnagata* (male actors who play female roles). The kimono of the woman on the right bears a maple leaf design inspired by Monnosuke III, whose clan *mon* (emblem) was a round cluster of four maple leaves.

Kunimaru studied under Utagawa Toyokuni I, and thus adopted the surname. Only a few of his works still exist. He was also a poet; he wrote haiku under the name Ryubi.

Cat. 70

SECTION 2

Goldfish

Kitagawa Utamaro II

Summer: Woman and her child playing with goldfish

1789–1801

The woman sits in a relaxed manner, holding a *uchiwa* fan. The character at the top right indicates that it is summer. During Edo peddlers on the streets selling goldfish were a common sight in summer. Costs varied depending on rarity, breed, colour, etc. Some goldfish could fetch as high as 3 to 5 *ryō* (1 *ryo* would be about \$800 SGD today).

Cat. 78

Utagawa Toyokuni I

Actors Onoe Matsusuke II as Kingyoya Kinpachi and Ichikawa Ichizō I as Ukiyodoko no Matabei

1814

This print depicts a scene from a kabuki play. On the right is Onoe Matsusuke II, acting as goldfish peddler Kingyoya Kinpachi. On the left is Ichikawa Ichizō I, playing the role of Ukiyodoko no Matabei. Kinpachi holds a *kingyodama* (glass container for admiring goldfish).

Entering the studio of Utagawa Toyoharu at the age of 14, Toyokuni I drew inspiration from famous artists around him, particularly Utamaro. He had a strong reputation during his lifetime and taught a host of talented students, including Kunisada and Kuniyoshi.

Cat. 80

Utagawa Kuniyoshi

Imaginary scene of Summer: Actors Ichimura Kakitsu as Water Vendor and Nakamura Kanjaku as Goldfish Vendor

early 1840s

This diptych shows two popular kabuki actors as summer street peddlers. On the left, Nakamura Utaemon IV (aka Kanjaku) plays a goldfish peddler.

On the right, Ichimura Uzaemon XII (aka Kakitsu) plays a water peddler. Between 1804 and 1830, a kabuki dance inspired by peddler-merchants was so popular that woodblock print artists created prints depicting peddlers selling paper, water, insects, fans, flowers, plants, and many other commodities.

Cat. 87

Kikukawa Eizan

Woman and her child looking at a goldfish bowl

1804–18

The child here is wearing a hood believed to be a lucky charm to avoid smallpox. By the late Edo period, images of a woman and child admiring goldfish were a popular subject. And there were many publications on keeping goldfish as pets. New compendiums and instruction manuals on goldfish were published regularly.

Cat. 83

Utagawa Kuniyoshi

Scene from the play *Genji Moyō Furisode Hinagata*

1851

This triptych shows a scene from a kabuki play based on *False Murasaki's Rural Genji*, a parody of *Tale of Genji*. The parody, by Ryūtei Tanehiko (1783–1842), was published in woodblock print edition with illustrations by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, in 38 volumes (1829–42).

In these prints, rural “Genji” has a unique hairstyle – *ebichasenmage* (a topknot split at the front, like the tail of a shrimp). Because of the popularity of the novel and the related prints, the play followed the same hairstyle for the character.

Cat. 86

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III
Mitsuuji and women enjoying a winding stream party
1852

Here, Ashikaga Mitsuuji, protagonist of *False Murasaki's Rural Genji*, is surrounded by women enjoying a winding stream party in a garden with cherry trees. The helpers in the stream pick up the wine cups so the finely dressed Mitsuuji and the women do not need to get wet. His overcoat is decorated with goldfish designs.

Winding stream parties are an old Chinese custom. Participants sit and compose poems while waiting for their cups of rice wine to float down to reach them.

Cat. 88

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III
The Sixth Month
Genji in the Twelve Months
1856

Here, a group of travellers crowds under a tree to take shelter from a sudden rain. Ashikaga Mitsuuji, of *False Murasaki's Rural Genji*, is on the right. A courier is seated on his messenger box; a mother carries a child; a monk looks toward the dark sky. In the middle, a young woman in *furisode* (long-sleeved kimono) glances at the handsome Mitsuuji. The woman beside her exchanges glances with a goldfish peddler.

Cat. 89

Utagawa Sadahide
French woman in the Foreign Merchant House in Yokohama
1861

In this print a French woman admires goldfish in a container in the foreign merchant house in Yokohama. In the inset image, a man admires her.

After Japan was forced to re-open its ports and allow foreigners to enter, Japanese people were curious about them. Many ukiyo artists responded to the demand for information about the customs and appearance of these new people.

Cat. 91

Other animals

Utagawa Kuniyoshi The Devoted Son Yoji Twenty-four Japanese Paragons of Filial Piety around 1843–45

This print shows a devoted son working as a monkey trainer to earn money to aid his sick mother. This is a scene from a kabuki play about – Oshun, a beautiful courtesan in Gion *kagai*; Oshun's lover Denbē; and Yojirō, Oshun's brother, a monkey trainer living in Kyoto.

The title is derived from the *Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety*, by Yuan-dynasty Chinese scholar Guo Jujing; known in Japan as Kaku Kyokei. The book recounts the self-sacrificing behaviours of 24 sons and daughters who go to extreme lengths to honour their parents, stepparents, grandparents, and in-laws.

Cat. 97

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III Glass Dutch ship, imported birds, and glass lantern at the Craft Show 1819

This triptych depicts glass artwork on display in a handicraft show at Ryōgoku, Edo City, in 1819. Coloured glass models of Dutch trading ships and large hanging lanterns were speculator marvels that showcased Japanese glass cutting technology. Live exotic birds such mynah and parrots were also put on display. The ability of parrots to mimic the speech of humans brought amazement to Edo people.

Cat. 95

Artist unknown
Camel imported by Europeans
1867

In this print, two young boys play on a Bactrian camel (two-humps). In 1867, crowds gathered in Osaka to see a live Bactrian camel. Its measurements (probably exaggerated) are in the inscription at the top: 4m tall; weight approx. 2 tonnes; neck about 3m long. Another inscription mentions the admission fee of 72 *mon* (about 1,800 yen; \$23 SGD today).

Cat. 102

Utagawa Kunimasa IV
Parody of *Hauta* songs
1865–68

A male rabbit sings while playing music on a shamisen for his partner. A *hauta* is short love song, usually accompanied by shamisen. They were extremely popular from late Edo into the early Meiji period.

The inscription is a parody of two famous songs. The lyrics tell of an excited rabbit peddler who has a rare and popular red-fur rabbit. He aims to raise it well and hopes to breed it with other pedigree rabbits to produce exotic rabbits to sell.

Cat. 100

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III
View of Kanbara
Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road
early Tenpō period (1830–44)

This is a print from Kunisada's series in which each station of the Tōkaidō is paired with a beautiful woman. And the background scenery in each print is copied from Hiroshige's view of the station in his famous *Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road*. The woman here is mounted on a bull or ox. Cattle were mostly used in farm work and for transporting heavy goods. In woodblock prints, cattle often signal idyllic aspects of the rural countryside.

Cat. 96

SECTION 3

Soul food

Katsushika Hokusai

Kuwana: Baked clam shop/Yokkaichi: Bean paste shop

Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road: Picture Book of Courier's Bell
around 1810

Kuwana, 42nd stop on the Tōkaidō, prospered as a pier for ferry transportation. One could find teahouses selling grilled clams, the area's specialty. In this print, the brazier is set outside; pinecones and needles added to the fire create fragrance to attract travellers to the stall.

The other print (right) depicts Yokkaichi, the 43rd station, and pitstop before heading on to Kyoto or to Ise Shrine. Travellers making their pilgrimage to Ise Shrine go off the Tokaido here. There were many teahouses along this path. This shop sells a traditional sweet.

Cat. 108a, b

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi

Looks heavy: Appearance of a waitress at Fukagawa in the Tenpō period

Thirty-Two Aspects of Women

1888

A waitress labelled as Karuko, working at Fukagawa, carries a tray set with enamelled porcelain dishes of food. In the red bowl, there seems to be a dish with beans; the blue-and-white dish holds sashimi.

The word *fūzoku*, which appears in all the titles of this series, means, "customs", "manners", or "morals". This series dates from the very end of Yoshitoshi's career.

Cat. 103

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III x Utagawa Hiroshige
Matsu-no-sushi: Actor as Sushiya Musume Osato
Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital
1852

The top images depict Matsu no Sushi, a restaurant near Asakusa – one of the most popular sushi restaurants in Edo City.

In the foreground is the character Osato, a maiden in a sushi restaurant. The print tries to suggest the (loose) link between Matsu no Sushi and Osato, two popular subjects in Edo City.

Cat. 105

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III x Utagawa Hiroshige
The Sakurai Restaurant: Actor Ichikawa Kodanji IV as Asakura Tōgo
Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital
1852

Kunisada and Hiroshige collaborated on this series on famous restaurants. Kunisada drew the figure and Hiroshige worked on the background image of a scene from a popular Edo City restaurant. Here it is Yoshi Cho, indicated in the red gourd at left. A worker carefully transfers sashimi from a larger charger to smaller serving dishes.

The figure in the foreground is Asakura Tōgo, played by kabuki star Ichikawa Kodanji IV. The role is based on a village head who organised a protest on behalf of the suffering farmers of his village.

Cat. 115

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III x Utagawa Hiroshige
The Dagasode Restaurant: Actor Iwai Kumezaburō III as Yaoya Oshichi
Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital
1853

This print involves a play on words, with “Dagasode”, the name of the restaurant pictured at the top, and the woman’s colourful “furisode” (long-sleeved kimono). The circle shows a box of bite-sized foods: meat, fish,

boiled vegetables, grilled omelette, fish cakes, etc., usually served before a kaiseki meal. Today they are common New Year dishes.

In the foreground is Yaoya Oshichi, character from a tragic kabuki play, beating a drum to sound a fire alarm. The play recounts an actual incident during a great fire in the Tenna era (1681–84). A young girl meets a temple page. The next year she attempts arson, thinking that she could meet him again if another fire occurred. She was caught and burnt at the stake. The theme of someone dying for love was popular with Edo audiences, and there were many novels, plays, and dances based on Oshichi's tragic and youthful folly.

Cat. 116

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III x Utagawa Hiroshige
The Hyakusekirō Restaurant: Actor Ichikawa Kodanji IV as Nakamaro
Famous Restaurants of the Eastern Capital
1853

The top images depict candle stands and a lantern inscribed “Oryōri Hyakusekirō”, a restaurant in Nihonbashi area that served kaiseki meals.

The character here is Abe no Nakamaro, a scholar and poet of the Nara period (710–94). He was part of the Japanese mission to Tang China. He remained there, passed the civil-service examination, and took a position at the Chinese court. In the play, the spirit of the character is trapped in a tower (*kōrō*). There is a play of words here that would have appealed to viewers, linking *Hyakusekirō* (multi-storey restaurant) and *kōrō*, the tower that trapped his spirit.

Cat. 117

Utagawa Kuniyasu
Prosperity of the fish market at Nihonbashi
late 1820s

Nihonbashi Uogashi (riverside fish market) – the “kitchen” of Edo – played an important role in the city's culinary scene. Sea bream, abalone, sea snail, squid, flounder, octopus, spiny lobster, and tuna were all sold in the market

(and are depicted here). The men with the carrying poles (at left) seem to have a large *katsuo* (bonito, or skipjack tuna), one of the most important fish on the Japanese menu.

Cat. 109

Utagawa Kuniyoshi

Moriyama: Bodhidharma eating soba noodle

Sixty-nine Stations of the Kisokaidō Road

1852

Skilfully adding characters and word play from stories and legends to his images, Kuniyoshi ingeniously depicted all the stations along the Kisokaidō. Here, images and the inscription above identify the place as Moriyama, by Lake Biwa. The figure in the foreground is Bodhidharma, founder of Zen Buddhism in China, eating tray after tray of soba. The bemused worker brings him even more trays of noodles.

The style of eating soba from steamer trays, as shown in this print, is thought to have started in the Edo period. Before that, soba was often consumed as dumplings. The soba noodles seen here are “cut soba”, served with finely sliced *negi* (Welsh onion) and *daikon oroshi* (grated radish). Preparing soba with soy sauce first became popular in the 19th century. Soy sauce had a big impact on Edo food culture. It made soba dipped in soya sauce an enormously popular dish.

Cat. 121

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III

Actor Ichikawa Ebizō V and his family in a calligraphy and painting party:

Sushi from the famous shop Matsu-no-sushi

1852

This triptych shows members of the Ichikawa family of kabuki actors at a calligraphy and painting party at Ichikawa Ebizō V's home. The inscription at right reads: “Salutations, Matsu no sushi from Atake shop, To Mr Kobukuchōsha”.

Matsu no Sushi was one of the most famous sushi restaurants in Edo City, at Asakusa. It originated in the Fukugawa Atake area and continued to use

Atake in the name after relocating. “Kobukuchōsha” – literally “one blessed with many children”, refers to Ebizō V. The array of sushi on the platter includes prawn *nigiri* sushi, egg-rolled sushi, and delights.

Cat. 112

Utagawa Kuniyoshi x Utagawa Torijo
Wanting to eat: Mimasaka province
Auspicious Desires on Land and Sea
1852

This print is part of Kuniyoshi’s series with scenery and famous products of places across Japan combined with pictures of beautiful women. Takada is famous for inkstones – thus the quarry image, drawn by Utagawa Torijo (aka Yoshitorijo), Kuniyoshi’s daughter.

Look closely at the dumplings on the tray: individual grains of rice are visible. This is probably a meal for a child, as the title suggests: *mama ga tabetai* – “I want to eat rice”, in a child’s way of speaking.

Cat. 122

Utagawa Sadakage
Lottery
1818–44

This woman is probably a courtesan. On the floor, sake cups float in a *haisen* (rinsing container) near a tray of food: maybe butterbur shoots, sweet rolled omelette, and other snacks.

The inset image shows a temple lottery. A man in ceremonial dress holds a wooden box filled with *kōban* (gold coins).

Cat. 126

Utagawa Yoshitora
Foreigners enjoying a party
1861

A group of foreigners enjoy a party in Gankirō house, in the Miyozaki red-light district of Yokohama. This is the Room of Folding Fans, highest grade of luxury.

The unexpected arrival of American Commodore Matthew Perry in Tokyo in 1853 astonished the Japanese people, who had been isolated from the rest of the world for more than 200 years. Rapidly following Perry's visit, the government of the shoguns collapsed; and a new age began. Foreigners visiting Japan were restricted to living in Yokohama, a port city south of Tokyo. Gradually other ports were opened, including Kobe and Nagasaki. Chinese merchants had always been present at these ports.

Cat. 128

Utagawa Yoshikazu
Foreigners' residence in Yokohama
1861

The physical appearance, apparel, and ways of life of foreigners were subjects of intense interest to the Japanese, and they became a popular theme for so-called "Yokohama prints" like this one. In this imaginary scene, a Western merchant's family relaxes in a European-style residence.

Cat. 130

Artist unknown
Present-day sesame rice cakes
1868

A group of men work to grind sesame seeds in a monumental bowl. They're making a sweet rice cake: containing glutinous rice, regular rice (ratio of 7:3; or only glutinous rice), and sesame seeds, the cakes sit for sale on the counter.

This print is a parody that tells the story of the Chōshū Domain, and how they formed an alliance with a rival domain to overthrow the Tokugawa Shogunate.

Cat. 131

Artist unknown

Earthquake catfish print: Grilling a giant catfish

1855

In 1854, the Great Ansei Earthquake struck Edo City, claiming thousands of lives and inflicting widespread damage. Within days, a new type of woodblock print known as *namazu-e* (“catfish pictures”) became popular. These prints featured giant *namazu* (catfish) that, according to legend, caused earthquakes by thrashing about in their underground lairs. In addition to providing humour and social commentary, many of these prints claimed to offer protection from future earthquakes.

The popularity of *namazu-e* exploded – as many as 100 different types became available within weeks. The phenomenon abruptly ended when the Tokugawa government, which maintained a strict system of censorship over the publishing industry, cracked down on production. Only a handful are known to survive today. In this one, a catfish is being exorcised by the Shinto god Kashima.

Cat. 132

Gardens

Utagawa Yoshitora

Fashionable assortment of chrysanthemums: Elephant

1844

Two women admire elephant made of *kiku* – chrysanthemums. During fairs and exhibitions in Edo, gardeners would create human or animal figures like this. *Mizugoke* (bog moss) was used to tie together the many small bunches of flowers to form the elephant.

This spectacular floral sculpture was made in Edo City in 1844 by Itō Kingorō. Elephants were recorded as diplomatic gifts to important Japanese lords in the 16th century. But not many Japanese had ever seen a live elephant.

Cat. 139

Utagawa Kuniyoshi

**Chrysanthemums of 100 varieties grafted together
around 1845**

A large crowd presses forward to see an enormous chrysanthemum plant bearing flowers of 100 different varieties, each identified by name on the hanging label. This botanical wonder was created by carefully cutting and grafting different chrysanthemum varieties onto a central stem – a technical feat made even more extraordinary when all the flowers bloomed simultaneously.

Kuniyoshi's print is the only existing visual record of this "miracle" plant, which, according to the text at the top, was the work of a garden specialist named Imaemon.

Cat. 137

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III

**Autumn: Actors (from right) Iwai Kumesaburō III, Ichikawa Danjūrō VIII, and
Bandō Shūka I**

***Comparisons of Flowers of Four Seasons*
1853**

Edo people bought flowers and plants from roadside stalls set up by peddlers. All the potted flowers and plants on the racks here represent the autumn season. More expensive plants, such as Japanese sacred lily and whisk fern, are already in ceramic pots on the shelves. Other autumn plants on the floor could easily be transplanted in one's garden or into pots after purchase.

In the foreground are the three kabuki actors named in the title. Both Kumesaburō III and Shūka I were famous *onnagata* (male actors who play female roles), hence they were usually portrayed in women's costumes. Their names are not inscribed in this print, but the attributes they hold and their likenesses here, would have signalled their identities to viewers of the time.

Cat. 135

Utagawa Kunimori II
Rooster-shaped corn exhibited at Shinagawa
1845

This print depicts an urban myth: the appearance of a rooster-shaped ear of corn in the house of a man at Shinagawa. According to one report, the rooster passed away, and the owner buried it in his backyard. From there, a cob of corn matured and took the form of a rooster. This story grabbed the attention of the neighbourhood.

Probably the cob had a fungal disease known as corn smut. The fungus causes leaves, fruit, and silk to form large galls that could perhaps appear like a rooster's comb and wattles.

Cat. 140

SECTION 4

Seasonal Festivals

Utagawa Kunisada II

Tanabata Festival

The Five Festivals Represented by Baicho Genji

1858

Tanabata – the Star Festival – is the 7th day of the 7th month, when Hikoboshi, the cowherd star (Altair), and Orihime, the weaver (Vega), reunite across the river of heaven (Milky Way).

This traditional Chinese legend arrived in Japan during the Nara period (710–794). It was originally celebrated following the lunar calendar, but when Japan adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1873, Tanabata came to be observed on the seventh of July, roughly a month earlier in terms of the cycle of seasons. Today Tanabata is celebrated in summer but for an Edo person, it was an autumn festival.

The Chinese version is called the Qixi Festival and is celebrated on 14 August this year (7th day of 7th month in the Chinese calendar).

The tradition of writing wishes on strips of paper and decorating bamboo branches with them has survived to this day. Visit the exhibition programming space in the Level 2 Foyer to write your wishes on our Tanabata tree.

Cat. 147

Utagawa Hiroshige

Fireworks at Ryōgoku

around 1849–51

Women gather at a pier to watch the summer fireworks near Ryōgoku Bridge in Edo City. Restaurants and other businesses along the riverbanks sponsored dazzling fireworks displays during the 1850s. The pyrotechnics drew large crowds, who gathered atop the bridge, along the shore, in teashops, and on rented pleasure boats to enjoy the show.

The tradition of summer fireworks at Ryōgoku lasted until 1961, with only occasional interruptions. In 1978, it was re-introduced as the *Sumidagawa* Fireworks Festival, now held annually on the last Saturday in July.

Cat. 146

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III
The Twelfth Month: Making rice dumplings
Twelve Months
1854

In the final month of the lunar year, preparations for New Year festivities are underway in this print as five women and a man make mochi (rice cakes). Auspicious symbols appear as small details: a turtle symbolising longevity is depicted on a fan; gourds, for good luck, decorate the sliding screens.

Seasonal activities, mostly performed by women, were Kunisada's primary subjects. Together his prints contrast the cycle of daily life with the more formal and special quality of festival days, thus highlighting the passage of time.

Cat. 143

Utagawa Kunisada, aka Toyokuni III
Scene at low tide: Gathering shellfish
late 1820s

In springtime, two favourite pastimes came to mind for Edo people: viewing cherry blossoms and gathering shellfish. One could find an array of shellfish at low tide, including hard clams, littlenecks clam, and a type of sea snail called horned turban.

Cat. 141

Paintings

Nagamasa

Bust portrait of a beautiful woman

1818–30

Ink and colour on paper scroll

Cat. 156

Bansai Madaki

Woman brushing her teeth

1830–44

Ink and colour on paper scroll

Cat. 157

Utagawa Kunimune II

Strolling shamisen player and woman at the face powder shop

1830–44

Ink and colour on paper scroll

Cat. 154

Artist unknown (Attributed to Katsushika Hokusai)

Monkeys with Gohei

1804–18

Ink and colour on paper scroll

Cat. 151

Tani Bunchō x Komatsubara Suikei x Kita Busei

Butterfly, peony, and cat

early or mid-1830s

Ink and colour on paper scroll

Cat. 150

Kouno Bairei (1844–1895)

Parody of Onna San no Miya (The Third Princess, from the *Tale of Genji*)

1868–72

Ink and colour on silk scroll

Cat. 153

CONTEMPLATIVE SPACE

Utagawa Hiroshige

Kyoto: The Great Bridge at Sanjō

Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road

around 1833–34

This bridge in Kyoto marked the end of the Tōkaidō Road. Hiroshige created various editions of this series, some with different aspects of the post-stations, but he always included this bridge. He may have thought of the unity of each edition, starting with Nihonbashi Bridge in Edo, ending in Kyoto with Sanjō Bridge. Or, he might have chosen it to clearly convey an image of Kyoto familiar to *Edokko* (people of Edo City).

Cat. 13