



## Icon Chantry Library Subject Bibliography

### No1 Conservation of Japanese prints

A select bibliography of references about Japanese Prints, with contributions from Celia Bochmuehl, Pamela De Tristan, Robert Minte, Shiho Sasaki and Pauline Webber



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

All the references are available for access either electronically, or in hard copy, via the Chantry Library, where original documents will be held.

## CONGRESS PAPERS

1. Connors, S.A., Whitmore, P. M., Keyes, R. S., and E.I. Coombs, 'The identification and light sensitivity of Japanese woodblock print colorants: The impact on art history and preservation' *Scientific Research in the Field of Asian Art: Proceedings of the Second Forbes Symposium at the Freer Gallery of Art 2003*, eds. P. Jett, J. Winter and B. McCarthy (London: Archetype, 2005) 35–47.

A collection of seventy two eighteenth and nineteenth century Japanese Woodblock prints from the collections of the Carnegie Museum of Art and The Library of Congress were surveyed. This was to determine their sensitivity to visible light using a micro-fading tester developed at the Research Center on the Materials of the Artist and Conservator. When possible, the reflectance data collected by the micro-fading tester were also used to identify the natural organic colourants used on these prints. Japanese woodblock prints are considered to be light-sensitive object. Surprisingly wide ranges of fading behaviour were found. Yellow areas were created with the most light-sensitive colourants, while blue areas proved to be relatively stable to visible light. Further examination of the data showed that medium values of a colourant will fade faster than their light and dark counterparts and that the prior fading history of a colourant has little effect on its light sensitivity. The reasons for specific colourant/colour use by Japanese woodblock printers are also explored. **Held in Chantry Library**

2. Keyes, K.M. 'Japanese print conservation – An overview,' IIC: Preprints of the Kyoto Congress, *The Conservation of Far Eastern Art*, eds. J.S. Mills, P. Smith and K. Yamasaki. (London: International Institute for Conservation, 1988) 30–36.

The author's knowledge of the materials and techniques used to make Japanese prints underpins this article. The author describes the characteristics of the Japanese print: the types of paper, the colourants and the marks left by the tools and block used in the process, and how these characteristics will influence the choice of treatment, display and storage. The author has drawn on the research undertaken by Dr R Feller<sup>1</sup>, into the fugitive nature of some of the organic colours found in Japanese prints. This overview is notable for the author's ability to combine both Eastern and Western conservation methods and principals. This article is invaluable for the conservator, collection manager and art historian. **Held in Chantry Library**

3. Sasaki, S. and P. Webber, 'A study of dayflower blue used in *ukiyo-e* prints,' IIC: Preprints of Baltimore Congress, *Works of Art on Paper, Books, Documents and Photographs, Techniques and Conservation*, eds. V. Daniels, A. Donnithorne and P. Smith (London: International Institution for Conservation, 2002) 185–188.

One of the traditional colourants used in *ukiyo-e* prints (Japanese woodcut prints), is dayflower blue. In this article, some of the botanical and chemical properties of the colourant are studied, together with historical use and production. The authors also present a study on the original state of the printed colourant, prior to its deterioration, and consider traditional techniques and materials that were used for making sample prints. This record of the non-damaged colours enabled the authors to assess the condition of several *ukiyo-e* prints in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. **Held in Chantry Library**

<sup>1</sup> Feller, R.L., Curran, M., and C. Bailie, 'Identification of traditional organic colourants employed in Japanese prints and determination of their rates of fading' in Keyes, R.S., *Japanese Woodblock Prints; A Catalogue of the Mary A. Ainsworth Collection* (Oberlin: Allen Memorial Art Museum, 1984) 253–266.

4. Walsh, J., Berrie, B. and M. Palmer, 'The connoisseurship problems of discoloured lead pigments in Japanese woodblock prints', *IPC Conference Papers London 1997*, ed. J. Eagan, (Leigh: Institute of Paper Conservation, 1997) 118–124.

This article addresses a question that frequently arises when treating prints. It looks at two types of lead pigment discolouration found in Japanese prints, those that naturally occur, and those where discolouration that has been deliberately introduced, explaining how to identify the one from the other. The paper goes on to the question of whether, armed with this knowledge, the conservator should treat the naturally occurring discolouration as that of disfigurement rather than a patina. It is a useful article on a topic that is still under discussion, and includes some interesting early references and opinions. [Held in Chantry Library](#)

## ENCYCLOPEDIA

5. Newland, A.R., ed., *The Hotei Encyclopedia of Japanese Woodblock Prints (2 vols.)*, (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2005).

The aim of this encyclopedia was to reflect the developments in the area of study of the Japanese woodblock print over the twenty years previous to its publication. It is a key reference work. It contains essays by notable historians in the field, on a variety of subjects, including 'Materials and Techniques' and 'Issues of Conservation and Collecting'. The essay 'Materials and Techniques', presented by Shiho Sasaki, is thorough and contains references drawn from both Western and Japanese source material. Materials and tools are described with accuracy. The complete printing process is outlined. There is an informed account of both organic and inorganic colourants, paper types and the sizes of papers used in Japanese woodblock printing. The essays 'On the Care of Japanese Prints' and 'Collecting Japanese Prints: The Issues of Quality, Condition and Rarity,' are also useful and informative. [Donation from Pauline Webber – held in Chantry Library.](#)

## ONLINE ARTICLE

6. Fiske, B., 'Metropolitan museum of art Japanese print collection: Condition survey, computer cataloguing and exhibition concerns' [online], *The Book and Paper Group Annual*, Volume 12, 1993, The American Institute for Conservation <http://cool.conservation-us.org/coolaic/sg/bpg/annual/v12/bp12-06.html> (accessed 20 February 2011)

This article was written in 1991 and describes carrying out a condition survey of the Japanese woodblock prints in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The information gathered was used to create a database designed to suite the needs of those who would access it at the time and in the future. It highlights the importance in designing the database in conjunction with a team of end users; also the importance of collecting data that would be useful and relevant, not just to catalogue information, but to enable it to be used as a planning tool for the conservator and for exhibitions and collections care managers. Although more sophisticated databases have subsequently been designed, the information in this article is still very relevant, offering a useful structure or guide, and outlining and explaining the relevant characteristics of the Japanese wood block print that should be recorded. [Pdf and hard copy available from Chantry Library](#)

## POSTPRINTS

7. De Tristran, P., 'Aqueous treatment of *ukiyo-e* prints of the Edo period: Three case studies', *The Broad Spectrum: Studies in the Materials, Techniques, and Conservation of Color on Paper*, eds. H.K. Stratis and B. Salvesen (London: Archetype, 2002) 190–197.

The author has drawn on practical experimentation supported by instrumental analysis to record how the organic colors in Japanese prints may alter with the introduction of moisture, used to carry out standard conservation treatments, such as the removal of surface dirt, staining and backing papers. What are evident from this article is that the characteristics of the woodblock print present the conservator with many challenges, and that any treatment has to be weighed against the risks of changing the appearance or nature of the print. The author has included references and a bibliography. **Held in Chantry Library**

8. Keyes, R.S. and E.I. Coombs, 'Color as language in traditional Japanese prints' *The Broad Spectrum: Studies in Materials, Techniques, and Conservation of Color on Paper*, eds. H.K. Stratis and B. Salvesen (London: Archetype, 2002) 184–189.

In this article, written by one of the greatest authorities on Japanese prints, the author discusses the points that the conservator needs to address in order to make informed decisions regarding the treatment and preservation of Japanese prints; to assess colour stability to determine treatment options; to be able to recognize whether or not a print has faded in order to establish guidelines for preservation; to describe objectively these matters with curators, museum administrators and clients.

He identifies the challenges the conservator faces, such as the inconclusive optical identification of many of the colourants well known by name and without prior instrumental reading, to know the degree to which these colours have faded. To this end, the author suggests considering colours in context. Since printers used limited combinations of colour relating to different periods and different audiences, the author has taken these standard colour combinations and called them palettes. He describes eight palettes that will enable the recognition of certain visual effects that are characteristic of un-faded prints relating to a particular period, style or audience. The author also describes the history of blue in Japanese woodblock printing, and some of the colour conventions used for certain types of prints. **Held in Chantry Library**

## WEBSITES

9. Fiorillo, J., '*Viewing Japanese Prints*' [online] launched in 1999, with subsequent additions. <http://www.viewingjapaneseprints.net/> (accessed 24 June 2011)

This is a well-devised site and is easy to navigate. There are ten sections each with links and bibliographies. Very good section on FAQ. The technical sections are well explained with some illustrations and diagrams. The author writes about types of paper, sheet sizes and orientation of the paper when printed. The author discusses the dangers in trying to remove backing papers without the expertise of a conservator. There is a section on display and storage of Japanese prints with an in-depth section on the fading of colourants. The information on fading is sound, but needs updating, and could have included more references. Nonetheless it is an excellent website. Somewhat biased towards American collections and lacking in references.

10. Fitzwilliam Museum : *Making Art 'How a Japanese Print is Made'* [online] [http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/pharos/sections/making\\_art/index\\_japan.html](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/pharos/sections/making_art/index_japan.html) (accessed 24 June 2011)

The Fitzwilliam Museum website has a small interactive subsection entitled "Making Art" to help explain how the art in their collections was actually produced. The subjects include Japanese printmaking and it provides an extremely useful guide to understanding the process. It uses a set of blocks owned by the Victoria and Albert Museum and shows very clearly how a print was made and the tools used. This would be a good website for anyone wanting to understand the nature of a Japanese print before embarking on any conservation.

## Historical Perspective

### BOOKS

**11.** Kendô, I., *Nishiki-e no hori to suri* (the Cutting and Printing of Ukiyo-e), (Tokyo: Unsôdô, 1994.) (Written in Japanese)

Ishii Kendô was a well-known editor and writer of educational magazines and publications for young teens from the mid-Meiji period. The first edition of this book (Showa 4, 1929) is rather late as a concurrent publication for *ukiyo-e* production. However, Kendô started to work on this book from mid-Meiji period (1868-1923) when he became interested in collecting early Meiji prints. Kendô refers to two earlier publications on this subject by the Japanese government and carried out further research to provide much more information in his book. It has long been referred to as the best and earliest scholarly publication on *ukiyo-e* printmaking in Japan.

The content of this book includes: a brief history of woodblock prints in Japan; detailed procedures and materials in block-cutting and printing; block-cutter's information; a short description of printers. Illustrations are very limited: eight black and white photographs of prints as reference; several hand-drawn illustrations. As with other historical literature, the description of coloured materials is rather brief because visual examination was the only way to gain information on this matter at that time. The language of this book is Japanese, but written in Meiji style so a translation into modern Japanese may also be required.

**12.** Meech-Pekarik, J., *The World of the Meiji Print: Impressions of a New Civilization* (New York: John Weatherhill, 1986).

Dr. Meech-Pekarik was a guest curator of The Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition of the Lincoln Kirstein Collection of woodblock prints (May – Sept 1986).

The author's point of view is stated from the changing political situation arising out of the opening up of Japan in 1853 by the American Commander Perry for reasons of trade. A previously closed society, the prints are now a document of the changing influences on all aspects of Japanese society. The Meiji Period 1868–1900 shows the introduction of Western technology which influenced the subjects that the artists embraced with such enthusiasm – a new urban landscape with trains, gas lighting and the depiction of foreigners.

The book is easy to read, and covers more than the prints, containing over 200 black and white illustrations and 40 coloured plates with good definition. These illustrate the new imported synthetic aniline dyes used in the printing of the *Meiji* prints, and are completely different in style to the previous *Edo* Period prints. The author covers the modernization of Japan in the 1870's, with the introduction of photography, news papers and magazines with illustrations of war, cartoons, satire and romantic serials all drawn from the Lincoln Kirstein collection. These *Meiji* prints still had the ability to influence the work of James J. Tissot and Mary Cassat, an inference illustrated by Julia Meech-Pekarik. **Available in Bodleian and Sackler libraries. British Library inter-library loan if required**

**13.** Tinios, E., *Japanese Prints: Ukiyo-e in Edo, 1700–1900* (London: The British Museum Press, 2010).

Ellis Tinios is an honorary lecturer in History at the University of Leeds, specialising in 18th and 19th century Japanese Prints and illustrated books. The design of the book indicates the author's aesthetic appreciation of prints as the illustrations are imbedded with the text without figs. It is designed to give a wide understanding without a chronological approach, but a good outline history of *ukiyo-e* printmaking is given.

The author covers *ukiyo-e* (floating world) from the *Edo* period into the *Meiji* period from the introduction of the Japanese print through Paris to the West, dealing with the design and production of the woodblock print to the strict censorship by the *Tokugawa Shogunate* limiting artistic comment. The evolving of style through *Kabuki* subjects, Beauties, landscape to birds and flowers to the introduction of trains and machinery in the *Meiji* Period is well documented. The 100 colour illustrations are of superb quality and do the Japanese prints justice. **Held in Chantry Library**

## Other references

14. *The Paper Conservator*, Vol.30, (2006) – edited by Jane Eagan and Philip Meredith.

Issue devoted to articles about Japanese conservation, paper and art. Contents available online via Routledge (informaworld) <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t925482951~db=all> and also included a CD Rom of vol.9 – no longer in print.

Includes a bibliography by Robert Minte:

*Conservation of Asian Art – a select bibliography of Western language publications*, (123-131) Available as pdf <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a927154114~frm=abslink>

This bibliography updates Wendy Bennett's bibliography published in 1985 in volume 9 of *The Paper Conservator – Hy gu: The Japanese Tradition in Picture Conservation*. The new bibliography includes selected works relating to the conservation of Asian art arranged by subject, covering areas such as tools and techniques, objects and their construction, pigments, dyes and other media, case studies, etc.

15. *Andon* the magazine of The Society for Japanese Arts [www.society-for-japanese-arts.org](http://www.society-for-japanese-arts.org)

16. Articles by author and title Main publisher of books on Japanese prints Chris Uhlenbeck [www.hotei-japanese-prints.com](http://www.hotei-japanese-prints.com)

### Acknowledgements

The Librarian would like to thank Jane Eagan ACR, Head Conservator at the Oxford Conservation Consortium (OCC), Kate Colleran, ACR, paper conservator, and Michael Williams, Bodleian Library, for their invaluable support and guidance in the compilation of this bibliography.

### Biographies

#### Celia Bockmuehl (nee Withycombe)

Celia Withycombe ACR gained a BA in Chinese Studies from Durham University before taking an MA in Conservation of Fine Art at the University of Northumbria. She worked at the British Museum on the conservation of Eastern Pictorial Art and then at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, where she specialized in the care and conservation of Japanese prints and drawings. Accredited in 2000, she now works at the Oxford Conservation Consortium.

#### Pamela de Tristan

Pamela de Tristan ACR trained as a textile designer and etcher before becoming a dealer in Japanese woodblock prints. She studied paper conservation at Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts and graduated in 1981. Since then she has been in private practice specializing in the Conservation and restoration of Japanese prints and Japanese books.

#### Robert Minte

Robert Minte ACR studied book and paper conservation under Christopher Clarkson and Judy Segal whilst serving a bookbinding apprenticeship at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, 1980–1987. He completed an advanced internship in book conservation with Chris Clarkson at West Dean College in 1989. In 1992, Minte worked with visiting Japanese conservator, Mr Oyama Seiji, on the surveying and conservation of Japanese collections at the Bodleian and in 1996 he participated in the Japanese Paper Conservation Course in Japan. In 1996–1997, he assisted with the remounting and conservation of a Japanese hand scroll from the Bodleian collection, with Philip Meredith at the Far Eastern Conservation Centre, Leiden, (funded by the Sumitomo Foundation) and went on to study scroll mounting and conservation at the Usami Shokakudo, Kyoto, Japan, in 2001–2002, supported by a Fellowship grant from the Foundation for Cultural Heritage, Tokyo. In 2004, he lectured with Chris Clarkson at the National Diet Library, Tokyo, and Kansai-kan, and at Kindai (Kinki University), Osaka.

### **Shiho Sasaki**

Ms. Shiho Sasaki ACR has over twenty years experience in specialized research on dyes and pigments used in Japanese prints, including work and research at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, UK, the Freer/Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, and the Intermuseum Conservation Association in Cleveland, Ohio, USA. Ms. Sasaki received her MA in Conservation from the Royal College of Art/Victoria & Albert Program, and is currently working as the Conservator of Paintings on Paper and Silk at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco in California, USA.

### **Pauline Webber**

Pauline Webber ACR studied Fine Art in Painting and Art History at Canterbury and undertook a postgraduate MA at Chelsea College of Art before joining the Paper Conservation Department at the V&A, London, where she was Head of the Paper Conservation Section for 11 years and Head of expanded Paper, Book and Paintings Conservation Section for three years. She has studied in the United States, Italy and Taiwan and was Supervisor for the RCA/V&A Conservation course programme, and External Examiner for the MA Paper Conservation and the Post Graduate Diploma in Conservation at Camberwell College of Art (University of the Arts London.) She has served as a member of the assessment panel for accredited membership to the Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works in Ireland (IPCRA) and is herself an accredited member of Icon and a member of AIC and IIC. Webber currently lives and works in Boston, USA, and has written frequently for conservation journals.

All the references are available for access either electronically, or in hard copy, via the Chantry Library, where original documents will be held.

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