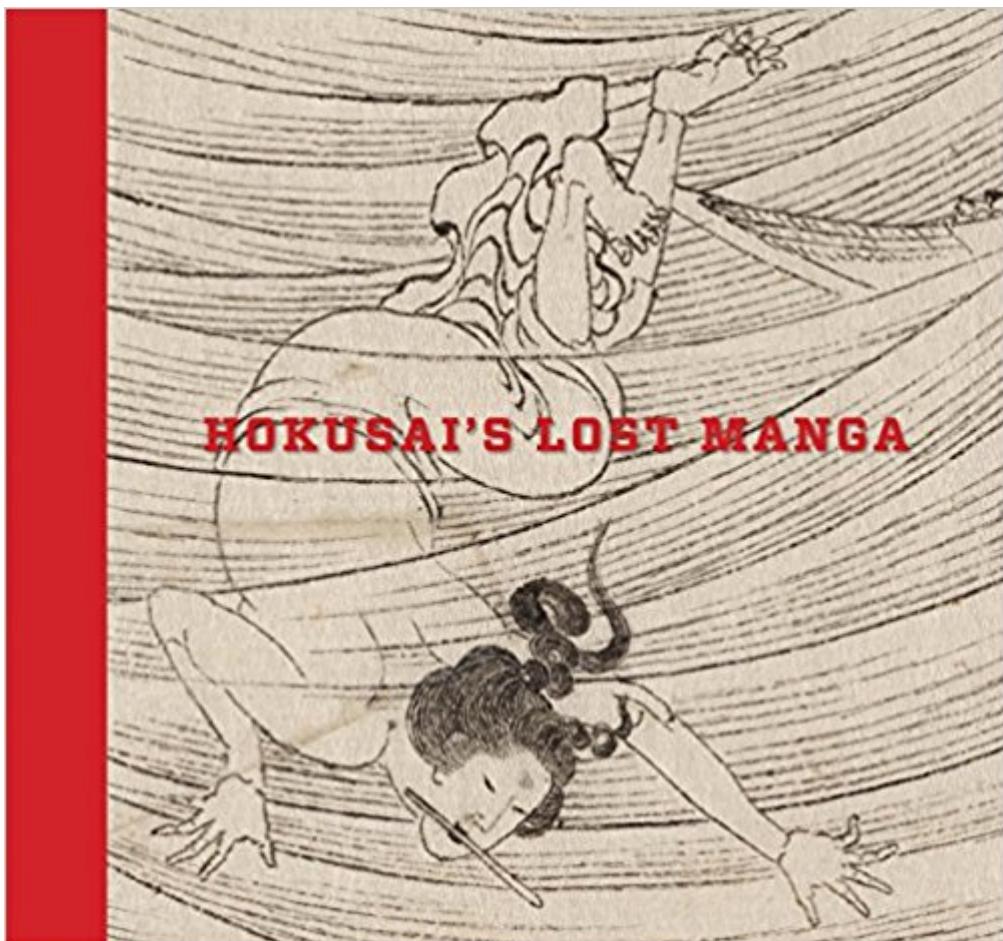


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Hokusai's Lost Manga



Synopsis

Nearly 200 years after Hokusai finished the drawings for this charming illustrated book, this intriguing early Japanese manga is finally being published for the first time. Thanks to a curator at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Rediscovered in an old box in the storage rooms of the museum, these Hokusai drawings should have been used to create the woodblocks for printing a continuation of his Manga series. But although scholars have found an advertisement announcing the title, there is no record of the book ever having been produced. Ironically, if the book had actually been published, the drawings would have been destroyed in the woodblock cutting process. Instead, presumably after the decision was made not to publish the book, the drawings were folded and bound together. And so they stayed for nearly two centuries. Author Sarah E. Thompson, Curator of Japanese Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, has studied the pages in depth for the first time, annotating them to help readers discover these drawings in Hokusai's own hand for themselves. Although Hokusai is most famous today for the color woodblock prints that he made at the end of his life, he was best known during his own times as a popular book illustrator.

Hokusai's Lost Manga includes the sort of lively, behind-the-scenes sketches of daily life that have made the Hokusai Manga so beloved, with appearances by imaginatively conceived sea creatures, refined flowers, heroes and a variety of craftspeople and laborers. Hokusai fans will find prototypes of many of the people and animals that populate the Japanese master's later landscape prints. The book also includes an especially interesting series of fabulous astrological deities may reflect Hokusai's practice of Nichiren Buddhism and his devotion to the Bodhisattva My...ken. Hokusai: The Lost Manga will delight and intrigue admirers of Hokusai's prints as well as Manga collectors. Artist and printmaker Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) made some of the most iconic images in Japanese art, such as the seminal woodblock print "Under the Wave off Kanagawa (The Great Wave)." Already influential in Japan, Hokusai inspired a new audience of budding Impressionists and post-Impressionists in the West upon the opening of Japan to Europe shortly after his death.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hokusai's Lost Manga includes...a short note explaining each drawing and situating it in the context of early-19th-century Japanese art. From these we discover a wealth of obscure trivia. (Brian Riley Artistsreview)Tucked away in a storage room at the Museum of Fine Arts, a collection of Hokusai's drawings was recently unearthed and has been published for the first time. Hokusai's Lost Manga... The handsome volume includes dozens of lively, lovely images, showcasing Hokusai's skill at capturing movement, in swirling garments, in water, in wind, in bodies in motion at work, spinning pots on a wheel, making paper, washing a horse, trekking up a hill. (Nina MacLaughlin The Boston Globe)The detail throughout is thoroughly wonderful. (Sarah E. Thompson Philadelphia Enquirer)The volume of tasty morsels remained unpublished-until now. The cover displays a partially clothed abalone-diver swooping down on her prey with a knife between her teeth. She seems just the right official greeter for Hokusai's incisive art. (Christopher Benfey The New York Review of Books)...highlights how driven Hokusai was to record his surroundings, no matter how quotidian; his 'tasty morsels' offer a comprehensive view of Japanese life at the time, from the people to the architecture to religious and cultural customs. (Claire Voon Hyperallergic)

Sarah E. Thompson is Assistant Curator for Japanese Prints at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

This is a really exciting book, beautiful and inspiring, that will be a valuable addition to any library. Artists, illustrators, collectors, scholars, and anyone interested in ukiyo-e or Japanese art in general will appreciate having the full reproduction (with annotations!) of this newly identified treasure from the hand of master artist Hokusai. Like any of Hokusai's work, and like his other manga, there is so much to see in each image, and here we have an overwhelming trove of nearly 200 new paintings! The book has crisp, clear reproductions of the pages at or near actual size, easy to savor all of the fine brushwork and detail. Always interesting to see underpaintings intended to be used for woodblocks, and cool to see notes and pasted edits. The handful of magnified images will

make you wish you could see the whole thing at even larger scale, but this is also not one of those massive, unwieldy art books that you can't take anywhere, and it doesn't carry the hefty price of those tomes either. If I was still a train commuter, I would toss this in my bag to read along the way. Sarah Thompson's introduction is characteristically well researched, and packed with information, history, supporting images, and side stories, while being short enough to be accessible to non-scholars. The annotations are thorough, but, again, not unwieldy. Whole papers could be written about any of the images (and probably will be, now that they've been made public) but this has brief explanations of what's going on, translations of inscriptions, some notes about the details, and enough information to provide starting points for deeper exploration about the subjects. The book is excellent by itself, but even better following the recent Boston MFA Hokusai exhibition catalog, and of course alongside any of the reproductions of Hokusai's original manga and One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji. It is so great to have this resource, and fabulous to see more amazing work from Hokusai.

History has not done the title's translation any good. 'Manga' back then meant about what 'cartoon' meant, which is not what either means now. Back then, a cartoon might be a preliminary sketch or under-drawing of a finished work. Likewise, these are relatively loose drawings, far from finished works. To my untrained eye, though the compositions first takes at linework really do suggest that a finished color print was in the offing. So, one might sense the loss of rigor you've come to expect in Hokusai's famous prints. For me, though, any loss is more than overcome by the freshness of not having to plan a major work for multiple artisans to complete, and by the focus on one character that might end up a minor detail in a major work, and by the chance to explore so many visions without having to commit a print's resources to them. I'm sure that many of these drawings exist only because Hokusai was free of the many demands a commercial print would impose. And, by the same token, made possible the later works architected by Hokusai but executed by a platoon of woodcut carvers, papermakers, colormen, master printers, and others who brought his famous imagery to life. If you came for Hokusai's wonderful color, for his rich series of prints, for his classic themes - well, you came too early. Some of these drawings, I'm sure, informed the classic works. (I wish I were the scholar that could draw the relationships.) These drawings - it's hardly fair to call them sketches - come from an earlier, freer, and less technically demanding stage of the printing process. And I, for one, feel grateful for them. -- wiredweird

The history of manga occupies one of the most fascinating niche areas of art history. Published by

the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, this collection of manga by the artist Hokusai, famous in Japanese ukiyo-e printmaking, highlights the lighter sides to the renown master. Hokusai's Lost Manga.....The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston is to be congratulated for providing an excellent example of the depth of one of art history's most important artists to the print medium. These images bring forth Hokusai's sly humor while facilitating his understanding of human nature and engaging his audience to the same levels we expect from his better known images. Thanks for a closer look at this compelling artist! Alice Bear

I gave this to my daughter for her birthday, but took time to enjoy it myself first. A great collection of Hokusai drawings. I have always thought of him as just a print maker, but this show that he was so much more. If you like to draw, you will be particularly enthralled and amazed.

Hokusai is a dreamcatcher. A profound grace is revealed by the prosaic under his hand. Otherworldly, sublime, sometimes erotic, sometimes surreal, often pedestrian scenes all become magical.

A great addition to any library focusing on the arts of Asia.

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