

## PRESS RELEASE

# Minneapolis Institute of Art to Present Retrospective of Yoshitoshi, Japan's Last Great Master of Woodblock Prints



*Moon: Actor Ichikawa Sanshō as Kezori Kuemon, from the series The Snow, Moon, and Flowers (Setsugekka no uchi), 1890. Published by Akiyama Buemon, Carved by Wada Yūjirō, Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper, The Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, gifts of various donors, by exchange, and gift of Edmond Freis in memory of his parents, Rose and Leon Freis 2017.106.239*

**Minneapolis Institute of Art**  
2400 Third Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
artsmia.org

**MINNEAPOLIS—January 7, 2020**—A new exhibition at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) celebrates the work of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892), considered the last major artist of the traditional Japanese woodblock print, known as *ukiyo-e*. “Yoshitoshi: Master Draftsman Transformed” highlights the artist’s process, his technical and innovative skills as a draftsman, and how he responded to Japan’s changing cultural tastes between 1860 and 1890. The 43 artworks on display—ranging from sketches, drawings, paintings, and many printed masterworks—include a selection from Mia’s 2017 acquisition of nearly 300 objects by Yoshitoshi from the Edmond Freis collection. The exhibition is on view February 1 through April 12, 2020, in Mia’s Cargill Gallery.

“Yoshitoshi was a formidable draftsman and the exhibition includes works by his own hands that showcase his innovative vision and skills and how his original idea was turned into a woodblock print,” said Andreas Marks, PhD, Mary Griggs Burke Curator of Japanese & Korean Art at Mia.

Yoshitoshi was born in Edo, now Tokyo. His earliest print was published when he was 14 years old as a student of Utagawa Kuniyoshi, the leading print designer of warrior subjects. Initially, he designed beautiful women and actors in traditional style, like all other artists of that time, but then shifted toward realism. He also studied with Kikuchi Yosai, a master of historical painting. At age 19 Yoshitoshi became an independent artist and focused on historical painting. He gained a reputation as a “war artist” because he often depicted scenes of violence. After recovering from a mental breakdown in 1873, he illustrated newspapers, a recent invention. In the 1880s, he became very successful through his popular series, *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon* and *Thirty-two Aspects of Behaviors*. After his death at age 53, he achieved posthumous acclaim as the most significant Japanese print designer between 1870 and 1890.

“Yoshitoshi: Master Draftsman Transformed” spans the artist’s prolific career, which follows Japan’s transformation from a feudal to a modern society, largely during the Meiji period. This time period saw drastic and disruptive social change, including the opening of Japan to global trade and the rapid adoption of foreign technology and knowledge.

# Mia

Exhibition highlights include:

- One of the artist's largest painting, a mysterious image of six great generals of the East and West, including George Washington and Napoleon III—on view for the first time ever (c. 1874)
- Four variations of the flute player subject, including a rare deluxe edition of his iconic triptych (1883)
- Selections from the series *Thirty-two Aspects of Behaviors*. Each design captures a woman from varying social classes in a scene from daily life
- Preparatory drawings for *Yoshitsune and Benkei on the Gojo Bridge* (1886), hung next to the final print to show the changes and choices Yoshitoshi made in the design process

### Related programming

Sunday, March 1, 2 p.m. [Modernizing Japan: Yoshitoshi and a New Look for the Late 19th Century](#). Chelsea Foxwell, associate professor of art history and chair of the Center for the Art of East Asia Committee on Japanese Studies at the University of Chicago, and Andreas Marks will discuss the modernization of Japanese arts. \$10; \$5 My Mia members, free to members of the Asian Art Affinity Group

### About the Japanese Art Collection at Mia

Mia's collection of Japanese art features outstanding concentrations of Buddhist sculpture, paintings, lacquer, works of bamboo, woodblock prints, and ceramics, and is particularly rich in works from the Edo period (1603–1868). Also notable is its collection of *ukiyo-e* paintings and prints, popularly known as "pictures of the floating world." Representative examples from the collection of more than 9,000 works are shown in 16 galleries of Japanese art—the largest permanent display devoted to Japanese art within any Western museum. Two historic rooms, a formal audience hall, and a teahouse serve to heighten awareness of the relationship between art and architecture.

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## About the Minneapolis Institute of Art

Home to more than 90,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest art collections in the country—from all corners of the globe, and from ancient to contemporary—Mia links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration. General admission to Mia is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee. For more information, call 612.870.3000 or visit [artsmia.org](#).

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## Museum Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday 10am–5pm

Thursday, Friday 10am–9pm

Sunday 11am–5pm

Monday Closed

For more information, call + 1 612 870 3000 or visit [artsmia.org](#)

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