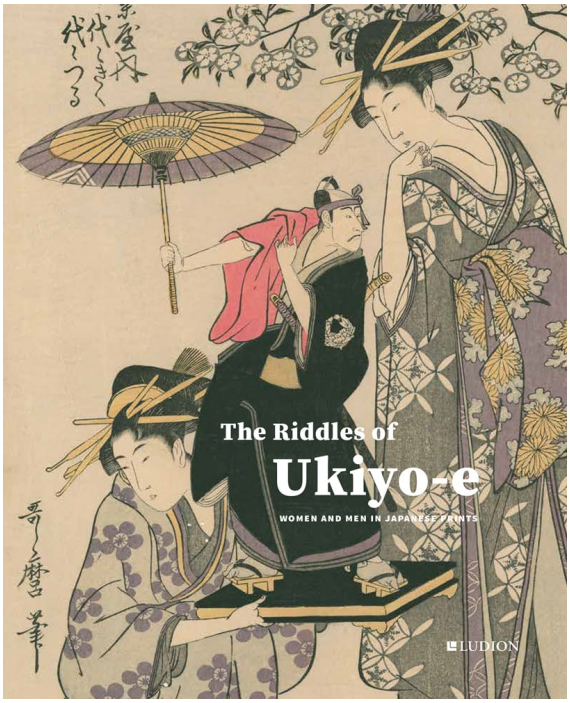
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The Riddles of Ukiyo-e

Women and Men in Japanese Prints

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Josephine Smit

ISBN	9789493039902
Publisher	Ludion
Binding	Hardback
Territory	USA & Canada
Size	9.25 in x 11.42 in
Pages	224 Pages
Illustrations	250 color
Price	$45.00

- This book sheds light on the often mysterious iconography in Japanese prints
- Lavishly illustrated with over 130 prints of women and men, from the heyday of Japanese printmaking
- A passionate introduction to the intriguing art of Ukiyo-e

Women and men – strong, proud, tragic or beautiful – from the heyday (1765–1865) of Japanese printmaking are this book's subject. It seeks to dig below the surface of the prints to describe the often subtle iconography employed in these masterful creations by the most famous artists of their time.

It begins with Suzuki Harunobu's subdued and introverted scenes of women seated on verandas. The book then moves on to the spectacular 'big face' (okubi-e) portraits of prostitutes and Kabuki actors by artists like Kitagawa Utamaro, Toshusai Sharaku and Utagawa Kunimasa.

Frail 'streetwalkers', forced by circumstance into the lowest ranks of prostitution, are transformed into elegant beauties, obscuring their tragic existence. The spectacle of heroes from Japan's rich mythological and pseudo-historical past crowd the printed sheet. Stern-faced actors drawn by the confident hands of Utagawa Toyokuni and his pupil Kunisada demonstrate the economy of line and powerful expression of the woodblock medium.

Each print is explored in the finest detail in order to explain the riddles of Ukiyo-e: the intriguing and captivating mode of visual expression that would have such a profound influence on Western art.

Chris Uhlenbeck has been a dealer in Japanese prints for 40 years. He acted as curator of many exhibitions in the field of Japanese art, starting with the major retrospective exhibition on 20th-century Japanese prints from the Robert O. Muller collection in 1992 for the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, The Fondation L'Hermitage in Lausanne and the Musée Marmottan in Paris. From 2007, he fulfilled the role of curator of the Nihon no Hanga museum in Amsterdam for 10 years. Between 2011 and 2021 he created various exhibitions in the Japan Museum SieboldHuis in Leiden: on Hiroshige (2011), Yoshitoshi (2012) Kuniyoshi (2013), Kunisada (2015) and recently on Gekko (2020). He is co-author of the recent Ludion publication *Shin Hanga: The New Prints of Japan 1900–1960* (2022).

Josephine Smit is a scholar and lecturer who obtained her master's degree in Japanese Studies from Leiden University, The Netherlands. Specializing in Japanese politics and international relations, she wrote her master's thesis on the evolution of post-disaster mental health care responses in Japan after conducting research for a year at Kobe University, Japan. As a freelancer, Smit lectures on kimono culture. Smit is currently employed as a Japanologist at both Japan Museum SieboldHuis and Hotei Japanese Prints in Leiden doing Ukiyo-e related research and exhibition management.

Jim Dwinger is a scholar of Japanese art history with a specialization in woodblock prints. He is co-author of the recent Ludion publication *Shin Hanga: The New Prints of Japan 1900–1960* (2022) and is currently involved in preparing an upcoming catalog of prints by Utagawa Hiroshige. He is also a member of the editorial board of Andon, Journal of the Society for Japanese Art.







Published 22nd May 2023