

Ukiyo-e is a traditional and representative art form of Japan that flourished in the Edo period (1603–1867). Ukiyo-e, in either prints or drawings, depicted subjects such as portraits, landscapes and animals. Famous ukiyo-e artists include Toshusai Sharaku (years of birth and death are unknown) who depicted kabuki actors, Utagawa (Ando) Hiroshige (1797–1858) who created “The Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido,” and Katsushika Hokusai (1760?–1849) who created “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji,” a masterpiece that is well known for its



“Great Wave off Kanagawa” from Hokusai Katsushika’s “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji”

depictions of waves and Mt. Fuji.

In the Edo period, ukiyo-e was the art form most familiar with ordinary people. Works depicting kabuki actors were the equivalent to today’s pictures of popular idols. Works showing rural landscapes played the role of today’s travel guidebooks.

Ukiyo-e also significantly influenced overseas artists. This influence on nineteenth-century European painters is well known. Examples include impressionists such as Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), Claude Monet (1840–1926) and Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919).

These artists were reportedly inspired by the bold

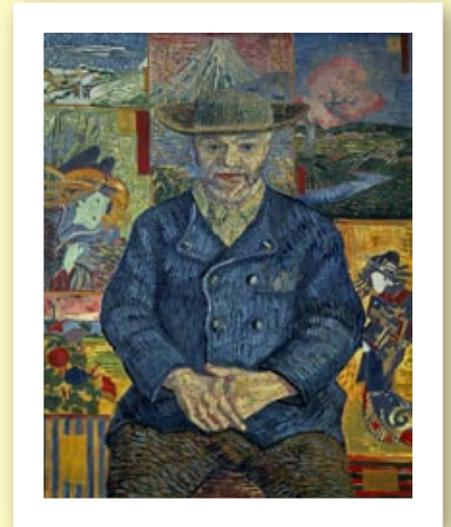
compositions and
bright hues typical



“Otani Onijino Edobe” (Kabuki actor Oniji Otani in the role of Edobe), by Sharaku

UKIYO-E

of ukiyo-e. van Gogh had a particularly strong fondness for the art form and amassed nearly 500 works; and along with reproducing them, he featured them in his own work.



van Gogh's "Portrait of Père Tanguy" with ukiyo-e featured in the background

Q

1: The tool shown in the photo is called a *baren* and is used in ukiyo-e and other prints. What is it used for?



- A:** Printing
- B:** Coloring
- C:** Cutting a sheet of printing paper

Q

2: Ukiyo-e first caught the public eye in Europe when they appeared in what?



- A:** Museums
- B:** Newspapers
- C:** Packaging

See the back page for answers.