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Hugo Munsterberg

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(Online library) Japanese Print: Historical Guide

Japanese Print: Historical Guide

Hugo Munsterberg : Japanese Print: Historical Guide before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Japanese Print: Historical Guide:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Express GirlAAA+16 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Decent Overview of the MediumBy Matthew DavidsonYes, there is the one censored plate, and the author is prudish throughout about shunga prints in general. However, anyone who is purchasing this book for the illustrations will be severely disappointed. There are some color plates in the middle of the work, but the vast majority of plates are reproduced in black in white. This is not a coffee table work with large, full-color illustrations. Nor is it a scholarly treatise on Japanese woodblock prints or a critical appraisal of why certain artists are held in higher regard than others. What it attempts to do is provide a brief overview for the general reader of the careers of the major artists and a historical guide detailing the development of the medium, and within the scope of its modest ambitions it

actually works fairly well as an introduction to Japanese woodblock printing. As stated, this is not for the specialist or the serious collector. The historical details are very general, and it is difficult, based only on this book, to differentiate between the stylistic differences between the various schools. Likewise, the critical evaluations are generally rather vague, and though the book attempts to describe the artists as major and minor, it often does little more than repeat the general wisdom without clearly explaining why an artist is held in such high or low esteem. As far as coverage, the work slants heavily toward 18th century artists and prints, which is a perfectly acceptable bias, but a new collector might be disappointed to find that many of the artists and prints discussed in length are actually generally unobtainable in good condition for those who are not either affiliated with museums or super wealthy. A more serious quibble with the work is that some of the prints (not the majority however) chosen to illustrate examples of the various artists' work are rather idiosyncratically chosen and not terribly representative. Overall, this isn't a bad place to start for the beginner. There are much better introductions to the medium, but few at this price. The plates, though the majority are in black and white, are easy to see, and the reader gets a fairly serviceable historical overview. One caution however: though the paper is thick, glossy, and generally high quality, the binding is a little flimsy. If you are hard on books, this might not be the one for you.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A nice overview for the beginner ukiyo-e lover

By Pichierri Fabio

As stated in the Preface, this book is "intended to serve as an introduction to Japanese prints". And as far as I am concerned, the book fulfills its promise in full. Following a chapter dedicated to many historical details on the early prints depicting buddhist motifs, the author presents the most important ukiyo-e schools (Kiyonobu, Torii, Kaigetsudo, Kitao, etc.). Several chapters of the book are specifically dedicated to the most influential ukiyo-e masters (Utamaro, Sharaku, Hokusai, Hiroshige, Kunisada) whose prints are nowadays reproduced on T-shirts, coffee mugs, and posters. The last part of the book describes the artists and methods employed in the Taisho period as well as contemporary prints. I was happy to see the figure of one print (Calm Wind) by Hiroshi Yoshida (1930s) that is similar to one of the same artist I purchased several years ago in Yokohama. The final chapter of the book provides useful suggestions to the would be ukiyo-e collector: besides collecting originals which, however, are extremely expensive and hence not easy to purchase unless selling your house, modern replicas made with great care and using the original techniques are affordable for reasonable prices. A final note concerns the figures inside the book most of which are black and white: if this helps to keep down the price of the book which, however, is printed on a high quality paper, then I do not see this as a serious problem. If one cannot study the original or a modern replica, then the best colored pictures of ukiyo-e are often found inside museum catalogs.

Book by Munsterberg, Hugo