THE INFLUENCE OF JAPAN ON WESTERN ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS (PART II)

THE VOGUE ILLUSTRATORS (1910 - 1929)

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LINDA BYRNE - 4TH YEAR FASHION

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INTRODUCTION

"Some critics have accused me of being an orientalist and of Oriental models, but this is not so, for I knew that when in Japan and China ... as I struggled with their sumi-inks and brush in an attempt to understand thier calligraphy - that I would never be anything but the occidental that I am."

Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

A number of complex exchanges influences and interactions in art have passed from Japan to the West. These influences have inspired generations of artists and designers from the early impressionists and Art Nouveau designers to the more abstract painters and contemporary designers of the present. However, it was impossible for these people to totally encompass the essence or soul of Japan. They could merely imitate the artistic principles used by Japanese artists. However, the encounter between European artists and Japanese art produced electrifying new ideas of composition colour and design.

My own personal interest in Japanese art came about through contact with the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, which contains many fine examples of Oriental art. After many visits to its collection of Japanese prints I began a study of Japanese art and artefacts with particular references to its influence on European artists and designers. My task in this particular essay is to illustrate the effects of the encounter between Far Eastern and European art. To grasp the stimuli, the analogies and the continuing impulses that resulted from the first exhibitions of Japanese art in Europe. The series of comparisons selected for

inclusion here are only a small portion of the examples included in my previous essay:

"The influence of Japan on Western Art and Design" (1850-1900)

- Fashion and Design Diploma 1985.

The main subject concerned here being that of Vogue fashion illustration in the early Twentieth Century. Fashion illustration in general, is a subject very relevant to my work as a designer, it is also an excellent example of the pictorial borrowings between European designers and Japanese craftsmen. The examples selected in this essay show, in my opinion, the interest, admiration, understanding, emulation and creative endeavour between designers such as Helen Dryden and Georges Lepape and Japanese artists such as Hiroshige and Hokusai.

My intention is not to offer any interpretation or analysis of Japanese art but merely to establish and discuss the connections between Japanese example and European design in the context of the period (1910-1925).

One of the principal areas I intend to discuss is that of artistic methods adopted by the Vogue Fashion Illustrators from Japan. Compositional ones such as silhouette, the diagonal principle, the grille or grid pattern, cut-off objects and vertical formats. These are all visual evidence of the Japanese influence. It is obvious through the study of such factors that Japan played a major role in the development of modern art in general.

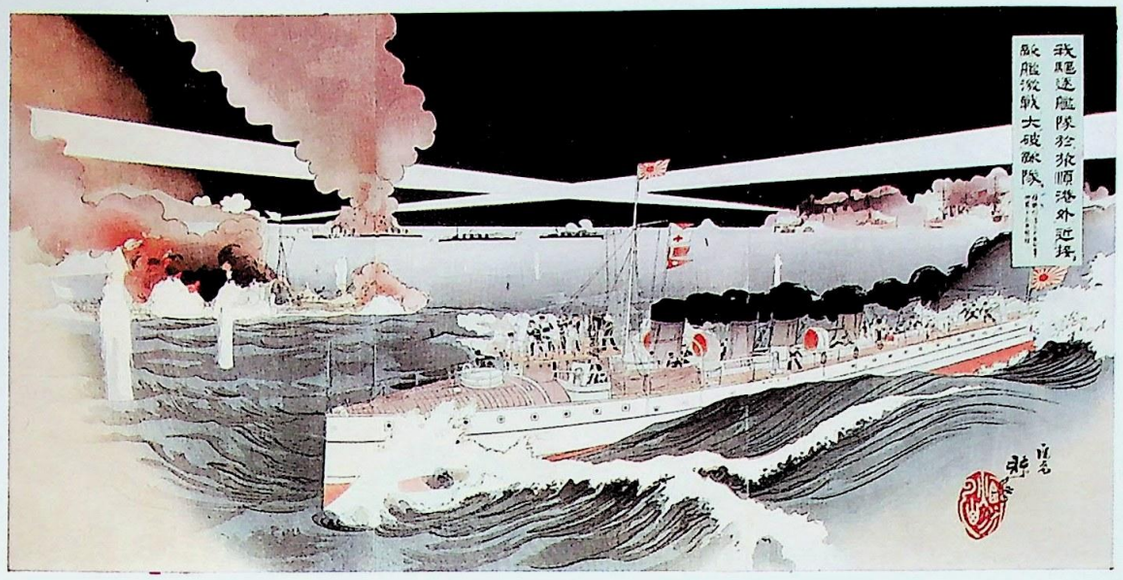
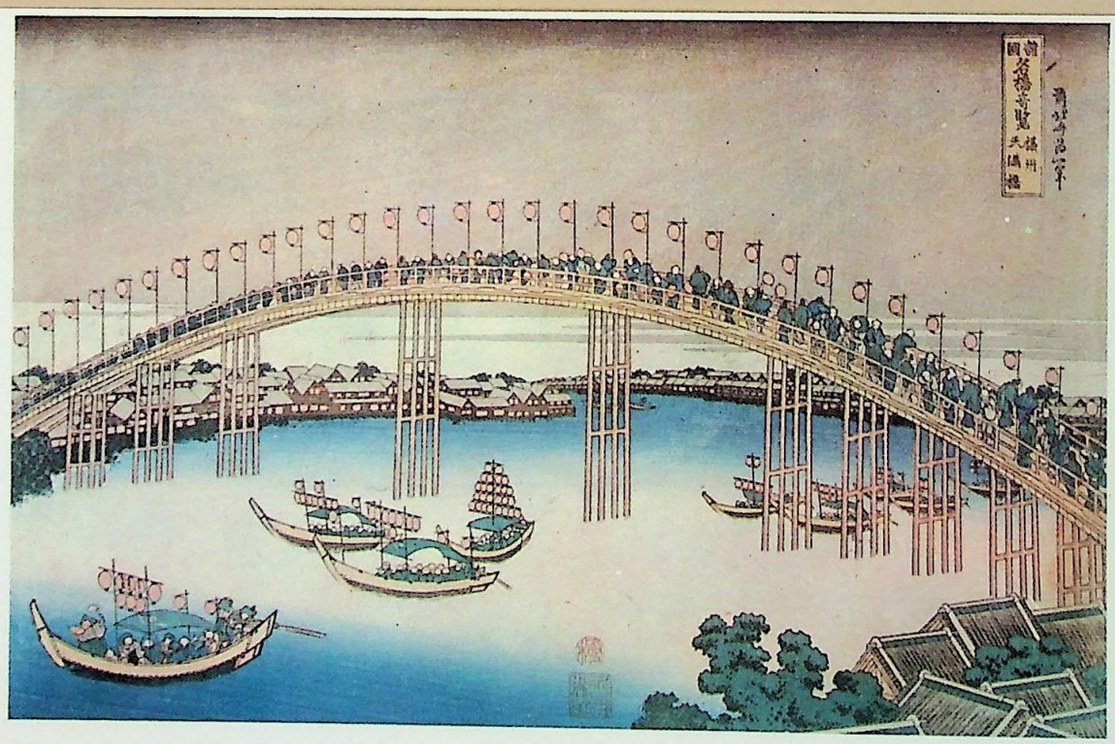


FIG. 3 Kokyo - Destroyer Squadron outside Port Arthur.
Woodblock Print - 1903.



JAPANESE PRINT
Temma Bridge, Province of Sesshu. By Hokusai 1760-1849 Japanese Coll. Ac. 1970

FIG. 4 Japanese Print.
Temma Bridge, By Hokusai
(1760 - 1849)

However, the influence of Japan on Europe in the late 19th, early Twentieth Century was not confined to artistic disciplines and devices, it also spread through art and design to society in general, it became a concept in style, a fashion, a new trend and totally encompassed book illustration, interior and furniture design, fashion, ballet, opera, and literature. It became "Japonisme".

From the Seventeenth Century onwards European taste and an appetite for the exotic and fantastic had constantly drawn on Oriental themes. From both China and Japan came Porcelain, lacquers, prints and paintings, silks and tapestries which in their various ways began to influence and inspire ballets, operas, novels, costumes and even interior design. (See Footnotes Dyers Stencil)

However, Japanese art did not come to the forefront of fashion until 1854, the year in which Commodore Perry an American Squadron leader sailed in to the bay of Yedo and began gradual contact through American and British navy personnel with the Japanese. From then on a new enthusiasm for Japanese culture and the moment of cultural balance bwtween Japan and Europe had arrived. Japanese artefacts had triumphal success at the International Exhibitions held in London in 1862 and 1910 and Paris in 1876, 1878 and 1889. Japanese lacquers, porcelains and textiles appealed very strongly to the European tastes. The collecting of Japanese ivories, ceramics, textiles, medicine boxes and ornamental sword guards was essential in order for

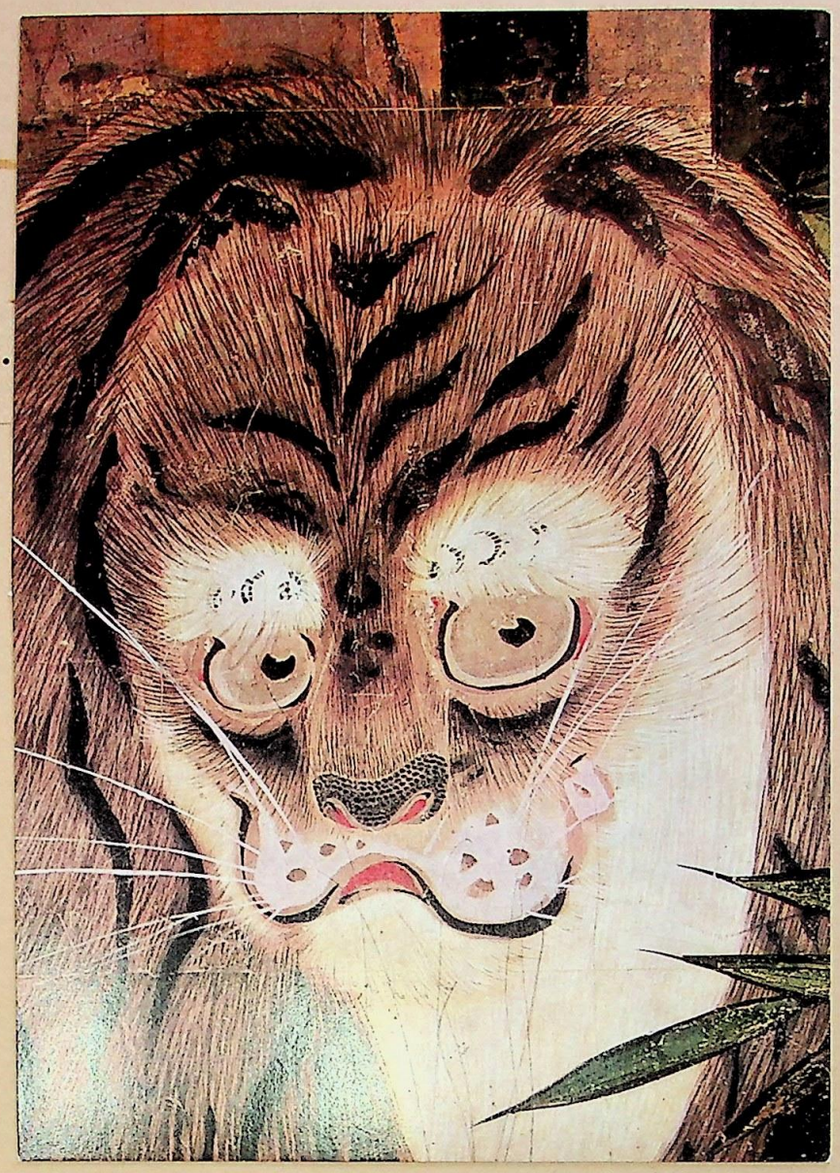
artists and craftsmen to study and learn the techniques involved at first hand.

From the 1890s onward trade with Japan moved into the open market. The leading galleries turned out in force at the Hotel Drouot when the collections of the great pioneers of "Japonisme" were put up for auction, those of Burty, Goncourt and Hayashi.

European artists and designers of the mid Nineteenth Century were looking for a new stimulus for their work. Japanese art provided a breath of fresh air. It was a necessary alternative to the Victorian principles of art. The Oriental objects and prints provided a new simplicity with more attention focused on the use of line and space. Painters and illustrators found new principles of composition and paid far more attention to line, form and silhoutte. Much of the subject matter along with the motifs and symbols used by the Japanese provided new areas of exploration.

However, the new Japanese craze was not solely restricted to the artists and designers. Later in the late Nineteenth early Twentieth Century the general public became interested in this new hunger for things Oriental. The main events leading up to this Japanese bonanza in Europe are well known. In France in 1886 Madame Desoye and her husband who had recently returned from the orient opened their shop "La Porte Chinoise" at No. 220, Rue de Rivoli in Paris. The shop inspired the public for it dealt solely in Far Eastern objects d'art. The shop also became the mecca for artists such as Manet, Fantin Latour, Whistler,

5 Tiger. Japanese Folding Screen. 17th, 18th Century.



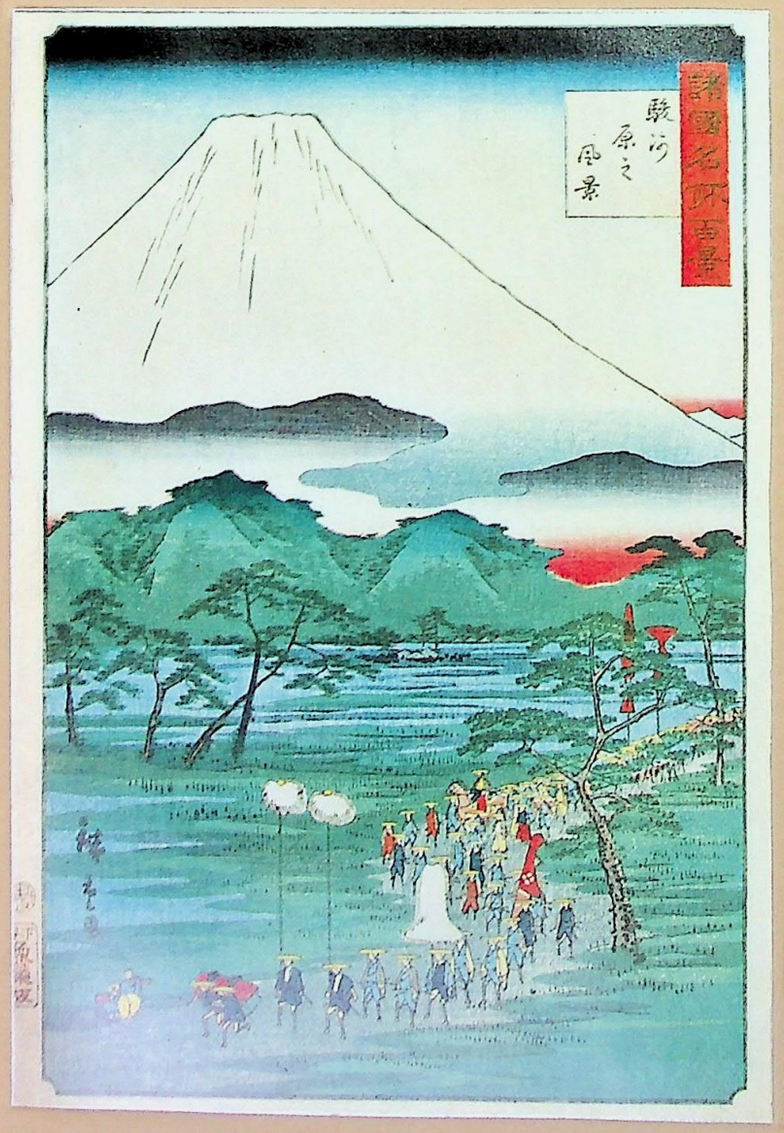


FIG. 6 Hiroshige (1860).

"Fuji Seen from Hara in Suruga Province"

Baudelaire and the Goncourt brothers. All were searching for Oriental fans, textiles, colour prints, blue and white procelain. Ernst Cheseau in the Gazette des Beaux-Arts in 1862 states:

"enthusiasm spread like wildfire to all the studios"

- Chisaburoh F Yamada - Dialogue in Art.

The new craze inspired people of very fashionable society to buy "Japonaiseries" (a term acquired by Baudelaire in 1861). This newfound love was based on an attraction for simplicity without taboos, restrictions, social and religious overtones - "Art for Art Sake" - "l'Art pour l'Art".

Madame Desoye's shop remained for many years the center of the cult. In 1875 the Goncourt brothers in their "Diary" described **"Le Grasse ... Madame Desoye enthroned in her 'bijouterie de l'idole Japonaise'".** Le porte chinoise did not only influence the designers of the late Nineteenth Century but its reverberations could still be felt in the first decades of the Twentieth Century all over Europe. After the appearance of Japanese objects in the International Exhibitions in 1878 and 1889 Japonism began to penetrate every aspect of society. The first congress of Orientalism was held in Paris in 1875. Literature also felt the impact with people like Judith Gowher using Japan as the setting for her 1879 novel "Usurpateur". In the music field Saint Saens created "Princess Jaune" in 1872 which also had Japanese undertones. Even in the culinary arts a "Salade Japonaise" by Francillan became famous.

Another event which led to the upsurge in Japonism was the founding of the "Societe Japonise - du Jing-lar" in 1867 whose

members chiefly included painters, collectors and critics. It also included literary people who had visited Japan and through their writings helped reveal this new and powerful world. The main flood of literature came in the 1880s and 1890s and inlcuded Samuel Bing's periodical "Le Japan Artistique" 1890 and Edmond de Goncourt's study of Utamaro in 1891 and six years later a less successful book on Hokusai.

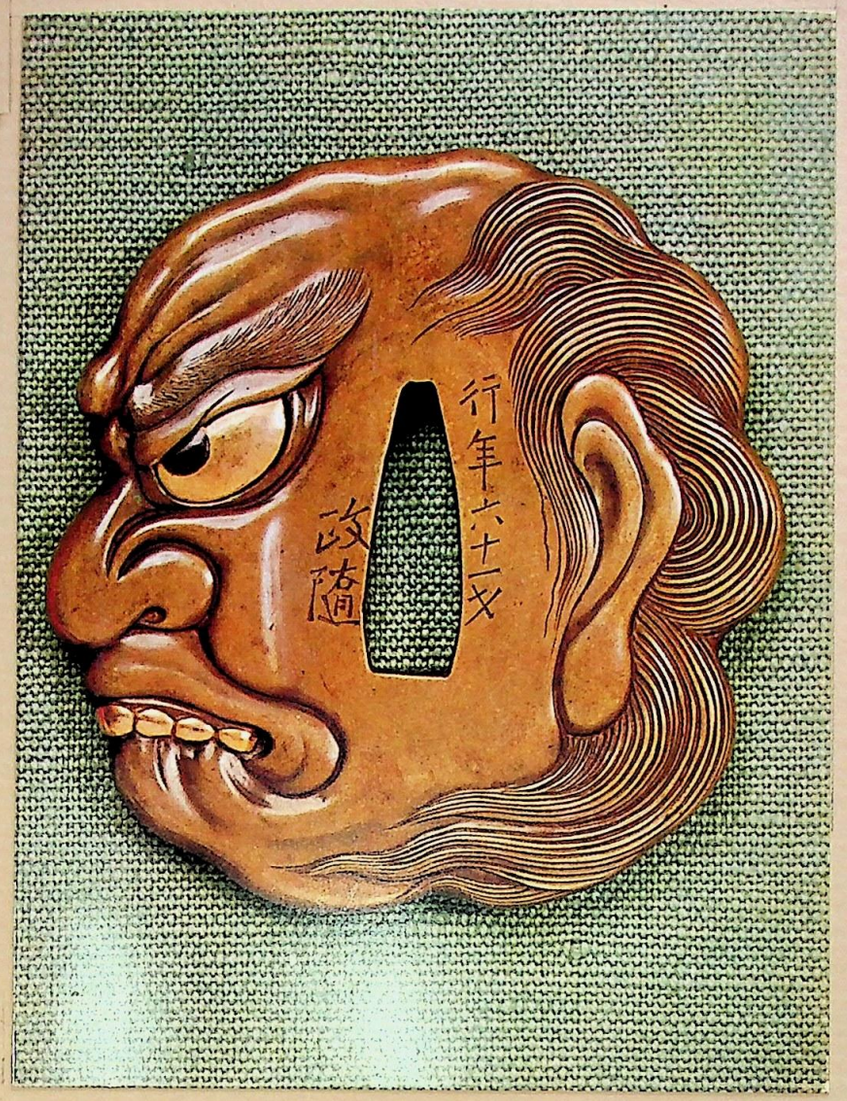
Japonism in the Nineteenth Century was not confined to Paris and the French. England too experienced the new love for the exotic and Oriental. One person in particular was responsible for the introduction of the Japanese bonanza into England and that was James McNeill Whistler. Whistler often used Japanese garments and prints in his paintings. He derived his inspiration from his fine collection of Japanese objects. As Rossetti, a friend of Whistler, once said:

"It was through (James McNeill) Whistler that my brother and I became acquainted with Japanese woodcuts and colour prints. This may have been early in 1863. He had seen and purchased some specimens of those works in Paris and he heartily delighted in them and showed them to us; and we set about procuring other works of the same class. I hardly knew that anyone in London had paid any attention to Japanese designs prior to this."

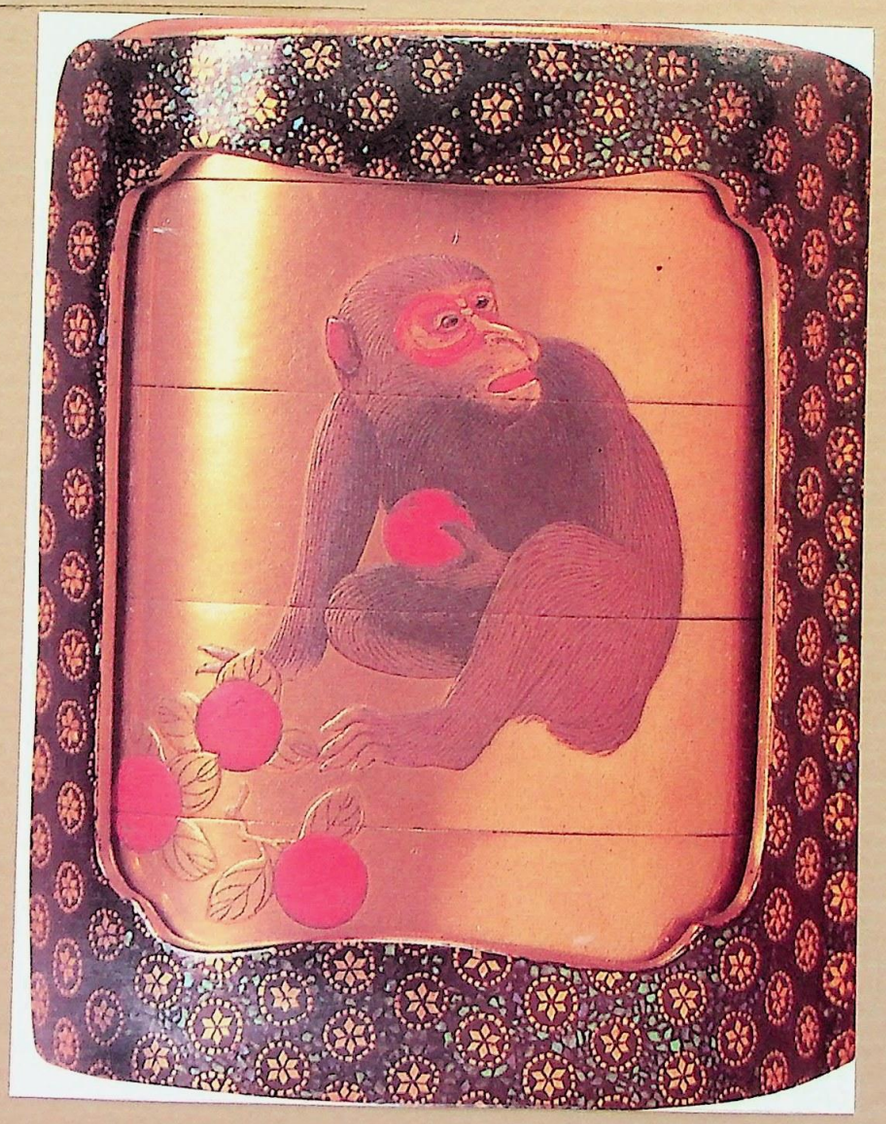
- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

Whistler like the other impressionists was constantly searching for new Japanese artefacts. When he was living in England he regularly visited a shop called "Libertys". This shop was Englands equivalent to Madame Desoyes "La Porte Chinoise" and provided a focal point for the new generation of artists and designers who were emerging at this time.

7 Sword Guard, Japanese.
18th Century, Head of Buddhist.



8 Japanese Inro made of Wood.
19th Century.



The Liberty shop embodied certain late Nineteenth Century changes in fashion and taste and became a valuable contributer to early Twentieth Century developments in art and design. This shop can be considered a yardstick in social change and one of the principal contributors to the introduction and promotion of Japanese art in Europe.

The great International Exhibition of 1862 in Kensington marked the first occasion on which Japanese art was exhibited anywhere outside Japan on a large scale. It attracted general enthusiasm for Japanese arts and crafts for it included a splendid collection of objects, prints, drawings and paintings. Walter Crane, the illustrator and arts and crafts designer commented on the Exhibition in "An Artist's Reminiscences":

"There was a fine, representative group of pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's pictures including some of Madox Brown's finest works. English decorative art too began to assert itself in this exhibition"

- Libertys - Alison Adburgham

However, the area of the exhibition which inspired Arthur Liberty was the Japanese section. It marked the birth of a new interest in Japanese art. The most valuable part was the personal collection of artefacts belonging to Sir Rutherford Alcock, the British Consul Minister in Japan. It included fine lacquer work, bronzes, and porcelains, many of which formed the basis of Farmer and Rodgers new Oriental warehouse. At first only Oriental silks were sold but soon they began importing porcelain, prints, paper fans, screens and mats. They also commissioned Japanese workshops to produce more of such items. From 1900 onward this idea spread and trade flourished between Britain and Japan,

resulting in a rush of "Oriental Warehouses" "Bazaars" and "Curio Shops". Big stores such as Debenhams and Freebody and Swan and Edgar also stocked such items in order to satisfy demands.

At the age of thirty Liberty opened his first shop at 218A, Regent Street. It was here that he strived to fill a hugh gap with his innovative ideas. He wished to change the whole look of fashion both regarding dress and interior design. He first began selling coloured silks and brocades from the East but gradually he purchased other items including Japanese paper-fans, ceramic gods, Buddhas of all shapes and sizes.

"The sort of thing that William Marris, Alma Tadema, Burn-Fanes and Rossetti used to come in, turn over and rave about"

- Libertys - Alison Adburgham

Liberty was totally inspired by this Japanese concept. He constantly imported garments from the East such as Japanese Kimonos, Chinese and Japanese silk embroidered coats, Turkish veils and shoes. His team of designers found inspiration from these costumes, modifying them slightly but retaining their original concept always. These costumes in the early Twentieth Century became particularly popular with upperclass English society who strived to add mystery and excitement into their appearance (See Footnote Kimono). Libertys like La Porte Chinoise became a mecca for the artists, designers and society in general, who longed for Japanese goods to inspire and enthral them.

VOGUE

In the period 1900-1920 Vogue Magazine also reflected to a large extent these new cravings for the exotic and Oriental. The Japanese and Islamic influences had already swept across the world of painting and sculpture and it was now, in the early Twentieth Century, the turn of the fashion textile designers and illustrators to make their mark.

'Vogue' the most famous fashion magazine, burst onto the world in 1909. This was the moment when Conde Nast took over a title which had been established in New York some sixteen years previously. Within a year the magazine began to grow and grow in popularity. It also became more physically substantial as more advertising was attracted to it. Editorially it was ever more ambitious in its scope than any other magazine of this period. "casting its proprietorial eye across American fashion and fashionable society."

- William Packer "The Art of Vogue Covers"

The year 1916 brought an important development. Due to its unbelievable success in America Vogue declared itself on Europe by launching a British Edition. This periodical took on a similar pattern to its American parent copy. It too grew in popularity for Vogue Magazine was an important image of the time in which it was produced. It reflected the attitudes and expectations of its readership. The paintings and drawings which graced the covers of Vogue for over thirty years marked the passing of time and documented the social history of the period. The artists who produced the images were themselves a production of society with all its pressures, restrictions and stimuli.

"The cover of any magazine is the banner which proclaims its identity to the world under which it must rally or die and by it we come to know familiarly something we may never even buy let alone open and absorb."

- Lady Diana Cooper

William Packer - The Art of Vogue Covers (1909-1940)

The covers of Vogue Magazine had the ability to set the tone to establish character and stimulate the reader to buy it. It appeared as it wanted the world to believe it to be. However, today the form of Vogue Magazine is dictated by the photograph upon its cover. The standard face fills the page; hair, eyes, lips and teeth all equal in perfection. This is so different from the days when the camera played no part in the magazine's identity.

In the early decades of this Century the covers of Vogue Magazine allowed variety and artistic freedom. Thus each artist was enabled to develop and experiment with his own work without compromising the spirit of his commission. Each artist could strive to establish his distinctive style distinguishing between that of contemporary colleagues and rivals.

However, the importance of Vogue was not solely due to its coloured fashion plates. It was brim full of articles reflecting current activity. It cast its eye across fashion and fashionable society. Although European visual sophistication spread itself across the surface of the magazine, French fashion and British society gossip invaded its body.

ARTISTS

One of the principal features of Vogue Magazine was the coloured illustrations on its covers. The designs of these first covers drew on many influences most of which were retrospective in character. Even so the covers were informative, inventive and a good commentary upon the contemporary trends in visual and graphic art of the period. Perhaps it was the decorative complexities of William Morris and the pre-Raphaelites which set the tone for the pioneer illustrators or maybe it was the more important influence of contemporary and predominantly British illustration from Edward Burne - Jones, Walter Crane and Kate Greenway. However these influences are rarely if ever specific and any comparison can merely be a thing of mood or atmosphere rather than the use of a common image or technique. We can merely recognise the nursery-rhyme fairyland images of childrens books in the early fashion illustrations but we cannot compare them on the grounds of artistic methods, tricks or devices.

In my opinion the most important influence on the early Vogue Illustrators was that of Japanese art and artefacts whether they be prints, porcelain, silks, satins, lacquers or tapestries. They each played a part in influencing and inspiring Western Illustrators of the time. Fashion designers and illustrators were very excited by some of the motifs and shapes regularly depicted in Japanese prints. These daring combinations of brilliant colours and decoration were the hallmarks of the Japanese print. Their subjects included actors in traditional costume and make-up which inspired designers to use heavy make-up on the eyes and mouth of their models in order to compliment

their dramatic garments. Other subjects included brothel quarters where courtesans of varying accomplishments, reputation and physical attributes entertained their customers. Their ultimate tasks in life were to hold themselves and walk gracefully, to tie and wear a kimono superbly and to white their faces, black their teeth and shave the napes of their necks to perfection (See Footnote, Kimono A Case Study).

HELEN DRYDEN

Out of the hugh business of fashion promotion came many notable fashion illustrators. Helen Dryden was one of the most significant survivors from this period. Her work reflects an important feature or stage in the "Vogue" character, one which was less exotic than the images created by her contemporaries but owed much to the spirit of Kate Greenway's childrens book illustrations. It was a recreation of the gentle innocent vision of the Nursery Rhyme furnished with hoops, knickerbockers and fairy coaches. However, more importantly we can see in Helen Dryden's work signs of a particularly sympathetic and educated response to the Japanese print. Here she was no pioneer, for painters such as Whistler and Degas had noticed this fresh and exciting example more than thirty years before. The Japanese print remained a direct and vital influence upon all artists, upon fashion designers and fashion illustrators most of all because it was particularly suited to the disciplines and restrictions of their particular craft.

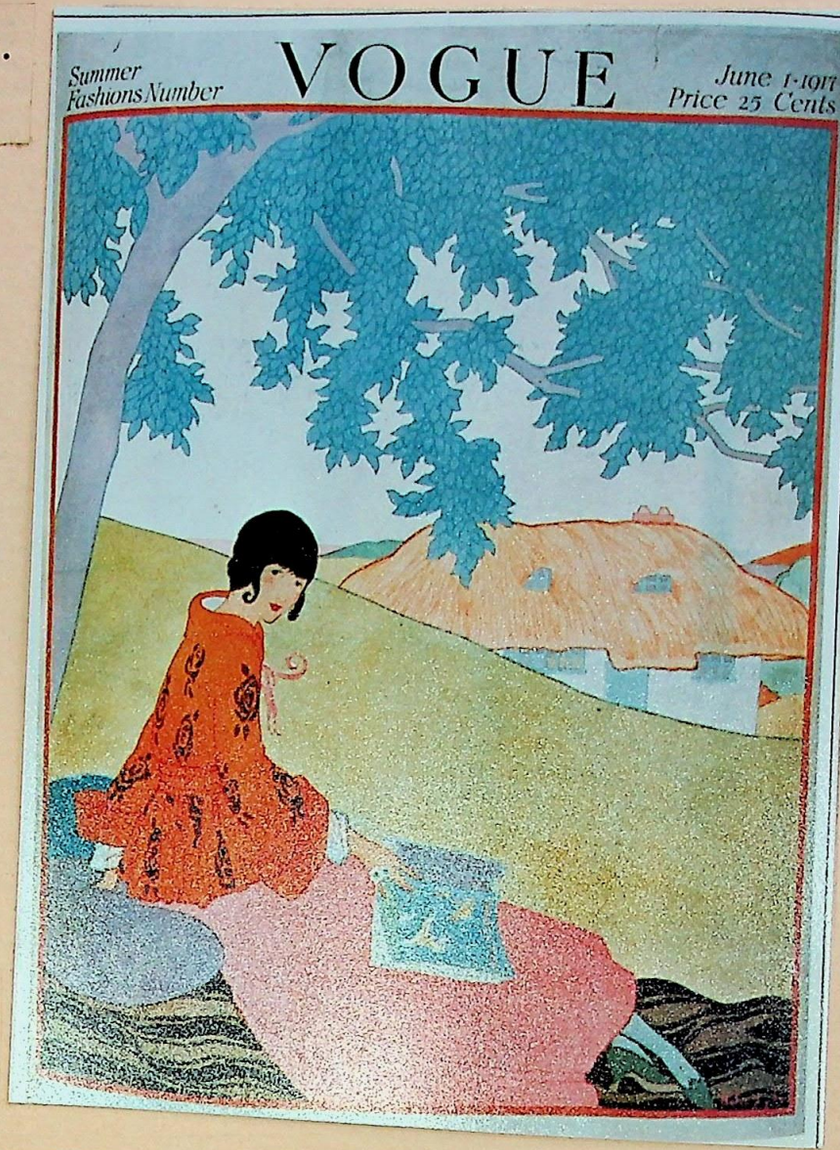
Helen Dryden produced covers for Vogue and editorial

FIG. 9 Vogue Covers 1915.
Helen Dryden.

illustrations besides, with commendable regularity and variety from 1915 until 1923, becoming in that time the third partner in the first small group of artists to set its stamp on the look of the magazine (Georges Lepape and George Barbier). She showed herself, particularly in the last year or so, capable of responding openly and sensitively to the work of other designers.

Helen Dryden came into her own in 1915 with a series of pretty covers all stripes, streamers and bright colours, pretty girls in summer frocks with parasols and picture hats (high brimmed to ward off freckles) ... (Fig.9) Dryden often used medieval and Japanese costume as inspiration but could still portray contemporary elegance. Her illustrations were full of mysterious mood, voluminous draperies and exotic hairstyles. Her July 1914 cover for example shows her preoccupation with things Japanese. The illustration is called "A Single Head" and is comprised mostly of flat areas of pure colour in contrast with highly detailed areas of decoration. A delicate parasol behind the head and a pointed headress on top all add to the Oriental atmosphere ... (Fig.15) Dryden tended to use similar compositional format throughout all her illustrations which often consisted of pronounced vertical, patterned areas confined by strong contour lines. Her figures were often depicted in poses and costumes recalling the Japanese prints of elegant ladies in decorative Kimonos. Delicate lines and a wealth of pattern with the central figure or focal point of the composition to one side are obvious Japanese traits. Dryden managed to use these elements as pegs on which to hang the spirit of contemporary design. She often used Japanese settings in which to slot her figures, be it a Japanese garden with bridges and fruit trees or an interior hung with

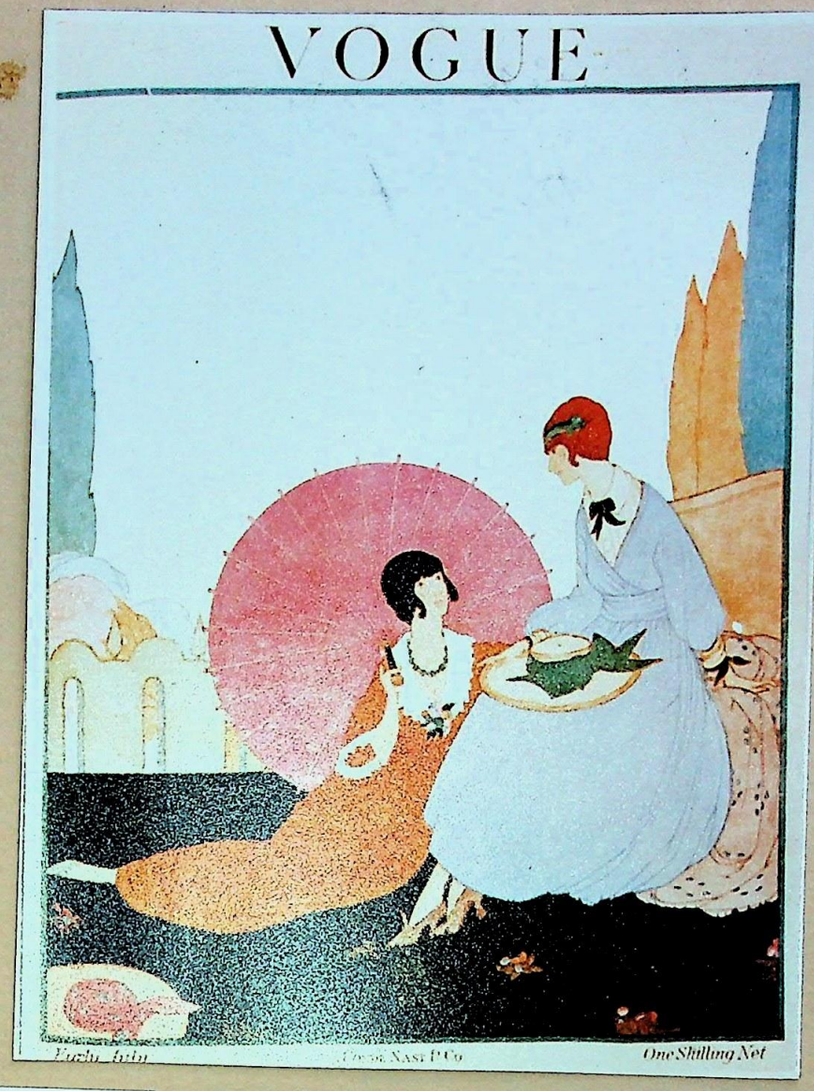
FIG. 10 Vogue Cover , June 1917.
Helen Dryden (2)



Shunksoai Hokuei.
(1830) Scene from the Drama Suikoden.
Colour Woodcut.

FIG. 11

FIG. 12 Vogue Cover, July 1917.
Helen Dryden.



Utagawa Kuniyoshi "Tatsuta River"
1840 - Colour Woodcut.

FIG. 13

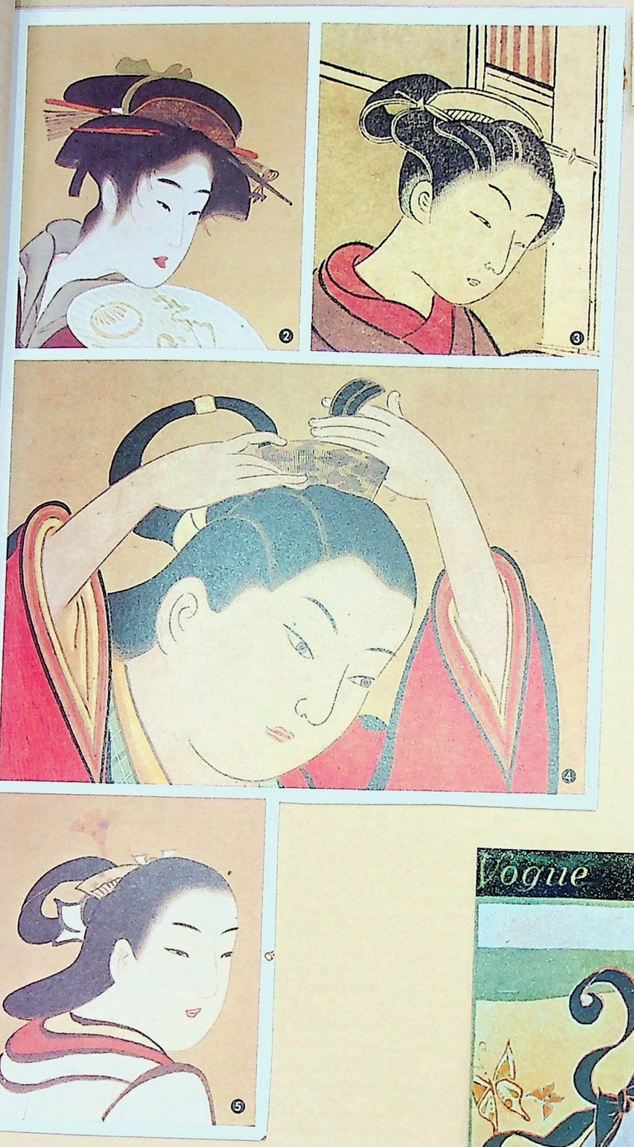


FIG. 14 Beauty Japanese Print.
17th Century.

Wm Dawson & Sons Ltd

FORTNIGHTLY
ONE SHILLING

Helen Dryden

. 15 Vogue Covers 1914, July.
A Single Head. - Helen Dryden.

Hokusai prints. They all served to enhance the garments whether they were suitable for indoor or outdoor pursuits, be it gardening, watching the goldfish or taking the sea breeze, her illustrations were still lavish and exotic ... (Fig.10)

GEORGES LEPAPE

The twenties belong to Georges Lepape. In the eleven years 1920 to 1930 he produced well over seventy covers for Vogue. His only rivals in the same period are George Plank and Helen Dryden. Between Lepape's first cover in October 1916 and his last in May 1939 he has to his credit a total of one hundred and fourteen covers, more than twice as many as any one of his colleagues. "Seen as a whole this body of work stands as a splendid and remarkable achievement, a sustained demonstration of graphic resource, invention and technique of a very high order indeed."

- William Packer - The Art of Vogue Covers

Lepape, like Dryden, always did more than decorate the surface he was given. He always indulged his wit and charm producing time and time again memorable images that even today could be seen ripe for fashionable revival. Throughout the decade Lepape's was the constant, insistent presence, but only for the three or four years after 1922 was it dominant. For in the first few years Helen Dryden quite simply produced too many covers for Lepape to compete. He was, however, the first artist to experiment conspicuously on the face that Vogue presented to the world and it was precisely at the turn of the decade that, full of confidence, he made his most radical gesture. To his great credit Lepape pushed himself further than anyone else had yet

FIG. 16 Les Papillons.
George Lepape.
Modes et Manieres D'Aujourd'hui. 1912.

gone. He was not content to stick to safe graphic cliches which were the staple of contemporary commercial art and advertising, selling stockings, bathing suits and motor cars.

It was definitely the theatrical rather than the pictorial or sculptural aspects of design which influenced these illustrators. To a degree it was Leon Bakst's outrageously exotic sets and lavish costumes which fired the imagination of illustrators such as Georges Lepape who in 1917 produced for Vogue two striking and decorative covers. One of these depicts a gruesome and fashionably befurred Amazonian spearing her polar bear and sprinkling its lifes blood across the ice. Yet again the Japanese influence is apparent with large areas of a single colour brushed on relatively flat to represent landscape, outlining and using colour for its decorative rather than its descriptive potential. His colours are again Oriental with black, red and white being prominent.

Both Dryden and Lepape helped to promote the liberating message of the new revolutionary designers such as Paul Poiret. He, for instance, sought to publicize his work and in 1908 commissioned Paul Iribe, another young artist to illustrate "Les robes de Paul Poiret". Later another edition "Les Choses de Paul Poiret" was illustrated by Lepape. Now he began to elongate the figure taking the physical gestures to decorative extremes and thus demonstrating his preoccupation with Japanese art and design. He often used a bamboo background to delicately draw Japanese images of ladies' faces in fur bonnets with exaggerated elegance... (Fig.17). He completely enjoyed rendering Poirets fantasy

FIG.17

Georges Lepape 'Les Jupes-Culottes', *Les Choses de Paul Poiret*, 1911.

costumes such as his lampshade dress and 'robe de minute' which were derived from the orient.

Paris in the early 1900s was ripe for new inspiration. The Orient provided this inspiration and its influence was immediately apparent in the sphere of fashion design. Paul Poiret was obviously the designer responsible for the craze. He engaged the twenty four year old Lepape to illustrate his fashion booklet where he displayed and developed a consistent style and a command of colour which was both original and adacious.
"Les Choses de Paul Poiret" undoubtedly opened up new vistas in drawing the attention of a discriminating section of the public to Lepape's work but like Iribe he was under the spell of the Ballets Russes"

- Martin Battersby - Art Deco Fashion

"Les Choses de Paul Poiret" was a larger book than his previous publications. It was printed in a bigger edition of one thousand copies on papier de luxe of which the first three hundred were numbered and initialled by Poiret. He, in addition, had three plates printed on paper from the Imperial Manufactory of Japan. These were for sale at a price of fifty francs. The striking cover on cream paper bears a drawing in black of an intricate arrangement of knots and tassels not as has been stated designed by Paul Poiret himself but actually of a traditional Japanese pattern. This design formed a vertical motif which was balanced by the title in vermilion and here it is noticeable that Lepape's name is in the same size type as that of Poiret whereas in the previous volume Iribes name had been in letters so small as to be barely legible. The plates themselves were extremely colourful - black being entirely absent. In some cases gold,

silver, metallic ink was used. A certain influence of Japanese prints can be seen in the drawing of the models, "as supple and boneless as cats with half-closed eyes and tiny mouths"

- Martin Battersby - Art Deco Fashion

The asymmetrical arrangement of the figures is again reminiscent of Japanese prints and in one curious plate a model appears to be walking out of the picture ... (Fig.17) Japanese artists often used this device of placing people or objects half in and half out of a picture. This technique had the ability to draw one's eyes into the scene thus giving the whole picture more depth and credibility.

All these illustrators serve to show how women can be reduced in style to two dimensional decorated romantic images. Ladies in purple, blue or scarlet reclining against cushions in colours of the same hue, the wall, window or screen behind draped in some appropriate chiffon or lightly printed fabric. Pattern on pattern, colour on colour, exoticism and orientalism were the looks these designers sought to explore.

Despite this newfound enthusiasm and inspiration, all of these talented fashion illustrators had numerous restrictions and constraints within which they had to work. George Plank, one of Vogue's most talented illustrators, accepted quite happily as did the Japanese print artists the discipline and restrictions of their particular craft. George Plank was extremely influenced by the Japanese Ukiyo-e Masters and like them produced work with broad areas of bright colour set off by the mass and line of the principal figures. The composition is always kept clear and simple, the wealth of pattern, decoration and detail

FIG. 18 Vogue Cover October, 1916.
George Plank.

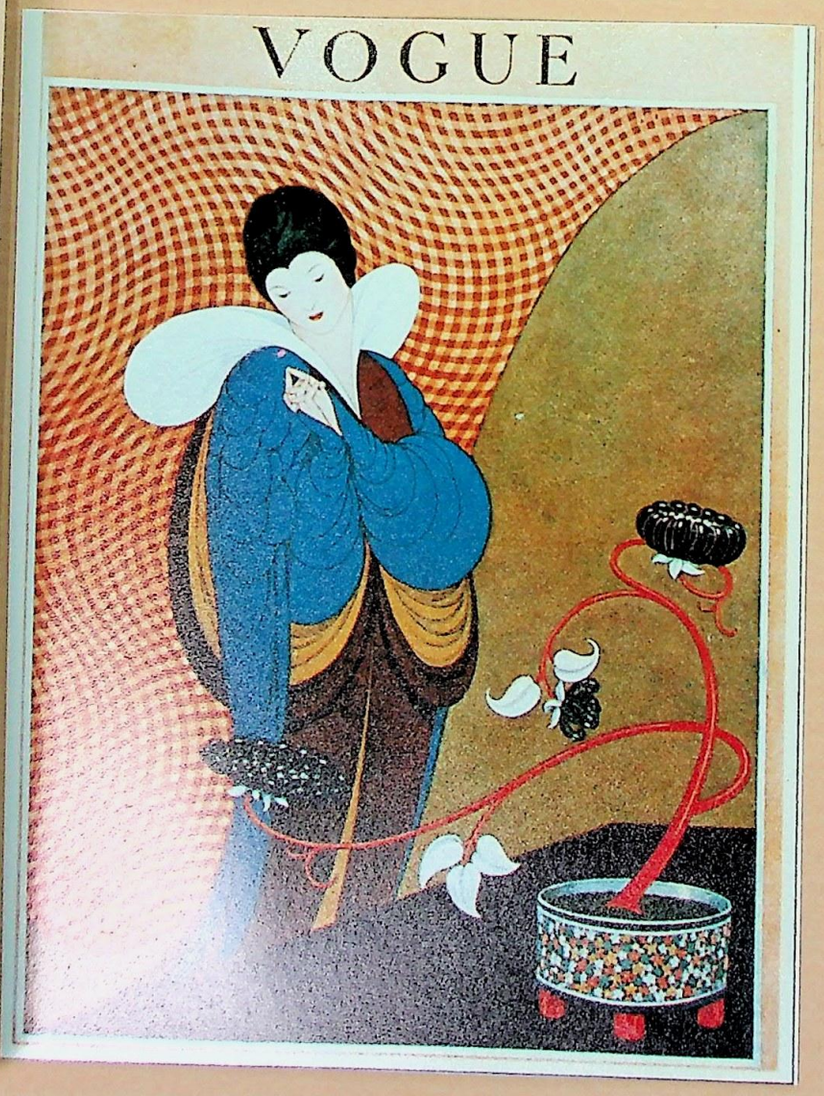


FIG. 19 Vogue Cover. Nov. 1919.
George Plank.

notwithstanding. George Plank, like Hiroshige and Hokusai, established a mature style almost from the beginning of his career. He fixed upon this style and continued with it, introducing few modifications ... (Fig.19) Plank dominated his field not by drawing the latest fashion but by drawing his own conception of what fashion might be. This was a generalized ideal; bizarre, romantic, nostalgic and adventurous.
"Young girls enwrapped in their ruffs and lace, crinolined or bloomered, or got up in the most unlikely but very fetching botanical fancy dress. They pass their time in a rich and mysterious private world that belongs half to Scheherazade and half to Pierrot"

- Lady Diana Cooper - Art of Vogue Covers (1909-1940)

* * *

ARTISTIC DEVICES

Introduction

"European artists and designers learned, as I have mentioned previously, a variety of artistic methods from Japan. They discovered compositional devices such as silhouette, the diagonal principle, grille patterns, cut-off objects and different formats such as the fan-leaf, the tall vertical format (scroll painting) and the folding screen."

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme.

Japonisme provided some of the central concepts of Twentieth Century modernism for it introduced into Europe new and astonishing angles of vision viewed from below and from above, the separation of planes by a diagonal, combined with the framing function of foreground shapes. These new concepts had an important effect on poster design at the turn of the Century and in conjunction with the newly discovered value of colour for its own sake, hastened the demise of the copy made from nature and the birth of Abstraction. Only one example, that of fashion illustration in the first two decades of this Century, provides some amazing examples of the persistence of the Japanese influence.

* * *

ORNAMENTAL PATTERN

"Thus some artists believed they could find a new source of ornamentation or even the lost principal of modern style in various linear combinations, these attempts seem to have been inspired to a certain extent by the graceful movement of Japanese line, which so happily influenced Linear Ornament"

- Michael Sullivan - Meeting of Eastern & Western Art

When considering the influence of the Japanese Ornamental Pattern on Western Designers, textiles become the central sphere of interest. Textiles depicted in Japanese Woodcuts often feature the most striking decoration. European Illustrators managed to recognize and grasp their abstract potential, ornamental vigour and new colour combinations.

"The Japanese are equally deliberate decorators. Their wooden block colour prints: Kakemonos are definite pattern paintings in which the Pattern Motif is as strong as, or stronger than the Graphic or Figurative Motif."

-"Line and Form" from Walter Crane by Isabel Spencer

In Japanese Art there are two different types of motif. Firstly a Pattern Motif and secondly a Graphic or Figurative Motif. When considering the introduction of the ground - pattern - technique into Western illustration, Japanese textiles are a prime and deciding factor. Stylized elements in large and small scale patters (often Heraldic) dictate the shapes which occur on Japanese Kimonos and Kabuki Costumes. Fashion Illustrators

FIG. 20 Vogue. January 1919.
Ethel Rundquist.

21 Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797-1861)
Woman and Chrysan Themums.

adopted these vaguely circular asymmetrical forms often using them as patterns on an object or garment. This technique had the abililty to shift emphasis from one area of the composition to another. In some illustrations the pattern appears to be cut off by each section or fold in a garment which gives it an interesting patchy look. This can be seen in many Japanese prints including Kuniyoshi's 'Woman and Chrysantemuns' (1843 - 1846) (Fig.21). The technique was also used by Ethel Rundquist on her Vogue cover January 1919 (Fig.20) in which a windswept girl appears in a cloak of black, orange and purple. The flat areas of pattern on her cloak and scarf are distorted in the drape and fold of the garment. Rundquist has used this technique to its greatest affect, even the colours she uses are obviously Japanese in origin. Sadly this was Rundquists first and last cover for Vogue.

Far-Eastern costumes and silks attracted a lot of attention at the international exhibitions including those held in London in 1862, Paris in 1867 and Vienna in 1873 of which Frederick Pecht remarks, "Japanese decoration owes its wonderful facination to its own peculiar system of large forms and colour patches which are often broken up into innumerable small ones, or to large forms assembled out of small ornamental motifs.... one takes one's leave of these enchanting, magnificent fabrics only to find that they are lodged in one's memory as an ideal".

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

Western Fabric Designers of the early Twenthieth Century such as John Lewellyn and Arthur Wilcocks who designed their famous "Daffodils and Crocus" Chintz fell in love with these Japanese examples. From them they managed to grasp many techniques

including the superimposition of pattern on pattern and the use of decorative motifs in an irregular sequence rather than in regular repeat patterns. However this was not a new craze, already in the 1870s Europe had a number of examples of Japanese naturalistic designs such: Ceramic wears, lacquered objects, medicine cases (Inro), cones, utensils made of silver and other materials, sword guards (Tsuba) with cut or chased designs and textiles dyed and embroidered. The critic Julius Lessing wrote on the Paris International Exhibition in 1878, "Stripes and small squares have come into European weaving under the influence of Japan through technique... the fashion is for patterns of stripes and squares more or less in the foreground with other patterns in the background... the taste of opulence and quality from China and Japan have entered the design repertoire of European weaving and are used as models for new designs."

However, in Japan some fabrics and garments had a religious rather than fashionable significance. By tradition silk was worn at ceremonies and festivities at Court. No actors and Gagakuu musicians dressed in splendid silk robes when taking part in a performance. The Kabuki Theatre was also enlivened by colourful flowing silks. All of these flamboyant people became the central theme of early Ukiyo-e painting in which the human figure was draped in masterpieces of Japanese textile artists. On these fabrics we see rosettes and tendrils depicted in a grand network of geometric forms. This use of two contrasting patterns on the one fabric is very common in Japanese textile design: an example of this is Keisai Eisen's 'Courtesan in festive robes' (1830). Here again we can see an abundance of contrasting patterned areas which never appear cluttered but always manage to compliment one

another. These Japanese patterns were known as Shokko or Shippo. They often appeared on Samuri dress or on Court clothes (Kamishimo and Suo), they were also used on luxuriously decorated No costumes and kimonos (Kissode, Furisode) which were accessorised with superbly ornamented belts (Obi).

The late Ukiyo-e Masters always introduced a hugh degree of decorative patterning into their figurative pictures, this had a profound affect on fashion illustration for it was not the importation of Japanese silks which was the essential factor but the extistance of the Japanese blockbooks of kimono designs which were especially familiar to French Craftsmen. The influence of these books can be seen in the work of artists such as Paul Iribe, Helen Dryden, Georges Lepape.

"Clarity of decorative shapes was supported by glowing brightness of colour. Through the Japanese Woodcut therefore French, Belgian, English, Dutch, German, Austrian, Italian and American artists all began to appreciate the significance of design which had hitherto not been adequately examined"

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

Japanese clothing in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries developed in many different directions, in some cases Japanese Craftsmen only decorated one half of the garment leaving the other half free to create a contrast between full and empty space. The patterns on these costumes which can be divided into three distinctive categories:

Firstly the Grille or Grid pattern in which overlapping or intersecting strong structural lines were used, designs such as

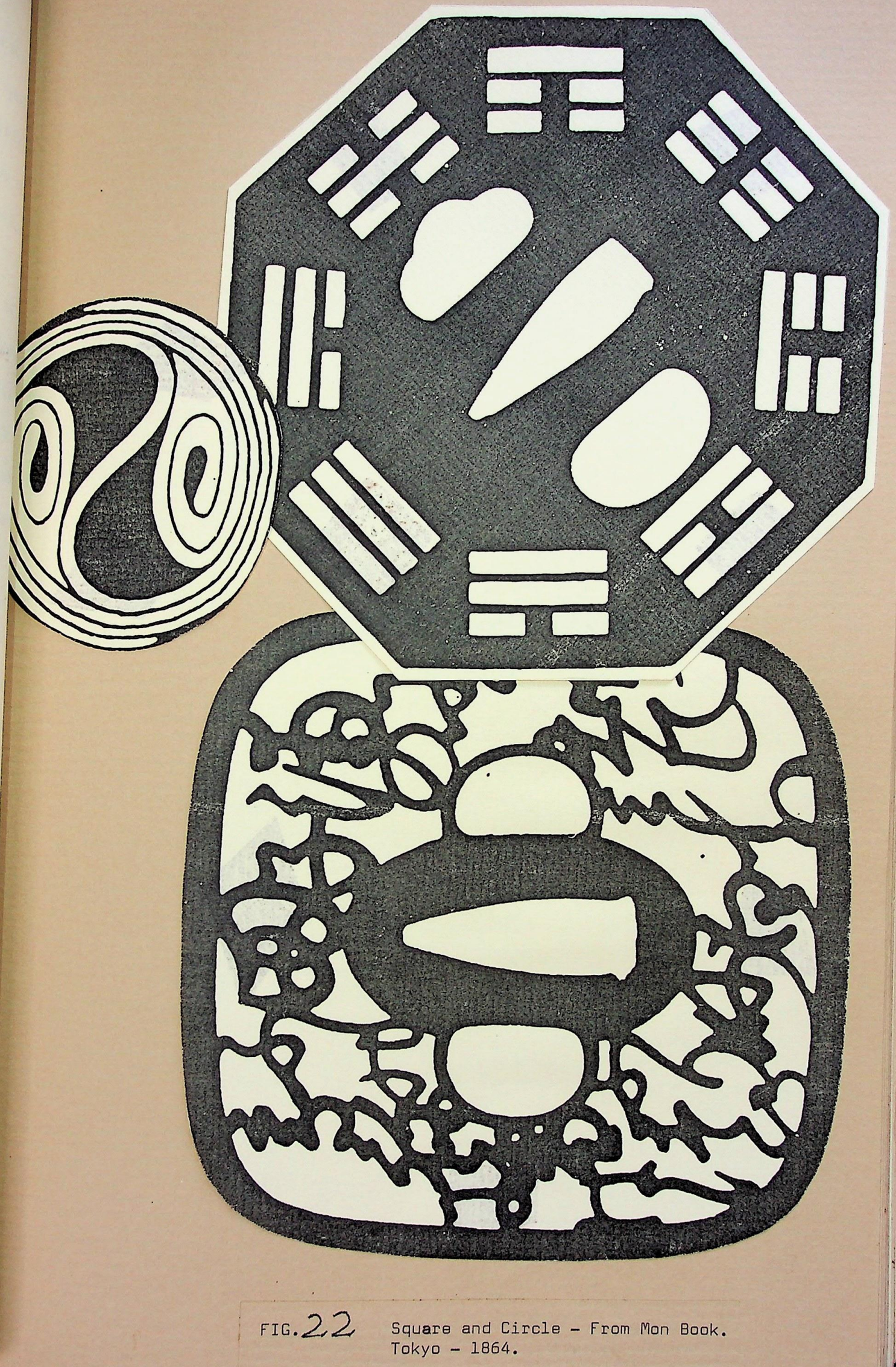


FIG. 22 Square and Circle - From Mon Book. Tokyo - 1864.

these were often basis on weaving structure.
The second category was known as the Enclosed Area; this technique created sections or areas of pattern with the use of decorative borders, wavey lines and pattern stripes. These predominantly linear devises appear over and over again in Japanese textiles (Fig.26)
The third category was the use of a centralizing motif, here the fundamental element is the repetition of a 'mon' or Heraldic motif which is integrated into the basic unity of the background material. Crests and Heraldic motifs are found everywhere the family symbol dominates Japanese kimono design.

As time went on Western understanding of Oriental pattern became greater and greater as a result of the International Exhibitions. The preoccupation with and increased study of Japanese textiles was obvious in the work of European textile designers.

"They showed totally inemitable understanding at how to extend a swaying branch or a thin bamboo shoot with feather-like leaves across an entire surface depicting only as much of it as is absolutely necessary in order to arose in us a sense of its living reality, yet nevertheless with the most delicate observations of graceful swinging movements. Not everything is embroidered, much is only painted or printed on the cloth. The forms on the dully gleaming silk surface shine forth from the ornamental pattern. The Japanese decorative sense is anti-axial, single centred, often delicately florid or tending towards unity within all-embracing borders. In short it can cope with the most unusual formats - even clothing."

- Catalogue to the Vienna Exhibitions of 1873
- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

Japanese garments themselves were not the only form of inspiration, the Japanese print was full of figures in colourful clothes walking in the streets, squares, theatres and houses. It is obvious from these prints that the long trailing robes and wide mantels dictated certain postures and modes of behaviour. For instance the 'Okaidori', a feminine garment with long sleeves necessitated a particular way of holding the arms and the way people sit, stand or lie down obviously showed the existence in Japan of a proscribed protocol. Here the garments became more than mere body coverings, the Kabuki actor, for instance, is almost secondary to his costume, the mass of material is displayed to its fullest advantage, swirling and swaying about the figure. Thus the character becomes secondary. It pales into insignificance when the configuration of clothing becomes the sole point of interest.

The figure engulfed in ornamentation was an inherent characteristic of the early Vogue fashion plate. The models or figures were mere tailor's dummies clad in sumptuous clothing. The highly decorated gown became an almost structural base for the illustration, with the head of the figure having only secondary functions. The model sinks into anonymity, becoming totally and perfectly absorved into ornaments as in the Japanese Woodcut only small sections of the face are still recognizable with the rest of the bodily features submerged under the yards of cloth. The asymmetry of all the forms, large and small and the existence throughout the picture surface of different decorative areas further emphasize the pure surface quality of the work. In both Japanese prints and Vogue illustration the floral or geometric patterns lead the eye from one area to another with, in

23 Keisai Eisen Courtasan in [illegible]
(1830) Colour Woodcut.

FIG. 24 Vogue Cover, 1919.
Helen Dryden.

many cases, little recognition of actual figures and forms.

Many of the early Vogue Illustrators such as Georges Lepape and George Plank concentrated to a large extent on the pattern ground technique. Here figures, indeed everything on the cover becomes embedded in a single surface texture. The surrounding space is not seen as a distinctly separate entity. Everything tends to blend together and in the longrun results in the abstraction of both figure and environment. In many Vogue covers, particularly those done between 1914 and 1916 the spatial depth is very restricted which results in a two dimensional affect. The whole picture is reduced to decorative principals. Many Illustrators created a strong unity between the wallpaper, furnishing and clothing patterns in their covers. They presented box-like rooms full of highly decorative fittings thus retaining pattern and decoration from one area to another, the speckle-like squares, stripes and dots on curtains, carpets, wallpaper and tiles keep the picture surface constantly moving, for example ... (Fig.24).

This close placing of harmonizing colour areas one behind the other in different proportions does not permit any suggestion of depth or sense of perspective like in the Japanese Woodcut, objects are defined by their colour values and outlines or surface borders. In some illustrations the figures in their chequered, spotted or floral robes became part of the wallpaper or curtains. The ground absorbs everything that is represented on it e.g. (Fig.25).

FIG. 25 Vogue Cover 1915.
George Plank.

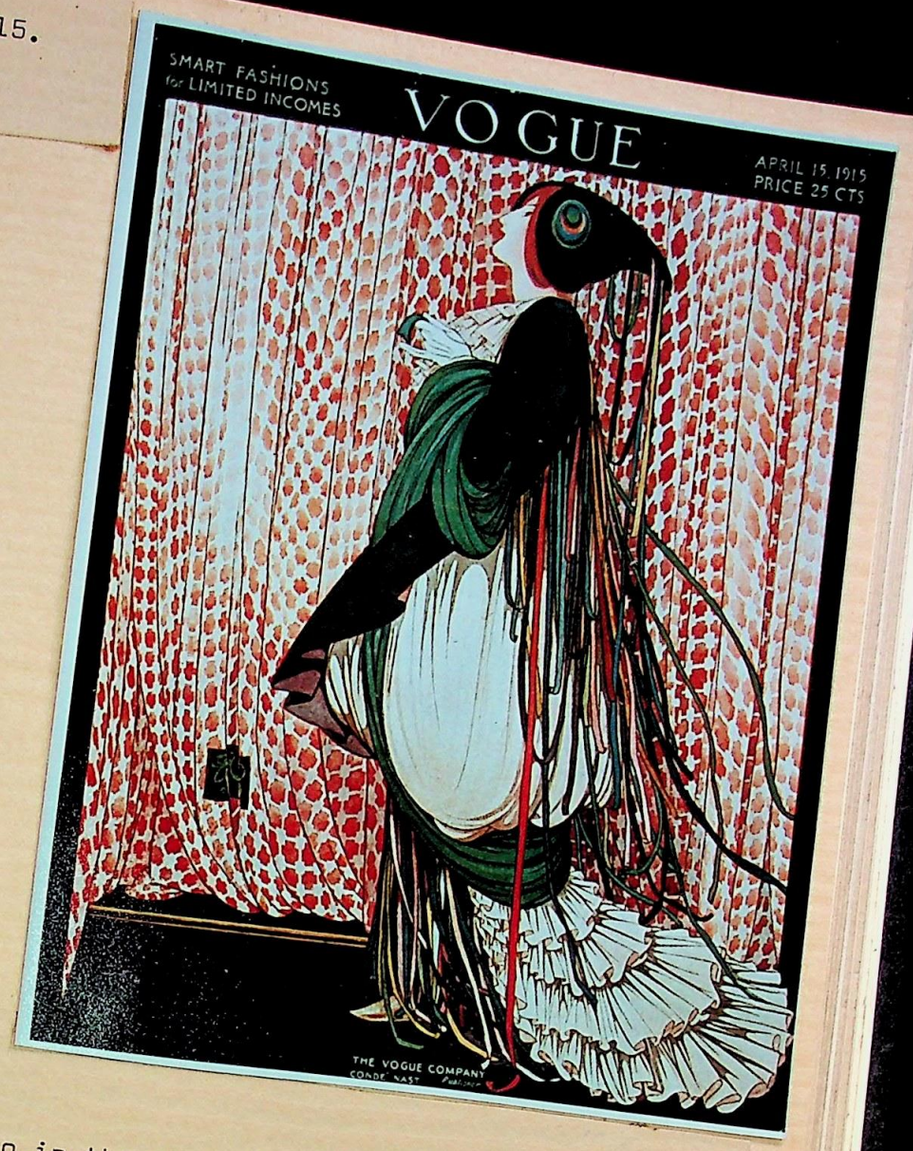


FIG. 26 Colour Block Print.
Utagawa Kunisada.
"The Actor Onoe Kikujiro in the Play "Kagamiyama".

No and Samauri costumes were exhibited at the International Exhibitions in London, Paris and Vienna. European artists appreciated all the artistic forms and devices used in their creation.

"The painterly freedom and whimsicality of the Japanese designers resulted in hugh scale patters crossing over the shoulders of the garment and stretching right down the length of the back."

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

Woodcuts by Hiroshige and Kuniyoshi depicting these garments were known as textile still lifes. The Japanese treated the silk like a canvas, rarely using an all over repeat pattern but instead distributing the various elements of their designs across a fabric in a rather irregular asymmetrical way. So too could the Parisian Couturier and textile designers embody a harmony of rhythm of line and colour, thus creating in a Japanese manner works of art in every detail of design and craftsmanship.

Not only was European fashion design and illustration but book illustration as a whole was influenced to a considerable degree by these contacts with Japan, in particular children's books. In many good children's books around 1900 clothes acquired a certain figurative independence and decoration became a medium in its own right. Comparisons can be made between Utagawa Koniyoshi's 'Tokiwa Gozen travelling with her three children' and, Kayneilsen's 'The Gust of Wind', the gust of wind itself being a popular subject with Japanese artists. It was also a much loved subject of fashion Illustrators of the early Twentieth Century,

FIG.27 Vogue Cover, 1917.
Helen Dryden.

FIG.28 Woman Standing Beside a Cherry Tree.
(1688) Moronobu.
Woodblock Print.

the blowing wind with its energy and fullness of movement is enhanced by the streaming of densely patterned material, for example ... (Fig.27).

Other Illustrators such as Aubrey Beardsley created the impression of floating garments through thin, brittle fold-lines. Backviews and the quarterface technique were also popular after the Japanese fashion. The textiles thus acquired a primary significance through extreme reduction of all essentially human aspects. Beardsley must be considered as being the most influential illustrator of the Art Nouveau period like the Japanese printers, he used solid black in the most diverse variations, he intensified the silhouette style into unique form which in its extreme tends towards the decadence inherent in the work of the late Japanese Ukiyoe Masters. Long curving lines, dramatically silhouetted back expanses in front of a light patterned background and freestanding individual ornaments are the points of emphasis in this art form. Beardsley manages to achieve a unique stylization and symbolism in its figures. He, like Helen Dryden and Georges Lepape, made use of patterned garments as an expressive medium. (Fig.30). His total reduction of the human element was a characteristic inherent in the Japanese print and was obviously also an important objective of the Vogue Illustrators of the early Twentieth Century.

* * *

FIG.29 Samuari Warrior.
Koryu Sai 1788.
Woodblock Print.

FIG. 30 Aubrey Beardsley.
Vigilus the Sorcerer. (1893)

DIAGONAL COMPOSITION

The use of strong diagonal compositions is immediately recognizable in the work of Japanese artists. Diagonals running in one direction or in certain cases running as counter-diagonals, for instance, from bottom right to top left as well as from top right to bottom left, are often apparent in the Ukioy-e prints ... (Fig. 35). This dominant visual device avoids the common rectangle principle by shifting the boundaries of the scene outside the picture surface. It has the ability to open up the pictorial space so that it can extend beyond the picture sides as far as the viewer desires. A good example of this is Hiroshige's 'Sudden rain in Shono' ... (Fig.31). Here we see the rain falling heavily in one direction whilst the figures coming up from below hurry in the opposite direction. These counter-diagonals encourage the viewer to look outside the picture plain. We imagine where the figures are coming from or going to. The diagonal of the raindrops also gives more strenght and suddeness to the heavy shower.

The diagonal as a distinctive visual device totally dismisses the traditional stylistic pluralism and moves away from conventional European landscape views. European artists were impressed by the remarkable sense of depth which could be created through diagonal composition. By leading the eye in one direction and through the sharp diminution of objects and narrowing of the diagonal a great sense of depth could be achieved. The Ukiyo-e artists were

FIG. 31 Ando Hiroshige.
Sudden Rain in Shono.

FIG. 32 Harriet Meserole. Vogue.
April, 1920.

FIG. 33 Vogue Cover.
May, 1920 - Helen Dryden.

masters at dividing the composition with the diagonal and creating an illusion of perspective.

Birds in flight were a much used diagonal motif in both Japanese and Chinese art. This proved very effective as a diagonal motif and was adopted by European artists and graphic designers.

"The cut off is a universal technique of Japanese Woodcut art. This creates detailed close-up views, the precision of which clearly brings out the essential 'type of each object as physical closeness makes for subtle observation of surface structure"

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

Through studying Japanese prints we can recognize two distinctive methods of Diagonal Composition:

First the direct compositional line just mentioned and secondly the stepped version which leads the eye bit by bit, step by step through the picture. Hiroshige employs both devices in his work. The popularity of the diagonal among Ukiyo-e masters was due to the influence of Emaki art or horizontal scroll painting. This form of art provides the viewer with a 'moving landscape'. The unrolled section of each scroll - an arms breadth at a time - lies available for examination from right to left the picture proceeds, as the person who is looking at it unrolls it with his right hand. Emaki art was full or variations on the diagonal compositional device, the viewer could determine the view at any time which allowed extreme flexibility in composition.

Already in the 1870s and early 1880s Manet was using a pronounced downward angle of vision with open picture borders on all sides. Later the Vogue Illustrators of the 1900s adopted this technique. By using diagonal composition on their covers, it was possible for them to bring out what was important in the scene. Spectacular storms and unusual natural phenomena appear in a lot of Ukiyo-e works as sharp diagonals 'surface patterning'. They also appeared time and time again on the covers of the popular fashion magazines of the early Twentieth Century. The Japanese print artist Hiroshige for example renders a shower of rain with long sharp strokes as though they have been almost etched out of the picture. In a similar way Helen Dryden used such methods in depicting a pair of ladies under a parasol on her Vogue cover for May 1920 ... (Fig.33). Here we seen fine sharp strokes hatched in one diagonal direction to provide a shower of rain. The shaft of the umbrella also enhances the strong diagonal and draws the eye downwards towards the two ladies hovering underneath. The weather seems to have been an international preoccupation among fashion Illustrators, both Georges Lepape and Harriet Meserole use ladies, umbrellas, and diagonal showers as a reliable source of inspiration. Meserole, for instance, gives a rather slender lady a fashionable masculine tone with a man's umbrella and gloves to protect her from the sudden April showers (1924) ... (Fig.32). Goerges Lepape, on the other hand uses his sharp diagonals in a positively futuristic manner. His 1921 cover depicting a mother hurrying her young children in their neat sailor suits off to the park is full of **'refreshing stark shapes' - William Packer - Vogue covers (1909-1940).** Sharp diagonals are created throughout this illustration by both figures and landscape, trees, bushes and fences run in

FIG. 34 Vogue Cover.
August, 1921 - George Lepape.

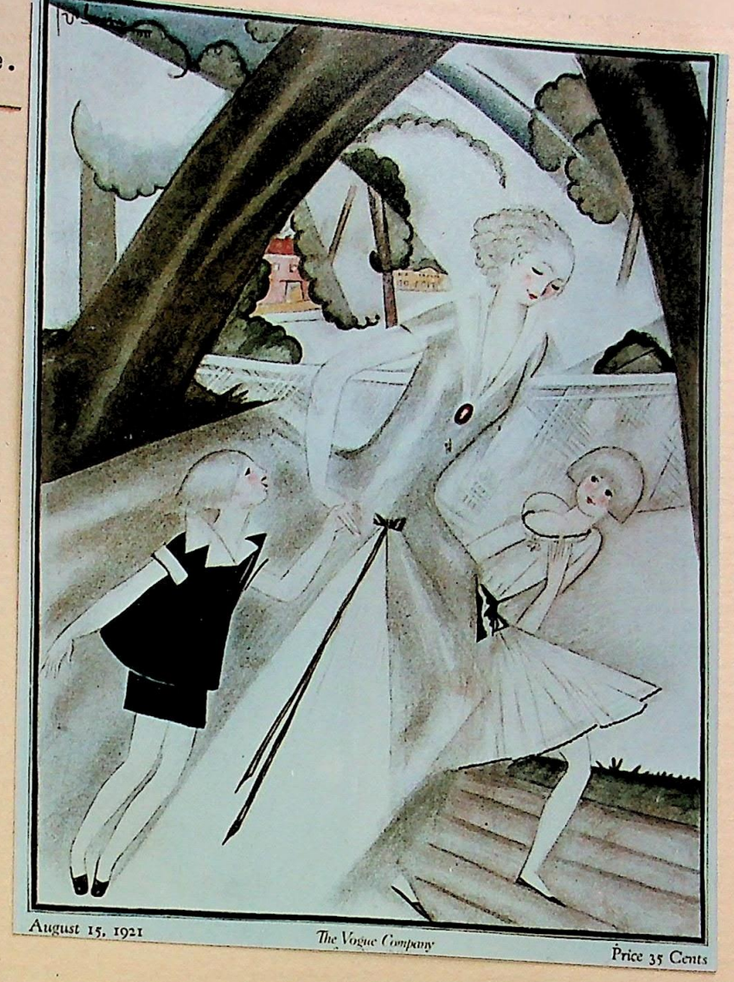


FIG. 35 "Yabu Lane Under Snow"
Japanese Woodblock Print. 1810.

counterdiagonals to the hurrying figures which tends to lead the eye out of the frame.

* * *

COMPOSITE FORMATS

The Japanese Ukiyo-e Masters of the Edo period (17th Century) were always preoccupied with the grouping of different objects or views referred to as the 'contest of framed pictures' or kibori gakawase. Different forms of this compositional style include the circle, the oval, the fan-shape and the gourd shape. In some cases a combination of two were used, one format within another. These pictorial structures could also be cut off overlapped or arranged in a distinctive progression or pattern as desired.

One of the most popular formats used in the prints was the circular or oval shape, the circular window was a common feature in Japanese houses (tokonoma) which naturally provided a direct 'detail' view outdoors. These oval windows combined with 'kakemono' pillar pictures and 'ikebana' vases provided interesting combinations of shape which lend themselves to depiction. A good example of this technique is Hiroshige's woodcut 'View of Sekiya Village from Masati' ... (Fig.36).

"On the right a sliding wall is clearly depicted and the eye is taken past branches with blossom in the foreground, away into the distance towards the landscape."

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme.

Japanese printers loved the theme of a picture within a picture. This contest of pictures was also used over and over again on Japanese silks, fans and lacquer boxes. Many European

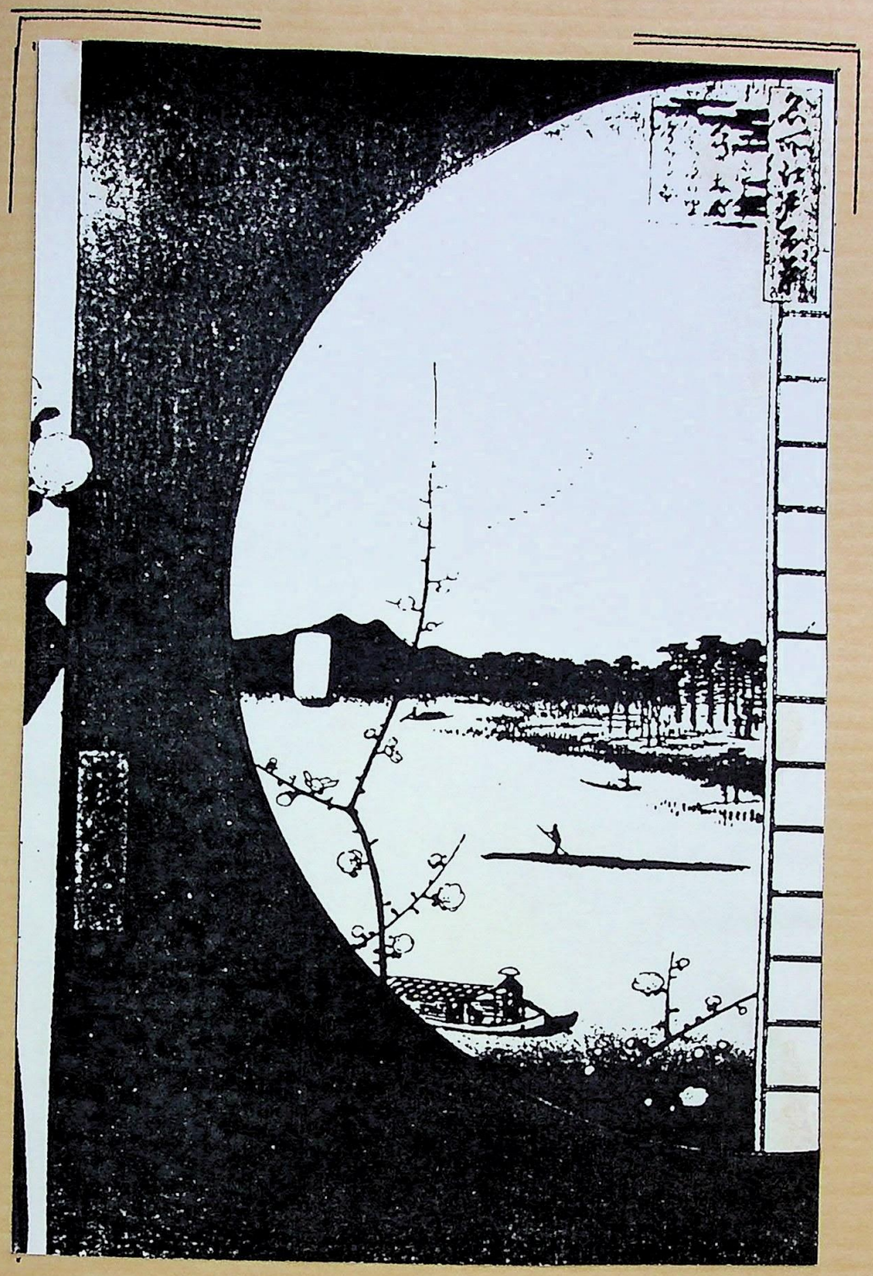


FIG. 36 Ando Hiroshige - View of Sekiya Village From Masaki - 1856-58.

Illustrators found this artistic genre particularly interesting and sought the potential for somewhat bizarre effects. Mixing formats became very popular in Europe, partially due to a series of almost 400 bound volumes of prints brought out in 1903 by Franz Lanek. Examples of techniques for combining colours within different compositional fields were given and became widely adopted by European designers and artists.

The circular portrait format within a rectangle was always used in Japan for illustrating tales of heroism. The usual combination was an oval or circle inside a rectangular or square surface, rather like the Japanese 'mon' or family emblem. The circle usually contained a portrait, landscape or figure of importance. Many painters and print artists used this format including: Hokusai, Kniyoshi, Shimman and Gakutei. Their most common subjects were portraits usually of successful actors, actresses, or courtesans.

Europe quickly took up this compositional device. The circular format within the rectangle had a functional use, for it led the eye forward as though through a window or looking-glass. The early Vogue Fashion Illustrators again adopted this Japanese technique for they found it particularly suitable to their work. Georges Lepape for instance used the oval and rectangle foremost on his August 1917 cover ... (Fig.38). Here he used a flat black rectangular background upon which he depicted a heroic scene of a befurred Amazonian lady spearing a polar bear to death. You are looking at the striking yet gruesome picture through a window or telescopic lense. This illustration is an example of Lepape's preoccupation with Japanese print. He uses

...ua Kimyoshi.
...ua - Gozen. Colour Woodblock print 1843.

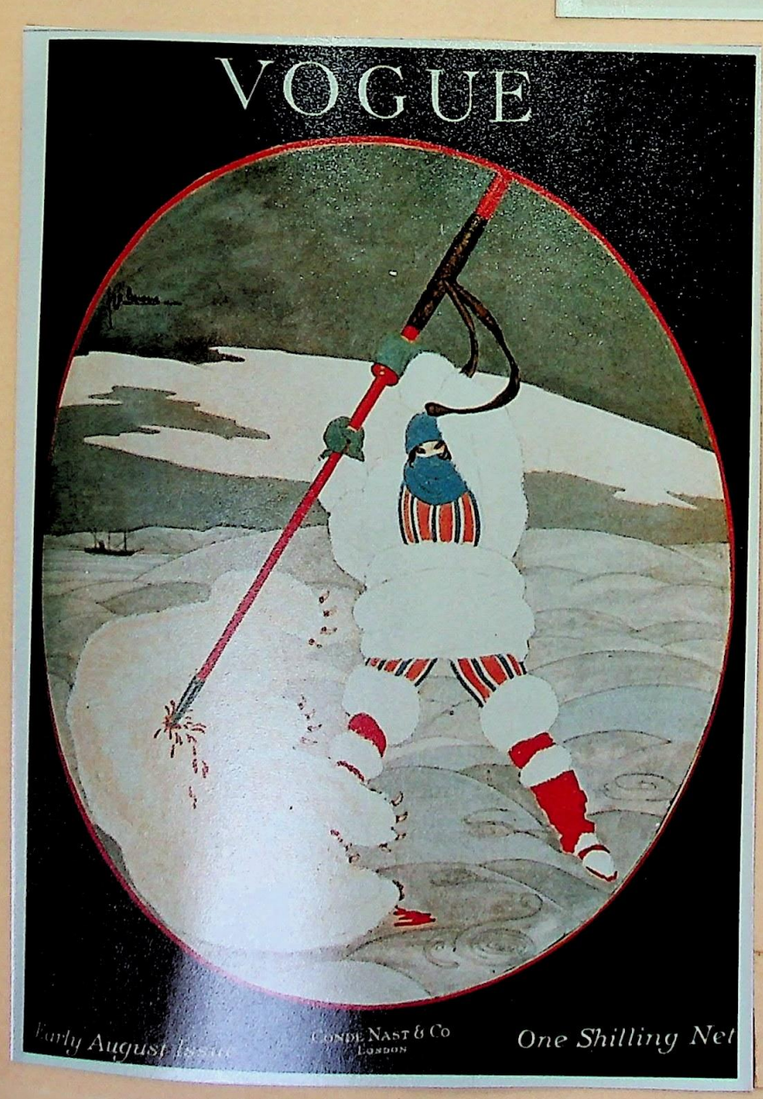


FIG. 38 Vogue August 1917.
George Lepape.

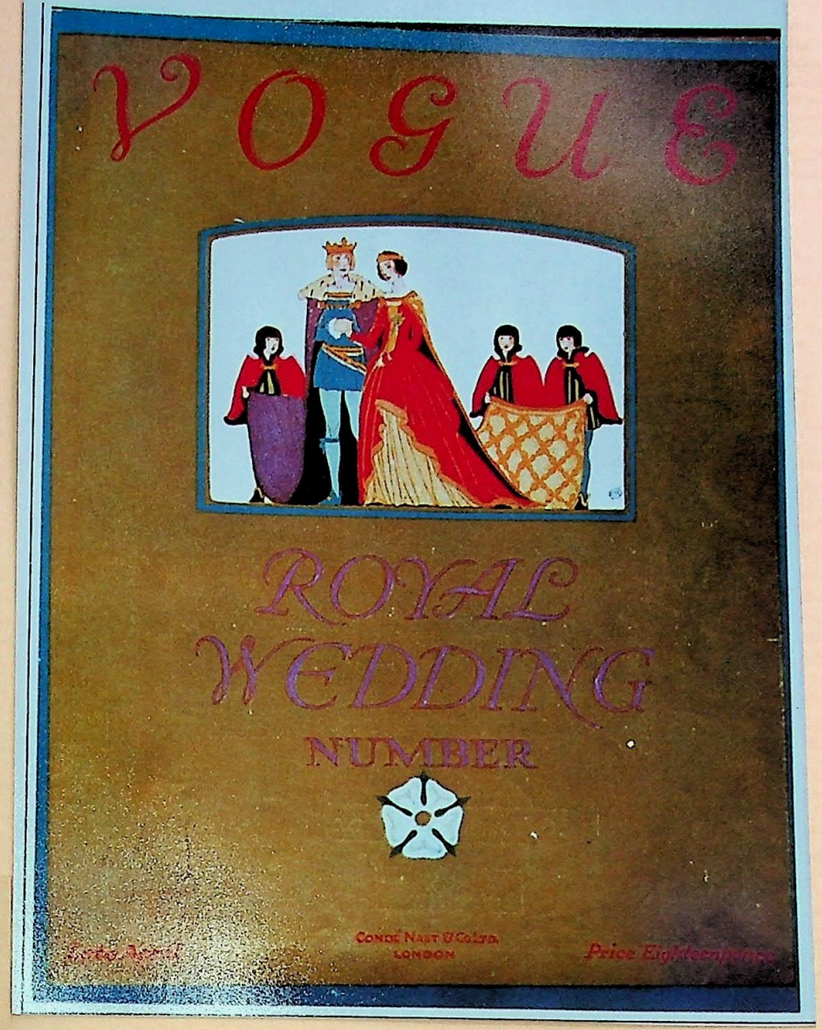
relatively flat areas of pure colour with minimal landscape details. The spear which sprinkles the polar bear's blood over the ice helps break up the picture plain, again a device used by Ukiyo-e Masters. Lepape's use of composite formats can be seen throughout his career as a vogue illustrator.

This use of a picture inside a picture or plain was known to the fashion Illustrators as a 'Vignette'. The Vignette was an attractive and infinitely variable device, bringing with it:

"its own opportunites and disciplines for the miniature artistry"

- William Packer - The Art of Vogue Covers (1909-1940)

This compositional format was so popular that it recurred several times in Vogue magazine, especially those editions marking a Royal wedding or special fashion forecasts. Frederick Chapman's design to mark the wedding of the future George V and his Queen, Elizabeth was a good example of this ... (Fig.39). Here we see the happy couple with three pageboys depicted in miniature inside a blue rectangular frame on a green background. The whole cover is given an added sense of importance and superiority to the other monthly additions. It is as though we have been given a sneak preview of the forthcoming event. The Illustrators Tomlynn and Saalburg also used the device on their early June edition 1923 ... (Fig.40) which contained the summer fashion forecast. Here we see a lady in a summer frock sheltering from a shower of rain, the miniature scene is surrounded by a thin oval frame and placed on a beige rectangular background. Other Illustrators such as Egor Scheile and Edouard Vuillard chose to depict collections of isolated motifs such as a laurel branch, flowers, swans or chics within a certain compositional field. Art Nouveau



39 Fredrick Chapman,
Vogue Cover, April 1923.

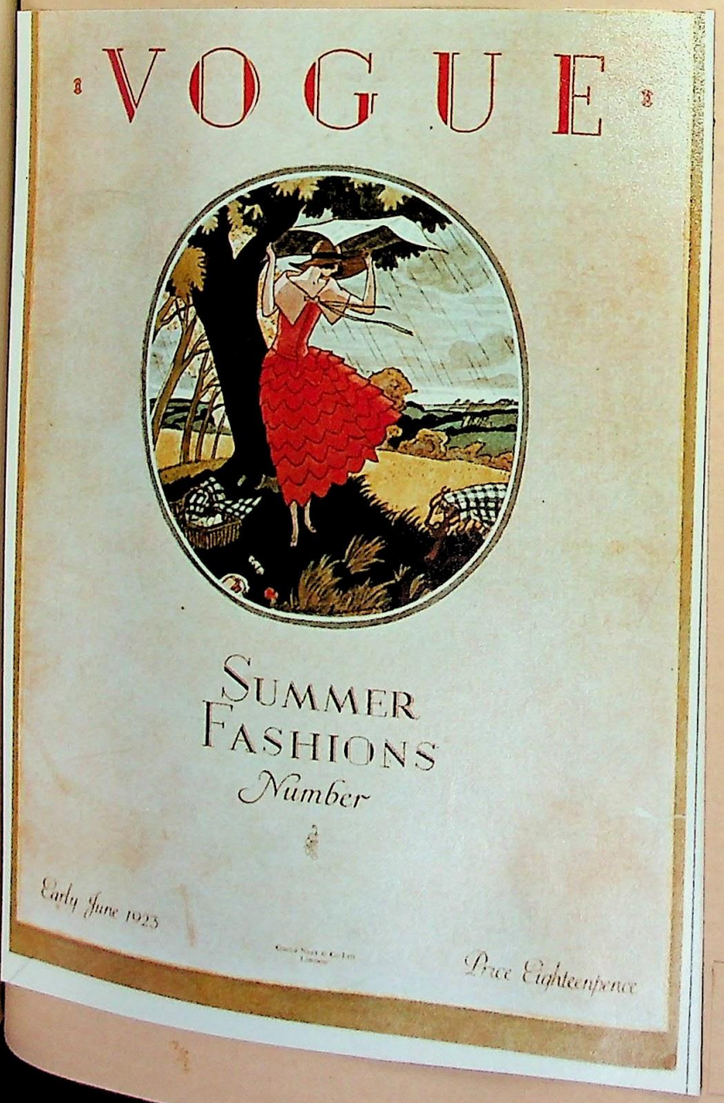


FIG. 40 Vogue Cover, June 1923.
Tomlin and Saalburg.

designers, for instance, showed a liking for circular pictures within long narrow horizontal formats. Walter Leistikow, Richard Grimm and T.T. Heine, often employed this combination in their illustrative work. This form had a long tradition in Japan, notable in the mon genre (Heraldic motif). The combination format technique was adopted from Japanese examples by western painters and designers and even picture postcards today testify to the inclusion of other formats within a rectangle.

* * *

TRUNCATED OBJECTS AND OBLIQUE ANGLES

probably one of the most important elements of the Japanese print which became a hallmark of the early Vogue Illustrations was the use of truncated objects. Japanese painters did not hesitate to allow a human hand or the lower part of a leg to protrude on its own into a picture. Sprays of blossoms and truncated sails, slipping into the picture stimulate the eye to lead directly into the distance. It was not only the Ukiyo-e artists of the Edo period who used this technique.

"In the horizontal picture scrolls of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries events are depicted as though seen through a chink. The action of the picture is seen from high above, evidence that this form of composition had a long tradition in Japan."

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

Many examples of these half-visible objects can be seen in Hiroshiga's prints where the eye can jump from one object to another, from one plain to another. To the Western eye, however, this new way of looking at the world was totally unconventional and was considered "a dangerous dismantling of nature."

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

The European artists, however, learned from the Japanese Masters that the truncated or cut-off object could often be more important than one whose form is completed visible. Ordinary objects, such as the mast of a ship, a person's face or the front of a boat could be presented to the observer in order to suggest to him movement or the transcience of the scene portrayed.

41 Ships Entering Tempozan Harbour
Yashima (1838)

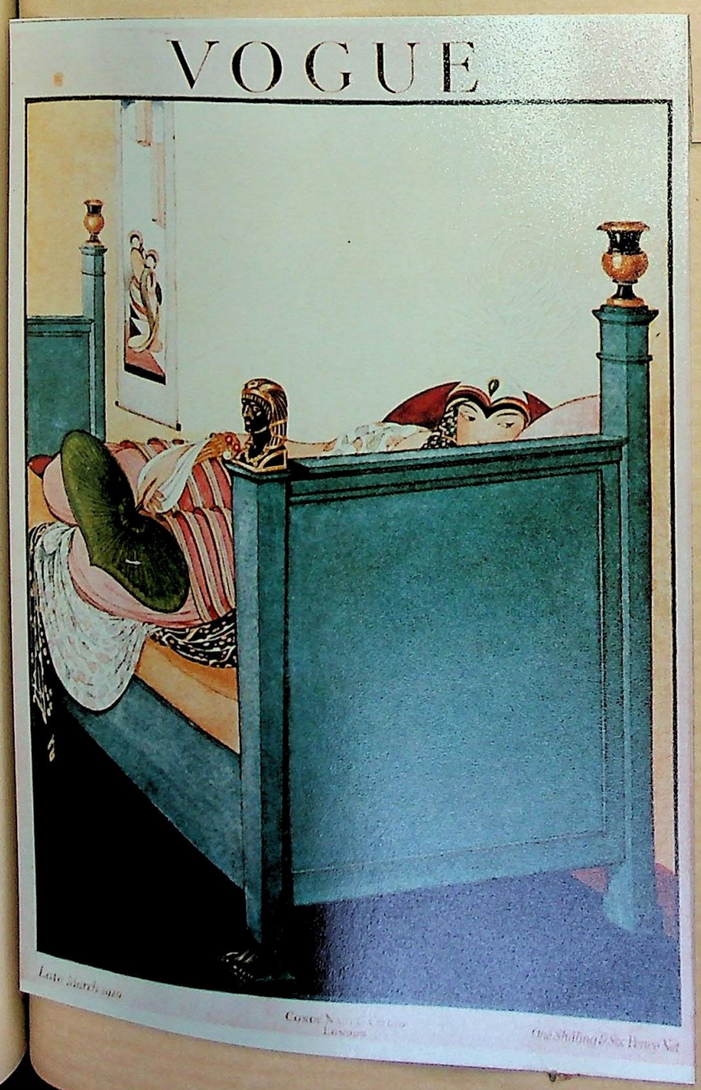


FIG. 42 Vogue Cover, 1920.
George Lepape.

This method of truncated objects was passed into the field of book illustration. Some extreme examples of this can be seen in the Vogue Illustrations where certain scenes presented to the eye are often glimpsed accidentally and in extreme close-up. The illusion of suddenly stepping into the picture, of leaning forward onto it, of flying past it are made real. In some cases the observer must complete the object in his imagination, therefor if the object is unfamiliar to the eye it will have significance in determining the form and content of the painting.

The splitting of an object is no rarity in Far-Eastern paintings. Flying cranes, swimming carp or even the human figure can appear one part on one, one part on another page of a book or section of the screen. This system was also used in the narrow strip or pillar pictures (Hashira-Kake). Here the head of a girl or a very small part of a figure can dominate the picture, despite the fact that the greatest part of the figure lies outside of the frame. The principal artists who used this truncated form were Torii, Kayomitsu, Isada Konyusai, Kitagawa Utamaro and Hosada Eishi.

In Europe after the Japanese woodcut became known there was scarcely an artist in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries who did not take up this compositional principal. The fasion Illustrators tended toward a quite exaggerated cut off format. The fact that they might leave out half of the body or even half a face on a cover illustration was not in accord with the conventional climate of Europe in the early Twentieth Century. Most previous artists had placed their portraits and figures in

the exact centre of the picture and now a new concept appeared. "The impressionists - these choppers off of necks and heads - despised the closed form of the human body which has been taught by the old masters."

- Franz Von Lambach

- Michael Sullivan - Meeting of Eastern and Western Art

George Plank for instance used this technique and although his work became more orthodox as time wore on, it still remained a constant surprise and delight. The Musical Redhead on his November 1919 cover ... (Fig.43) is only half in the picture. The remainder of her voluminous ballgown obviously stretches out beyond the frame as does the remainder of her devoted audience. We are only given a glimpse of her musical instrument in the bottom left hand corner of the picture. Despite this, the fact that she is playing a concert piano still manages to dominate the scene. It is as though we are given a view from behind the curtain or through keyhold where the essential ingredients are only revealed.

Helen Dryden whose willingness to acknowledge fresh influences and respond to them intelligently also adopted the technique. Her ability to do this was one of the most attractive aspects of her professional virtue for she was no innovator. It is principally her latter covers which demonstrate her preoccupation with the Japanese print to its greatest extent, her cover for June 1920 (Fig.45) showing two fasionably dressed tennis players, is a superb example of truncation. All we see of the two ladies are heads and shoulders in front of the sloping tennis

FIG. 43 Vogue Cover August, 1919.
George Plank.

FIG. 44 Katsushika Hokusai "The Pilot"
1814. Colour Woodcut.

net. part of the tennis racket juts into the picture in order to indicate the game being played. Again only the essentials are displayed and we are only given a fleeting glance or partial view of the scene.

* * *

FIG. 45 Vogue, June 1920
Helen Dryden.

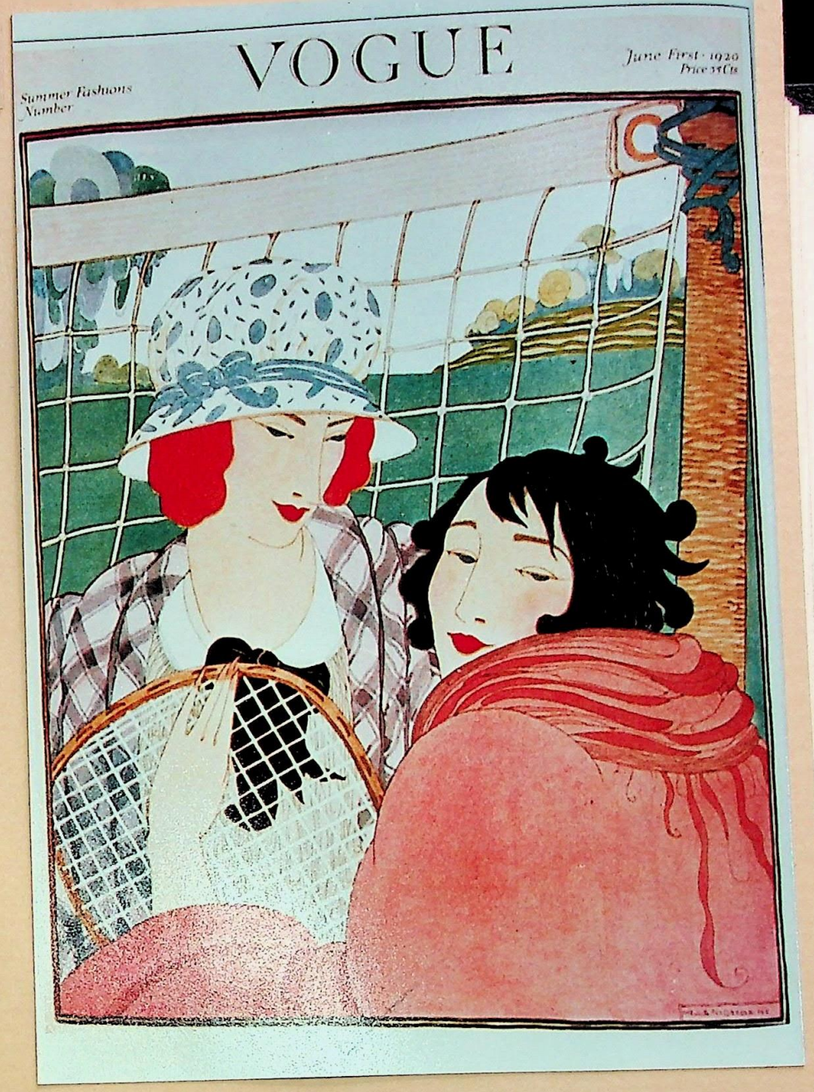


FIG. 46 Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797-1861)
Colour Woodcut.
Mount Fuji through a Fishing Net.

POSTS AND SPATIAL DIVIDERS

In Japan posts or pillars play a major role in everyday life, especially the 'tokohasira' post which divides the prayer section of the house (tokonoma) from the storage section (chigaidana). This poster pillar has deep religious connections with Japanese tradition. It has a symbollic meaning as the centre of the primevil hut, the centre of the family group and the centre of society. This post is often strangely gnarled or weathered and still possessed the beginnings of branches. The popular Japanese scroll pictures (or kaki-mono) were often hung on such posts in order to draw attention to the pillar or mark it out. The post was therefore a direct vertical focus for its immediate surroundings.

The Japanese print was obviously a representation of everyday life, therefore the post takes on a strong significance in this art form. The post was often used to direct the eye towards some important elements within the picture or to divide up different areas, the early Japanese print artists:

"developed the post as a pictorial element in itself, that is, the post is accented thereby attaining an important thematic significance."

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

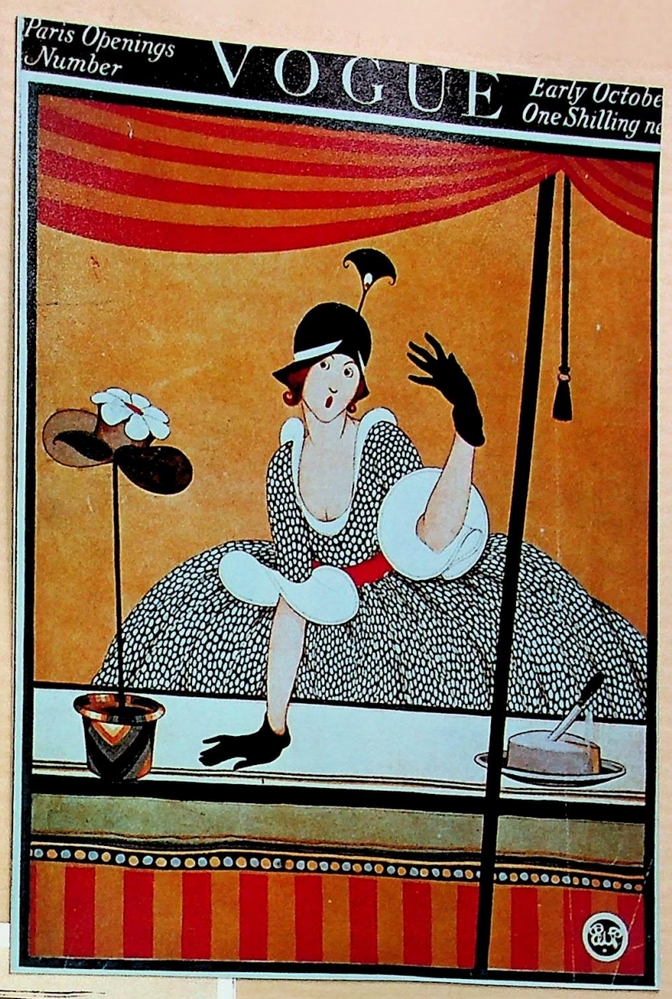
The Japanese like the Chinese saw the tree as a fundamental element of nature. This highly reveried object was seen by the Japanese in the post therefore the pillar or post took on a ritual treatment. In Hiroshiga's woodcut the 'Izumo Shrine in the Mist" ... (Fig.52) the pine trees are a symbol of long

life. The hugh cedars have been placed in the picture like large posts. Their trunks stand out against the misty background. Typical of the religious significance of these treeposts is the introduction of a Torii or the entrance gate to the temple at the right hand edge of the picture.

In general it is obvious that when a Japanese painter looks out from his house at any scene he includes in his picture the post as a significant component. The representation of posts and trees for their own sake was a concept developed by the French impressionists. However, the Vogue Illustrators also used the post as a device rather than as an object, the post had in their illustrations the ability to divide up the picture plain or overlap various aspects. For instance the overlapping of flat foreground with the background to creat spatial depth. By dividing the picture with posts one can also achieve in a single compostion several views. The post is ideally suited to this technique for its form can be continued mentally by the observer.

In 1916 George Plank on his Vogue cover for the English ... (Fig.48) depicts the conventional society lady helping at a parish bazaar. A long thin pole or post used to support her overhead canopy divides the composition. It leads the eye inwards and creates the illusion of depth in an otherwise flat picture. It also leads the eye downwards to intersect the stall on which a potted plant and cake are displayed. If the pole had not been placed in the composition it would appear flat and lifeless. The pole's slightly obscure vertical angle also provides a contrast to the horizontal stall and canopy.

FIG. 48



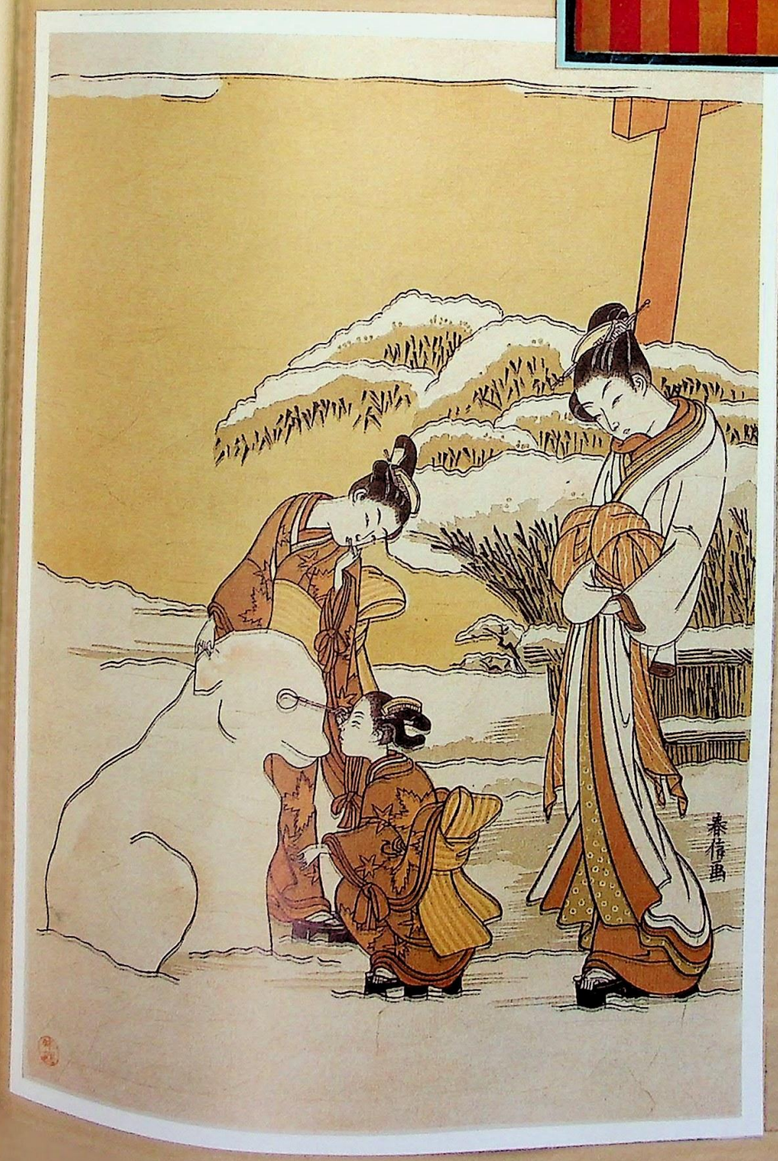


FIG. 49 Woodblock Print.
Haruyo.

Helen Dryden also uses posts or spatial dividers in many of her illustrations. In 1919 her November cover ... (Fig.50) for that year shows a lady wearing the new fashionable Eastern looking wrap, fur edged, rich in colour. A similarity between this illustration and Torii Kiyonagas 'woman looking into a snow covered garden' ... (Fig.51) can easily be seen. The use of posts or pillars to divide the foreground from the background landscape again a sense of depth is created in both pictures which draws the eye outward and back in again. As well as using strong vertical pillars both Drydon and Kiyanaga use very strong horizontal lines in the form of balconies and platforms. Similarities in the use of pattern are also evident between the two. The ladies in both pictures are draped with patterned fabric and both have elaborate head adornments, the appearance of grids as a backdrop panel or in the form of chequered tiles is also a significant connection between the two ... (Fig.50)51

Andre Marty produced a magnificent cover in 1924 ... (Fig.53), it shows Marie-Antoinette dressed as a shepherdess wandering in her gardens and chasing butterflies. Here the large tree trunks in their natural environment exhibit a post-like character, they look like the pines in Hiroshega's 'Izumo Shrine in the Mist" ... (Fig.52) provide a central axis to the picture. They also create depth of field while the figures in the foreground tend to be silhouetted against the dark background. Both artists tended to cut off the tree trunks, thus giving them an added strength and uniformity, making them even more post or grille like. In many other fashion illustrations and Japanese prints a single support fulfils the task of dominating the picture. It can act

as a connecting device between compositions or provide added depth and perspective to an otherwise flat pattern like illustration.

* * *

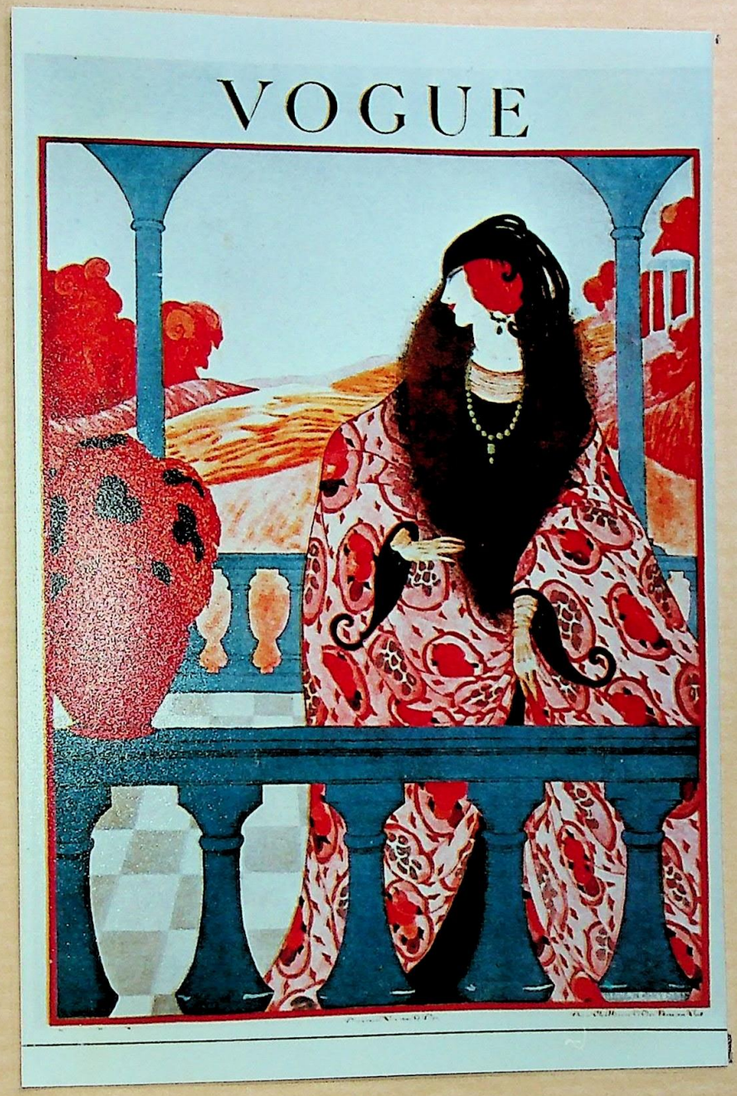


FIG. 50 Vogue Cover, November, 1919.
Helen Dryden.

FIG. 51 Torii Kyonagas.
"Woman Looking into a Snow Covered Garden"

FIG. 52 Hiroshiges "Izumo Shrine in the Mist".

FIG. 53

George Kepper 1923

TRELLIS AND GRILLE

The outside walls of Japanese houses often consist of sliding grille walls or sections known as 'shogi' ... (Fig.54), the inner walls are of a similar structure but lighter weight 'jusuma' ... (Fig.55).

"The grille structure consists of closely joined strips, thicker in diameter than the inner ones, these serve as a framework covered with paper, the screen appears as a light, bright wall surface. The patterns are clearly visible during the day and also at night with lights on the inside."

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme.

Not only does this diagonal or grid pattern appear on the inside but also as a decorative motif on fences and garden walls, Japanese tea-houses, Temple buildings and Budist Monastries all have sliding walls similar to the type described. Sliding walls form a sort of patterned background to daily life, as represented in Japanese woodcuts and also play a major role in stage design, whenever an interior or a house has to be suggested in the Theatre.

Another architectural item which receives much attention is a highly ornate form of grille known as the 'ramma'. The 'ramma' is situated below the roof and designed to allow free circulation of air around the house. All kinds of decorative motifs were used in the carving of this apparatus: waves, birds, pines, cranes, flowers, leaves, and much else. For the 'ramma' was an ever varied compositional form.

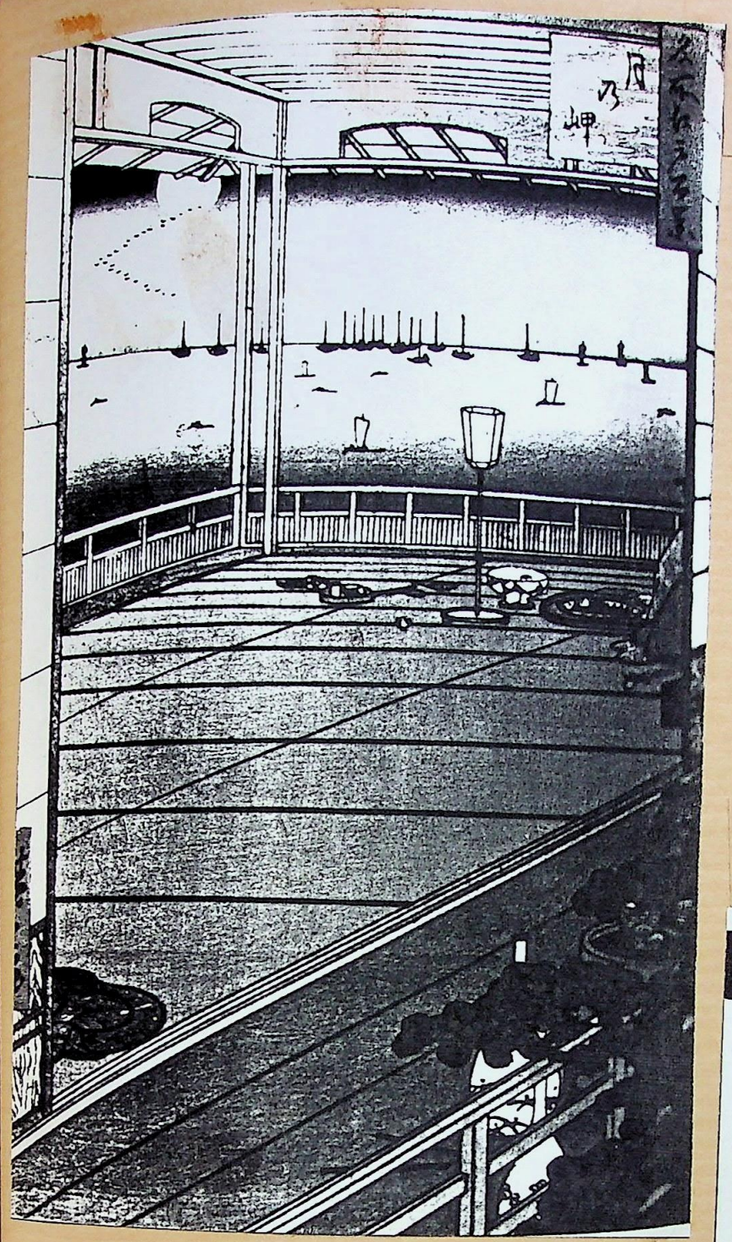
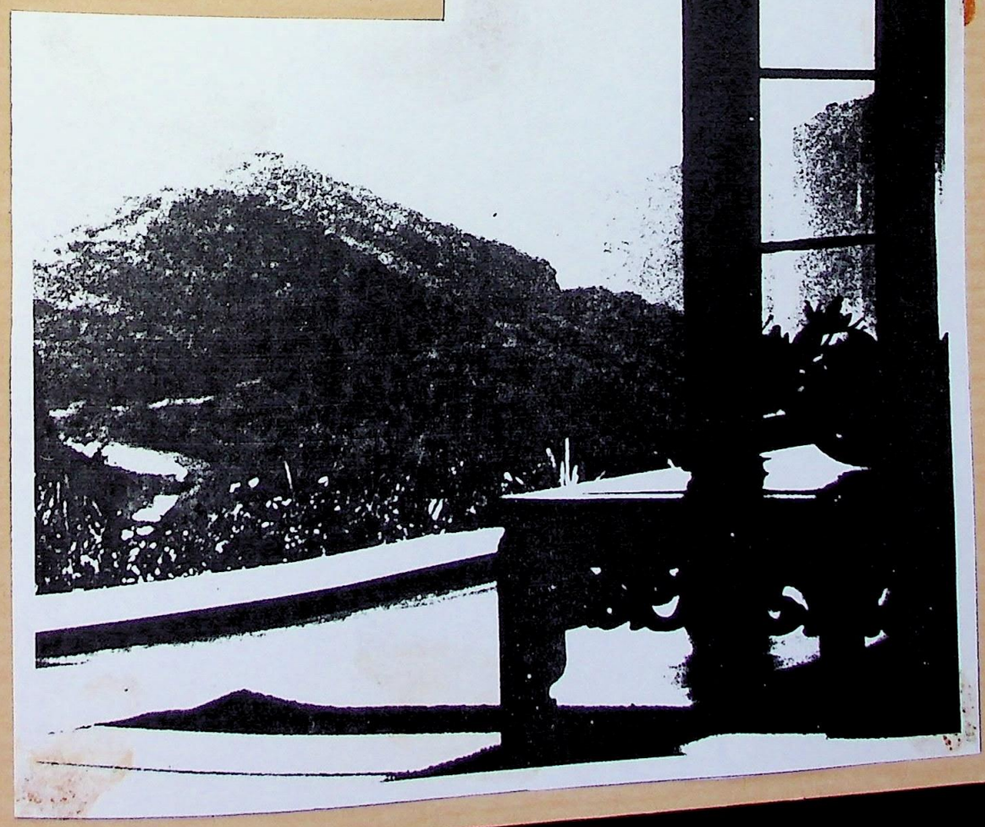


FIG. 54 Ando Hiroshige.

Interior of Tea House.

FIG. 55 Shoshito Seh, Kyoto.
Japanese Tea House.



These grille structures, sliding walls and fences reproduced in woodcuts were seen by artists as an ideal spatial divider, blocking device or backdrop. Utamoro uses them to creat different pictorial plains, either more or less cluttered according to the conventions of the woodcut genre.

Western Illustrators used the grille motif as a device for structuring their picture composition. Landscapes often featured larger grille like tree trunks.

"The feeling for clear articulation in the Japanese colour woodcut impressed me the very first time I came across it. Horizontal lines always stand in interesting relation to the verticals, Japanese painters have devised subtle and complex methods of creating interplay between picture surface and pictorial space ... they have even developed a grille motif of posts or trees in the foreground, middle distance or background to specific artistic affect."

- Email Orlik - Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

Placing a grille motif in the foreground, background or middle distance is another important technique used in Japanese art. Its function was on one hand to cut the foreground off from the landscape behind and on the other to creat a spatial unity between two areas. Hokusai's landscapes provide a good example of this technique 'Mount Fuji in a bamboo grove' ... (Fig.56) in which the pine trunks are used to divide the picture plain into verticle sections. In this way he brings the picture closer to the audience and achieves a sense of perspective that renders the impression of distance.

FIG.56 Mount Fiji in a Bamboo Grove
Hokusai.

Hokusai's 'Manga' also gives precisely defined examples of fence and hedge systems which made perfect grilles for landscapes pictures, Hokusai liked to sketch bamboo grilles and used tree trunks as a grille-like structure for sectioning up space and producing the effect of filtered vision.

This device was quickly adopted by European artists who were influence by Japanese woodcuts. The Vogue Fashion Illustrators also began to look at and use the grilles motif. However, they did not develope it merely as a device for creating space, no they used it more often in a two dimensional and decorative way to harmonize with the rest of the picture or provide a light and dark background to a chosen silhouette. In fashion illustration grilles and trellises provide a decorative contrast to the loose flowing curves of garments and folds of cloth. Harriet Meserole's first full cover for Vogue ... (Fig.58) shows a charming spring landscape viewed through the conservatory door, the young mistress of the house returning in light voile dress with Peter-Pan collar and bow. Here space is created with the use of the window-pane grid, we are given the impression of distance, perspective and the existence of both inside and outside the house.

Georges Lepape's Vogue cover for September 1919 ... (Fig.61) shows grilles or grids used as a decorative background to a rather domesticated lady setting her breakfast table. Her french doors, check tablecloth and two tone flooring provide a complete contrast in both line and pattern to the loose simple cut to her garments and the windswept appearance of her hair.

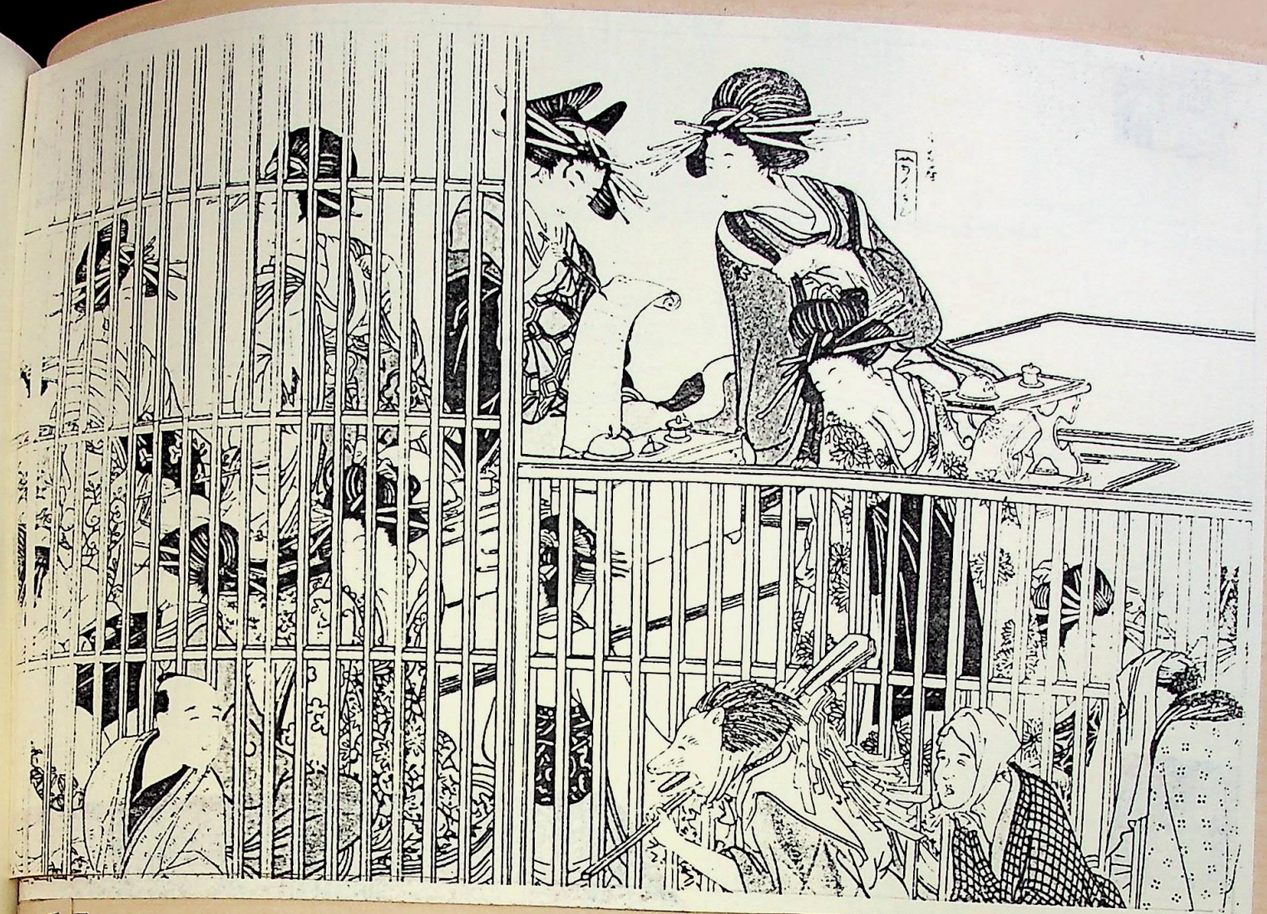
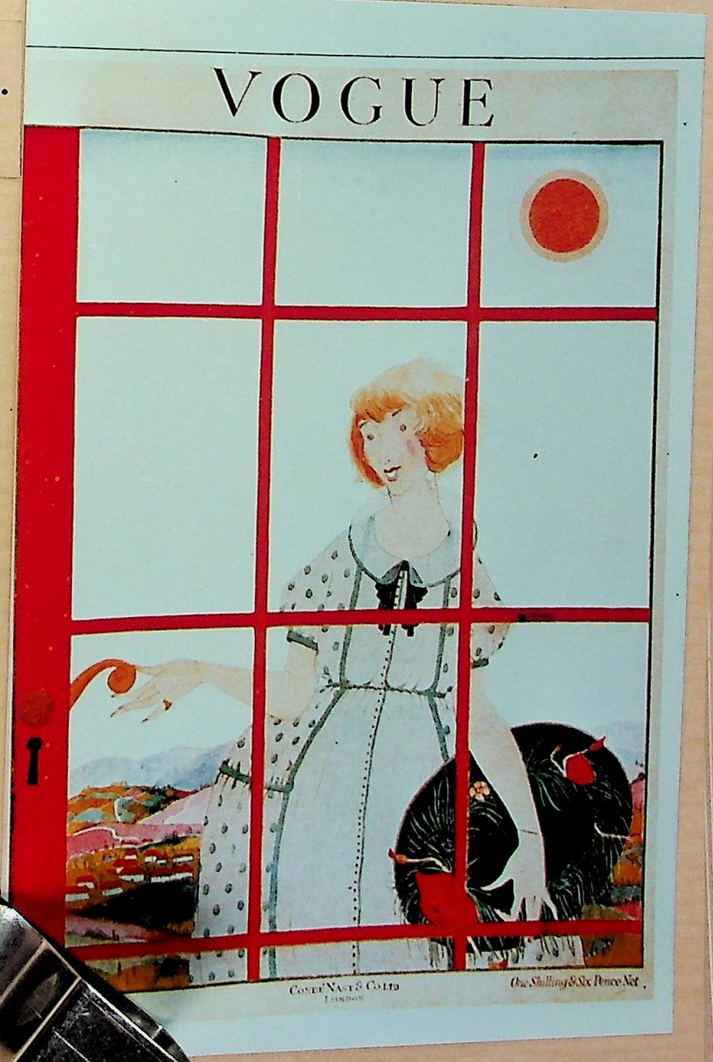


FIG. 57

agawa Utamaro.
rtasans Waiting Behind Sliding Grilles.
8. - Colour Woodcut.

58

Vogue Cover.
April, 1920 - Harriet Meserole.



Helen Dryden's cover of November 1917 ... (Fig.59) shows a lady dressed in touches of Victorian, Medieval and Japanese costumes, standing in front of a multi-pane glass door, the grid structure of the door here is used merely as a decorative background.

In Georges Lepape's cover March 1917 ... (Fig.60) a similar technique is used, a very Eastern looking lady reclines on some ornate cushions and fashionable surroundings. A striking red grid provides the backdrop against a black sky and pale yellow moon against the strick grid provides a pleasing contrast to the rather oval cushions with their circular flowing patterns.

* * *

FIG. 59 Vogue Cover Nov.
Helen Dryden.

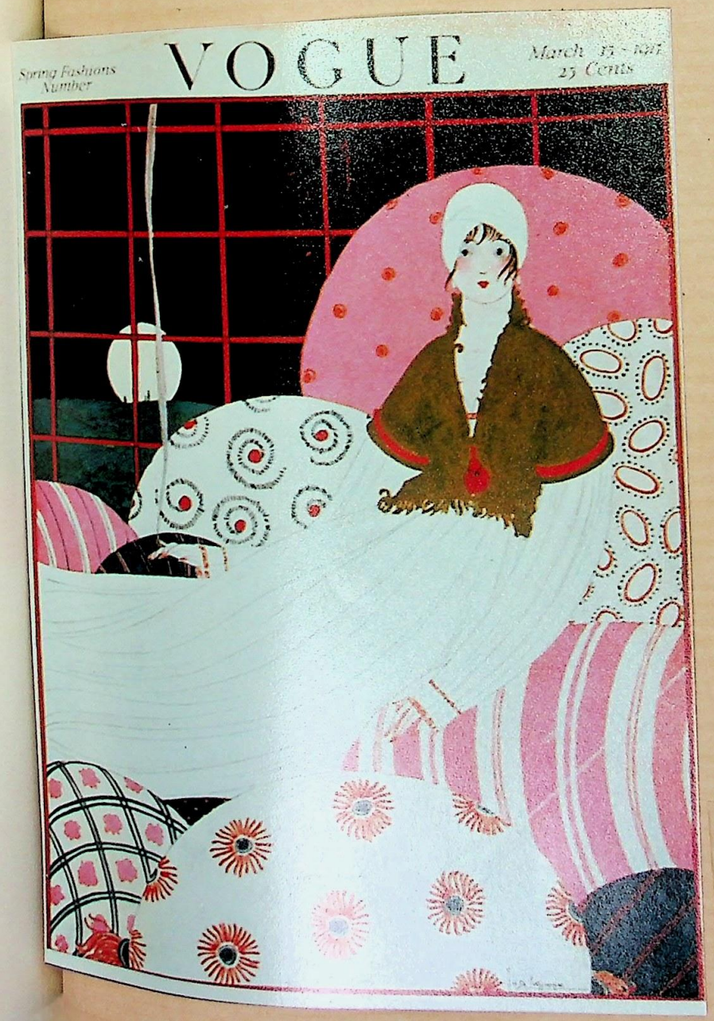


FIG. 60 Vogue Cover.
March 1917 - George Lepape.

FIG. 59 Vogue Cover Nov. 1917.
Helen Dryden.

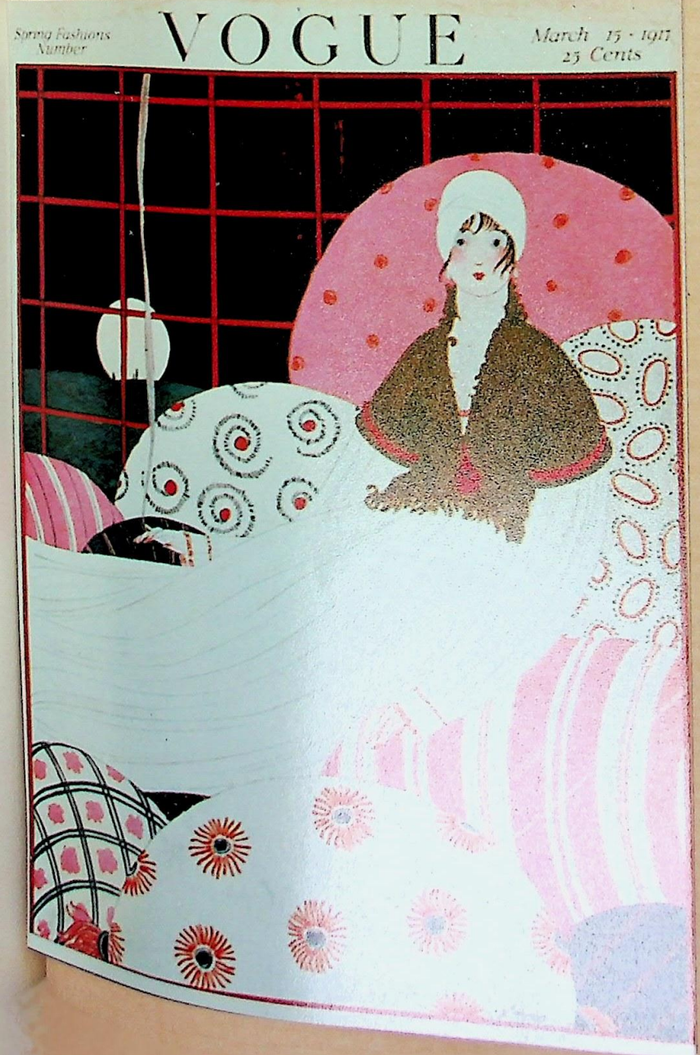


FIG. 60 Vogue Cover.
March 1917 - George Lepape.

p. 67 Vogue Cover 1919.
George Lepape.

CONCLUSION

The European encounter with the art of the Far East and particularly with that of Japan, gave rise to a whole new range of subject matter, new techniques and new artistic devices. However it was the individual artists who determined which aspects to adopt or reject. The impact made by Japonisme on European art in the early Twentieth Century was manifested with greater or lesser strength in different fields. In my opinion, the Vogue Fashion Illustrators incorporated these Japanese influences in probably the most direct way. They recognised how these revelations in technique, decoration, colour and perspective could be adopted successfully to their craft.

Vogue, in the years before the Second World War, allowed each artist whatever freedom he desired to develop and experiment in his work. Each designer was given the opportunity to move between small and large, the general and the specific, the fanciful and the everyday, without compromising at all the spirit of his commission.

In my opinion, the work of these remarkably gifted graphic artists should move young artists today to re-enter this particular field and by their initiative make it accessible to other fashion illustrators, persuading editors that there may be more to a cover than a pretty face.

* * *

FABRIC DESIGN DYERS STENCIL

The paper stencils used by Japanese fabric dyers were known as katagami, these stencils had an important influence on European textile and fashion designers of the early 1900s. Several thousand katagami were shown at the Vienna International Exhibition in 1873, this exhibition had a profound effect on the creative direction of many artists and designers such as Walter Crane, William Morris and Arthur Silver, all of whom started to produce work modelled on Japanese decorative design. The original Japanese stencils were made from the bark of the Mulberry. The stencils were similar to paper but made waterproof with the juice of unripe fermented fruit and oil. The Japanese artists used knives and punches for cutting the designs out. Sixteen sheets could be cut out at any one time. The bottom and top sheet on which the pattern was drawn were thrown away and the remaining fourteen were glued together, two at a time and given a protective net of human hair or silk thread to stop them tearing or becoming crumpled. The pattern could be cut either negatively or positively into the stencil.

Stencils were used in Japan for dying woolen and silk cloths which were used for general purposes. This cloth was cheaper than woven silk or embroidery. At the same time it allowed the designer to produce colourful materials by using several separate stencils or by using several separate resist dying processes one after another.

These stencil methods were easily copied by European designers and the Japanese repeat pattern had an enormous influence on Art Nouveau book design.

62 Dyers Stencil : Cranes.

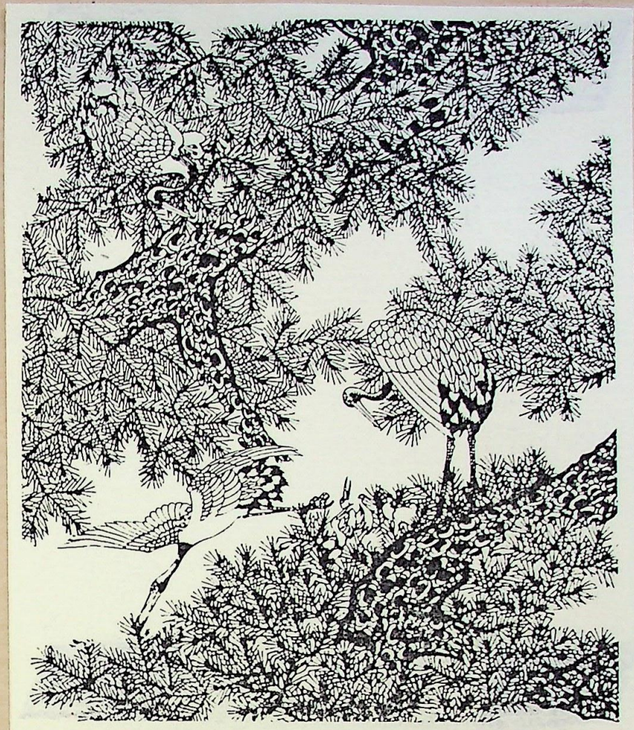


FIG. 63 Dyers Stencil : Flowering Branches.

FIG.64

allpaper Design.
ilver Studios (1913-14)

"Every day things such as flowers, branches, trees, birds and landscape were observed in a manner that went beyond realistic representation though without detraction from their intrinsic qualities."

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

The motifs used by these designers were on the whole floral i.e. vegetal in inspiration. These organic forms were full of curves and flowing lines, their surfaces dominated by woven patterns of lines and with rhythmic motifs alternating with strict grid-like bars. Many European fashions and textile designers grasped and translated such Japanese models they explored every technique of the Japanese stencil genre.

The Art Nouveau textile designers interpreted the graceful flowing curves and undulating lines used by the print-masters, linking them with three dimensional designs in the form of garments.

"Though some artists believed they could find a new source of ornamentation or even the lost principal of modern style in various linear combinations, these intempts seem to have been inspired to a certain extent by the graceful movement of Japanese lines, which so happily influenced linear ornament."

- Michael Sullivan - Meeting of Eastern & Western Art

Many of the Art Nouveau Design Studios such as the Silver Studios founded by Arthur Silk in 1880 designed for leading manufacturers in Britain, France and America, such as G.P. & J. Baker,

Theatre Poster - Spring 1704.
Woodblock Print - Kiyonobu.

FIG. 66 Vogue Cover, 1918.
George Plank.

FIG. 67 Vogue Cover, March 1920.
Helen Dryden.

. 68 Shunksoai Hokuei (1850)
Scene from Drama Suikoden.

Sanderson Liberty and Courtald. The products they designed included textiles, wallpaper, metalwork, plasterwork, book jackets, dress fabrics, stencils and advertisements. The studio became best known for its Japanese flower and exotic bird designs, many of the studio's textile and wallpaper designs were inspired by Japanese prints and textiles. Use of relatively flat areas of pure colour surrounded by thin swirling lines were a characteristic inherent in Japanese tapestries and silks. Even the wallpaper in Chinzes designed at the Silver Studios and sold in Liberty's of London included cranes, irises and lilies, popular motifs and symbolls used by Japanese artists.

By constantly being surrounded by Japanese artefacts, textile designers adopted many of the compositional devices used by these craftsmen. Margarete Von Bravchitsch, the Munich Art Nouveau embroideress was, by contrast, quite differently inspired. Her designs concentrated on the repeated rhythm of the Japanese stencil. The movement of the pattern of the cloth thus became more important than the amount of detail involved. She also investigated the use of floral patterns which were easily made into abstract ornamentation and used as purely decorative motifs. Such pattern cloth can be seen as part of the covers of many popular magazines. Helen Dryden and Georges Lepape often depicted these pseudo scenes full of swirling fabrics and voluminous drapery all full of colour and pattern. Helen Dryden in particular was deeply interested in both fashion and textile design. She often placed curtains or cushions in her illustrations which were of contemporary design - Vogue 1918 Autumn ... (Fig.69)

FIG. 69 Vogue Cover, Autumn 1918.
Helen Dryden.

These pseudo-Japanese textiles became literally part of the furniture in many society houses of the early Twentieth Century and it was the function of the Vogue Illustrators to reflect the society of the time. As Elizabeth Aslim writes of this period: "Every mantlepiece in every enlightened household bore at least one Japanese fan. Parasols were used as summer fire screens, magazines and ball programmes were printed in asymmetrical semi-Japanese style, this asymmetry of form and ornaments spread pottery, porcelain, silver and furniture."

- Michael Sullivan- Meeting of Eastern & Western Art

* * *

posture and gesture are central to the Japanese kabuki and no theatres. This repertoire of movement also governs the work of the Masters of Ukiyo-e who executed large numbers of actor portraits. The graceful line of the back, the droop of the long sleeves, the slenderness of knee and thigh above the generous spread of the hemline was a conventional pose continually repeated in Japanese art. Society ladies and actors wore several Kimonos at once, thus the layers of silk formed a base at the feet and lead to the incessant variation on the flow of movement. There are many drawings by Hokusai of women wearing the type of festive Kimono called an okiadori. This garment was cut to fall loosely and ended in an undulating trailing hem, the bottom edge which was padded and covered in costly silk. In summer a lighter version was worn. The long sleeves of the okiadori had multiple roles to play in Japanese customs - for example women in mourning used them to dry their tears.

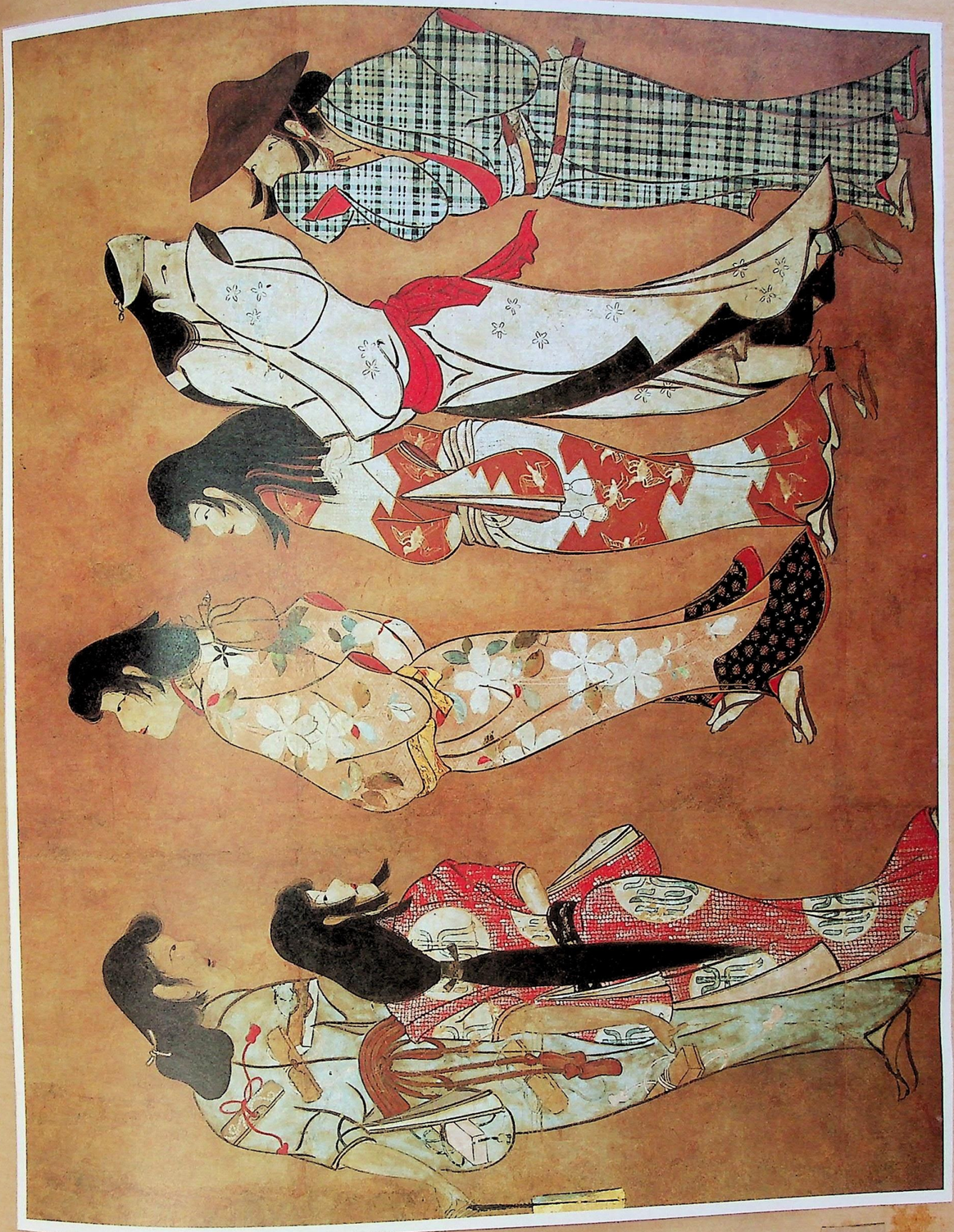
Silk garments from Japan became very popular in Europe. One reporter at the 'International Exhibition in Paris' in 1878 wrote: "The trump card this time was played by the Orient with the art of China and Japan, here even the greatest mistresses of European crafts laid down their weapons in shame. Once before at the end of the Seventeenth Century and the beginning of the 18th century, China exerted an influence that had the most profound affect upon artistic taste; now it seems as if Japan will assume that role."

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

The craze for Oriental art and artefacts was matched by a growing

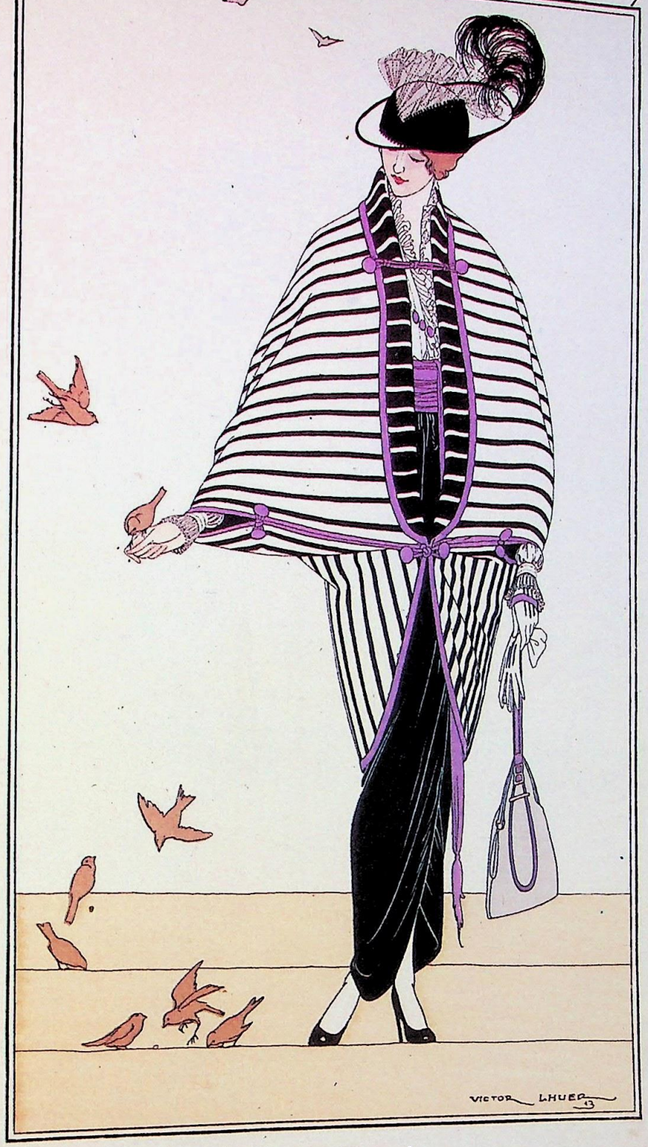
FIG. 70

Traditional Kimonos



Traditional Kimonos.

FIG. 70



Demi-deuil

interest in the customs and way of life of the peoples of Asia, not only did it affect painting, sculpture and architecture, it also had a profound affect on the applied arts which can still be felt today. In day to day life, womens fashions were strongly influenced by the Japanese Kimono and outer wrap up to about 1900 and even the way the fashionable Parisienne stood and moved between 1886 and 1900 was, so to speak, imported from Japan. At first the shapes of ladies gowns merely hinted at the long s-line but progressively designers strove up to the turn of the century to bring it to perfection. However, it was not alone the cut of the Kimono which encouraged designers (Paris) to choose this exotic dress, it was above all the exquisitely coloured silks decorated with asymmetrical patterns. These Japanese silks were reflected in the coverage of 1878 International Exhibition.

"Japanese silks are much more remote from European tastes but thanks to the industry of that race they have the advantage of being accessible to the European and they already enjoy the flattering attention of the ladies of France. These Japanese silks of which there is a large stock at the Exhibition are dear, because they are made of a heavy cloth, into which is woven a pattern in gold thread ... there are to be seen here colour combinations so exotically effective, of such piquant attraction, that it is easy to comprehend the eagerness with the hands of fine ladies reach out for these exquisite pieces."

- Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

The colour contrasts in the patterns provided endless inspiration for artists and designers, silk and grey, turquoise and coral was

Woodblock Print. Utagawa Hirokaga.
Gion Festivities - 1859.

a combination chosen time and time again with dashes of intense, saturating colours like tarracotta, azure, saffron and ice green for contrast. Gold and silver threads woven into the cloth could reflect the light, whilst the applique work could intensify the colours with additional tonal values.

The Kimono - the kind called a Kosado ... (Fig.75) in Japan became a favourite house-dress for ladies from about 1860 onwards: some splendid examples were exported from Japan. The Kimono was responsible in my opinion for the hobble skirt and the very popular long narrow, often fur trimmed wrap with wide Kimono sleeves. The cross-over bodice, high waist and slender skirt were most definitely products of such Eastern influences. French women loved the tea-gowns of fine silk hand-embroidered with showers of wistamia, bunches of poenies or branches of flowering cherries. The Kimono sleeve set into a large low armhole became a constant theme in the construction of full length coats.

Poiret obviously used the Kimono as the inspiration for his new tunic shape which fell from just under the bust and swept inwards towards the ankles ... (Fig.74). The loose flowing shawls or capes in striking oranges, reds and purples were draped over the tunic in order to enhance the lavishness of his design. The use of white theatrical make-up on the face and bright colours on the eyes and lips were also inspired by prints of Japanese actors. The fashion for the Kimono spread to England and America.

This European cult or craze for things Japanese was not merely a fad or a passing phase, both fashion and its accessories acquired

FIG. 74

Georges Lepape *Les Choses de Paul Poiret*, 1911.

FIG. 75

Kosode Kimono Design.
Edo Period - 17th Century.

a new importance in Europe through general enthusiasm for Japanese Culture.

"Women wore long narrow skirts with flouances which in outline closely resembled the Kimono, people tripped around the streets of Paris as if they had just stepped out of a Yedda Ballet - which had its first performance in 1879. The formal way of moving the hands and feet and the kinked body posture, together with the costly Kimono-like clothes of the ladies of the time exuded a mysterious magical aura of Oriental sumptuousness."

-Siegfried Wichmann - Japonisme

The Japanese mode of dress had arrived and the moment of cultural balance had begun. Around 1900 women began to appear in theatres with voluminous head adornments, decorative combs, hair grips and highly ornate fans along Japanese lines. These objects were obviously influenced by oriental theatre, ballet and operetta.

* * *

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