

月百姿 A hundred moons in Sydney

One hundred aspects of the moon is the last series of *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints by **Tsukioka Yoshitoshi** (1839-92). It is generally considered to be the artist's masterpiece. The Art Gallery of New South Wales has the complete series in its collection and it will be shown in its entirety for the first time from **20 August to 20 November 2016**.

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, known as Yoshitoshi, was active during the last years of the Edo Shogunate and the first of the Meiji Period a time when Japan eagerly embraced Western technology. At first Yoshitoshi was

of his more gruesome early works with their splatters of blood. It was for these works that Yoshitoshi was first known during his lifetime. However, it seems that public taste changed and he stopped receiving commissions. His profile rose again thanks to newspapers. Newspaper circulation boomed in the 1870s and 80s, and this increased the demand for woodblock print artists who worked as illustrators.

The prints that make up *One hundred aspects of the moon* certainly tell a story, from action packed to contemplative. Designed over the last seven years of Yoshitoshi's life from 1885 to 1892, *One hundred aspects of the moon* draws inspiration from Chinese and

Dawn moon and the tumbling snow— Kobayashi Heihachiro

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, *One hundred aspects of the moon*, 1885-1892

Moon of pure snow at Asano River—Chikako, the filial daughter

among those keen to adopt Western techniques in art, but he came to reject them and return to Japanese art forms, in particular, *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints.

In fact, Yoshitoshi is regarded as the major *ukiyo-e* artist of the early Meiji Period, the last great exponent of the art form which was to quickly decline after his death. Looking back at his work, modern eyes see the origins of manga and anime, particularly in some

Japanese legends and history, literature, theatre and folklore. The moon looms large in some works; in others its absence is the point.

It is not necessary to know the story being portrayed in each *ukiyo-e* print to enjoy them. Let your own imagination respond to the scenes the prints portray. Who or what is the samurai aiming at in the image above left? Is he winning or losing? Who is the young

woman desperately trying to avoid in the print below? Or is she even fleeing?

If the thought of seeing all one hundred aspects of the moon in one go is a little overwhelming, don't worry. **Tsukioka Yoshitoshi: One hundred aspects of the moon** is a free exhibition, so you can visit as often as you want.

www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au



Beyond words:
calligraphic traditions of Asia
will also be on at the Gallery from
27 August to April 2017.

Kumamoto Earthquake

On 14 April, a 6.5 magnitude earthquake hit Kumamoto prefecture on the island of Kyushu in southern Japan. This was followed by tremors and on 16 April by a stronger 7.3 quake, later declared to be the main seismic event. Neighbouring Oita prefecture was also affected. Forty-nine people lost their lives in the disaster and many were made homeless. Significant infrastructure damage was incurred, but major transportation routes have now been rebuilt.

Donations via the Consulate closed on 30 June. Contributions can be made to the Kumamoto Prefectural Government until 31 March 2017.