

MAGINEL AND THE JAPANESE PRINT

GRADE: 9-12**TIME:** Two 1-hour sessions

In this lesson, students will learn about the popularity of Japanese art in the United States and Western Hemisphere after the end of the Edo period in the 1800s. Students will learn about the artistic qualities common in Japanese art, by looking at Utagawa Hiroshige's iconic woodblock prints. Students will compare Hiroshige's artwork to illustrations by Maginel Wright Barney, Frank Lloyd Wright's sister. After photographing a scene from daily life, students will sketch their own Japanese-inspired print.

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Visual Arts, Social Studies**OBJECTIVES****MATERIALS | RESOURCES**

Tracing paper
Colored pencils
Pencils
Erasers
Access to cameras/phones
Access to printer
Access to internet devices
Images of Hiroshige's Japanese prints
(Appendix A)
Artistic Qualities note-taking sheet
(Appendix B)
Images of Maginel Wright Barney's
illustrations (Appendix C)
Compare and Contrast sheet (Appendix D)

1. Understand that Japanese art hugely influenced artists across the globe in the latter 1800s.
2. Identify what artistic qualities are found in Japanese ukiyo-e prints.
3. Compare and contrast the artistic qualities in Utagawa Hiroshige's prints and Maginel Wright Barney's illustrations.
4. Create a sketch inspired by Japanese prints.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How were artists in the late nineteenth century inspired by Japanese art?
2. What artistic qualities do the works of Maginel Wright Barney and Utagawa Hiroshige share?
3. What artistic qualities can an artist include in their work so that their art captures the essence of Japanese print?

LESSON PROCEDURE

EXPLORE

Session One

- Gauge your student's prior knowledge by asking them what they know about Japanese art and what artistic qualities are common in Japanese prints.
- Explain to students that interest in Japan art and culture boomed in the latter half of the 1800s in the United States and the Western Hemisphere.
- Provide students with 10-15 minutes to research the rising popularity of Japanese art in the 1800s, on personal devices or computers. Pose the following questions to guide students' research time:
 - ◊ What significant event in Japanese nineteenth century history expanded Japan's influence internationally?
 - ◊ Who are some of the artists who were heavily influenced by Japanese art in the late 1800s?
- As a whole class, discuss students' findings. Explain that Japanese leadership chose for Japan to be isolated from 1603 to 1867, called the Edo period. Japan did not trade with other countries and citizens were not allowed to travel in or out. When the Edo period ended, the Meiji Restoration took place, and a fascination with Japanese art and culture swept the West by storm.
- Play a short clip from the Asian Art Museum (it references a past exhibit, but contains helpful visual comparisons, showing Japanese influence in American art). <https://youtu.be/4oD9pB8ObVg?si=N3tKbbwYY4EHwCTH&t=1>
- After watching, ask students to identify visual art qualities they noticed in Japanese art and the American artwork inspired by them.

ENGAGE

Session One

- Distribute examples of Utagawa Hiroshige's ukiyo-e woodblock prints, letting students know that Hiroshige is internationally recognized as one of the great master printmakers (Appendix A).
- Distribute Artistic Qualities note-taking sheet (Appendix B) for students. Instruct students to jot down observations of different kinds of artistic qualities they observe in Hiroshige's artwork: subject, color, composition, frame, perspective (flat, linear, atmospheric) and line. Encourage students to look at all of the images of artwork they have been provided with and to look for commonalities, as they take notes. Students may work as individuals or in pairs/small groups.
- Meeting back as a whole class, facilitate a discussion, asking students to share aloud their observations regarding each artistic quality.
- Next, explain that Frank Lloyd Wright was heavily inspired by Japanese prints and Japanese architecture as he began his career as an architect. He was profoundly inspired by seeing Phoenix Hall, a replica of the Ho-o-den temple built in Jackson Park at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. For more information about Wright's interest in Japanese art in its historical context, visit: <https://www.wrightsjapan1905.org/japan-timeline/>
- Wright's sister, Maginel Wright Barney, also took interest in Japanese art in her prolific career as a children's book illustrator. Maginel was close to Wright and lived nearby when Wright's fascination and collection of Japanese prints began.
- Distribute images of Maginel's illustrations from "Flower Fairies" "Forest Fairies," which were both published in 1915 and "When little thoughts go rhyming," published in 1916 (Appendix C). Ask students to compare and contrast the artistic qualities in Hiroshige's prints and Maginel's illustrations using a compare/contrast sheet (Appendix D). Provide time individually or in pairs for students to write down their observations.
- As a whole class, direct students to share the similarities and differences they noticed between the art qualities of Hiroshige and Maginel's artwork.

LESSON PROCEDURE

(continued)

- Explain that both artists' work captures scenes and landscapes from daily life. Although some of Maginel's selected works feature fictionalized fairies, they still have a focus on nature and unassuming characters.
- Provide time for students to consider beautiful everyday scenes they see in their daily life. Ask: *Where do they see beauty in the mundane?* If there is time, discuss this question as a class or direct students to independently journal their answers to this question. Provide time for students to independently take pictures of beautiful scenes from their daily life, or assign it as an independent homework assignment.
- Tell students that they will use one photograph they take as a basis for their sketch in Session Two. Instruct students to print their chosen photograph and bring it to Session Two of the lesson (or provide time for students to print their photograph at school in between Session One and Session Two).

DESIGN

Session Two

- Begin Session Two by reviewing the qualities of Japanese prints as discussed in Session One.
- Distribute a sheet of tracing paper to each student. Instruct students to trace over their photograph with a pencil, but only keep its major elements. Students may add and erase elements as they see fit. Let students know that their goal is for their sketch to look like a Japanese print, so encourage students to consult their notes from Session One and to think about what elements help the composition feel balanced.
- Ask students to consider how the subject of their print is framed within their art.
 - ◊ Remind students to revisit Hiroshige's art as necessary to see what everyday objects and nature create a frame within the print. Explain to students that sometimes Japanese prints have permeable frames, where the frame isn't a perfect rectangle. Nature or objects can peek inside the frame or stretch out from the print past the frame.
 - ◊ Additionally, Japanese prints are sometimes framed with a banner or cartouche, that contains text describing the print. Students may optionally add a cartouche to frame their work.
- After students are satisfied with their print, instruct students to add color using colored pencils. Remind students to revisit Hiroshige's art as necessary. Require students to integrate gradient color in at least one piece of their art, since that is often found in Japanese prints.
 - ◊ Tip: Refer students to look back at "A Red Plum Branch against the Summer Moon" and "A View of Tsukuda Island from Eitai Bridge" as exemplary uses of gradient color.

CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

Session Two

- Direct students to look at their art. It is often said that Japanese prints can be turned upside and still be just as beautiful, because of their balanced composition. Encourage your students to pick up their art and rotate it, and to see if it continues to feel like a balanced composition, even when facing other directions. Ask:
 - ◊ Does the combination of filled/empty space feel balanced?
 - ◊ Do the lines feel well placed?
 - ◊ Do the objects that "frame" your art still feel well placed?
- Display students' artwork next to the photograph which inspired their art (display formally, or at desks around the room). Provide time for students to view each other's finished sketches. Afterwards, encourage students to share aloud some of the artistic choices they saw their classmates take so that their sketches resemble Japanese prints. Once again, discuss each artistic quality (subject, color, composition, frame, perspective and line) and direct students to share exemplary use of each quality they saw within their classmates' artwork.

Appendix A

Utagawa Hiroshige's Prints



A Cuckoo Against the Moon



Bush warbler on a plum branch



A Red Plum against the Summer Moon



Kanbara



Bush warbler and Camellia



First Cuckoo of the Year at Tsukuda Island



Cuckoo, Pine Branch,
and Full Moon



Hanging Lanterns



Iris



Morning Glories and
Cricket



View of Tsukuda Island
from Eitai Bridge



Autumn Grass
and Full Moon



Sparrows and
Camellia in Snow

Artistic Qualities in Utagawa Hiroshige's Prints

Artistic Quality	Observations
Subject What is the artwork's main focus? A person, place or thing?	
Color Are the colors warm/cool, bright/neutral, solid/gradient?	
Composition Is there symmetry/asymmetry, balance, rhythm, empty/filled spaces?	
Frame What shape is the artwork? Are there features in the artwork that frame the subject? Is there a banner/cartouche?	
Perspective Is the artwork shown from a flat, linear, atmospheric, or other kind of perspective?	
Line Are the main lines vertical, horizontal, diagonal, straight or curved?	
Other What other observations do you have?	

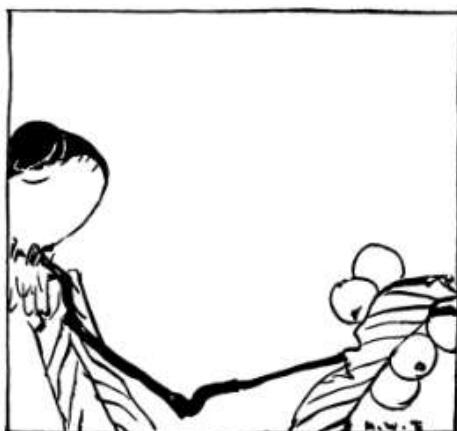
Maginel Wright's Illustrations



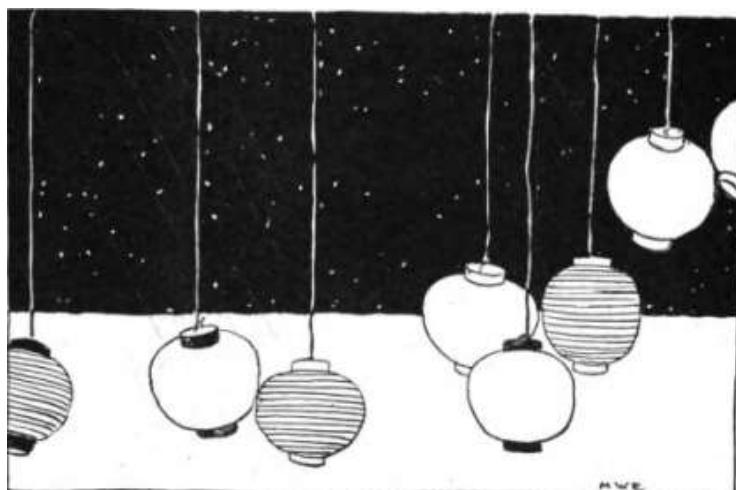
A Problem



Isn't like new flower



A True Friend

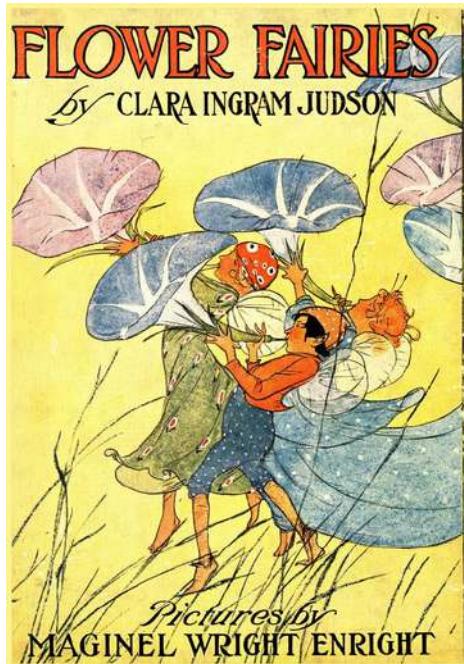


The Sensitive Sun

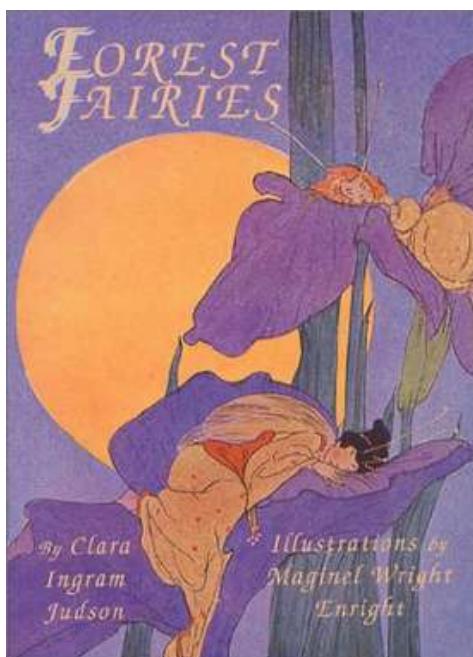


A Red Bird and
the Crystal Queen

Appendix C cont.



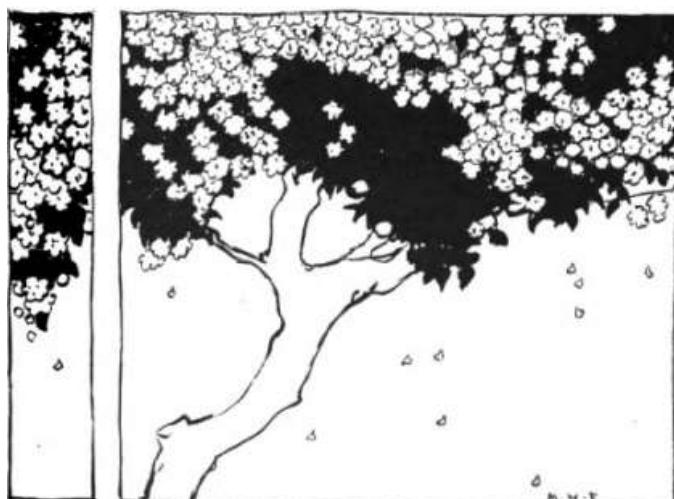
"Flower Fairies" Cover



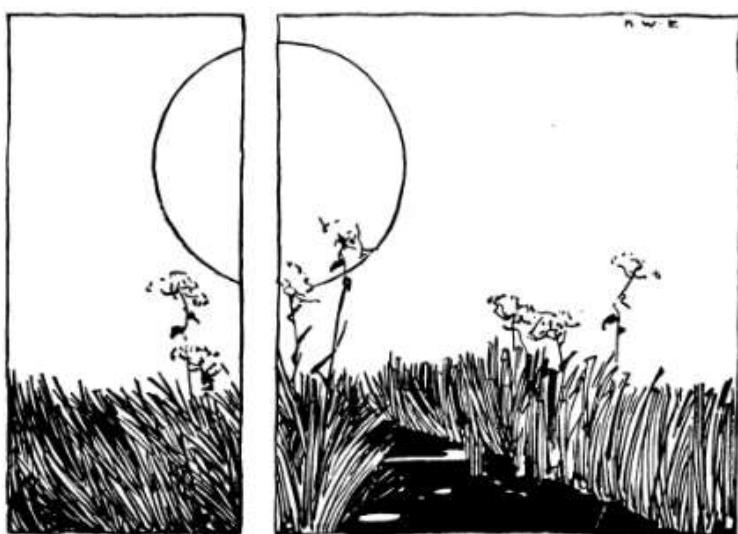
"Forest Fairies" Cover



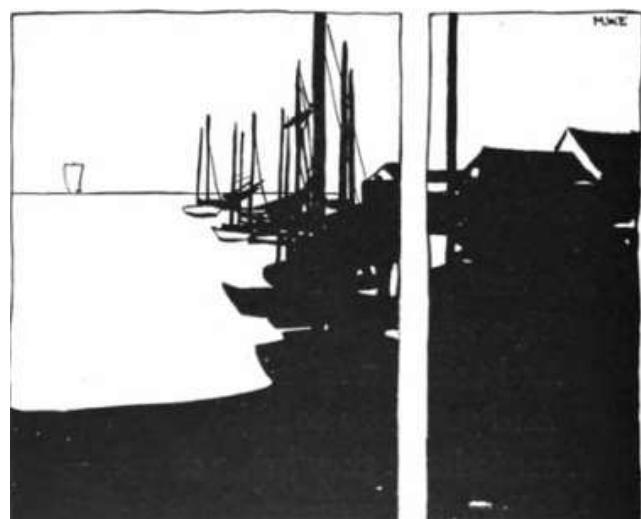
Tiny snowballs



My Tea



My Grass Band



My Ships

Compare and Contrast

List the similarities and differences between Utagawa Hiroshige's prints and Maginel Wright Barney's illustrations below.

Similarities		Differences
	Subject	
	Color	
	Composition	
	Frame	
	Perspective	
	Line	
	Other	

IMAGE SOURCES**Appendix A: Images of Hiroshige's Japanese prints****• Image Sources:****• The Art Institute of Chicago**

- ◊ A Cuckoo Against the Moon
- ◊ A Red Plum Branch against the Summer Moon
- ◊ Bush warbler and Camellia
- ◊ Bush warbler on a plum branch
- ◊ Cuckoo, Pine Branch, and Full Moon
- ◊ First Cuckoo of the Year at Tsukuda Island
- ◊ Iris
- ◊ Kanbara – Evening Snow
- ◊ Kanbara
- ◊ Sparrows and Camellia in Snow
- ◊ View of Tsukuda Island from Eitai Bridge

• Brooklyn Museum

- ◊ Autumn Grass and Full Moon

• Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

- ◊ Hanging lanterns
- ◊ Morning Glories and Cricket

Appendix C: Images of Maginel Wright Barney's illustrations**• Image Sources:****• "When Little Thoughts go Rhyming," authored by Elizabeth Knobel, illustrated by Maginel Wright Barney (accessed via HathiTrust Digital Library)**

- ◊ "The Sensitive Sun," pg. 15
- ◊ "My Ships," pg. 52
- ◊ "A True Friend," pg. 70
- ◊ "My Tea," pg. 79
- ◊ "A Problem," pg. 87
- ◊ "My Grass Band," pg. 89

• "Flower Fairies," authored by Clara Ingram Judson, illustrated by Maginel Wright Barney (accessed via Wikimedia Commons and Library of Congress)

- ◊ "Flower Fairies" Cover Art, cover
- ◊ "It isn't one bit like the new flower," Chapter: Fire, pg. 53
- ◊ "A beautiful red bird flew down from the tree, and on his back rode the Crystal Queen," Chapter: Morning Glory Trumpets, pg. 63
- ◊ "They built the sides of the tiny snowballs rolled hard and laid together like bricks," Chapter: Springtime, pg. 75

• "Forest Fairies", authored by Clara Ingram Judson, illustrated by Maginel Wright Barney (image found on abebooks.com)

- ◊ "Forest Fairies," Cover Art, cover