

艺术界

LEAP



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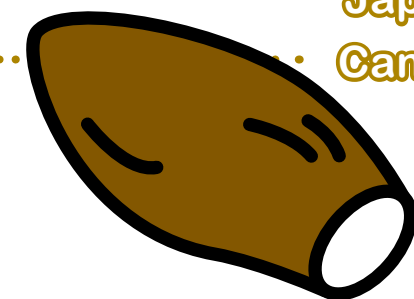
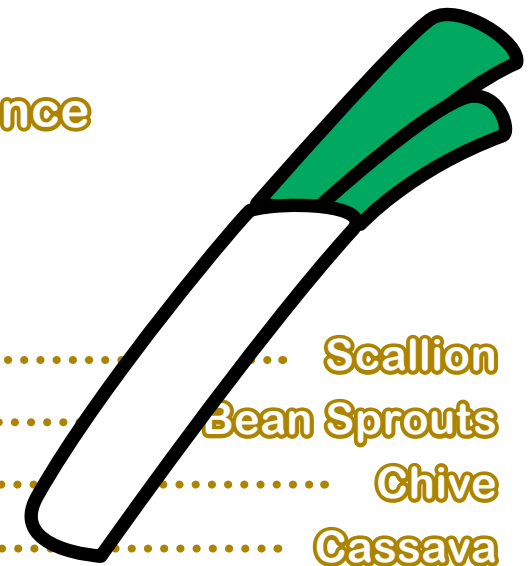
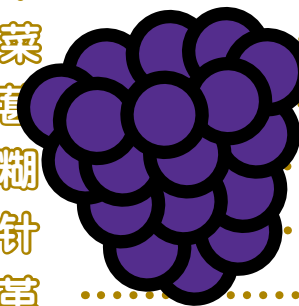
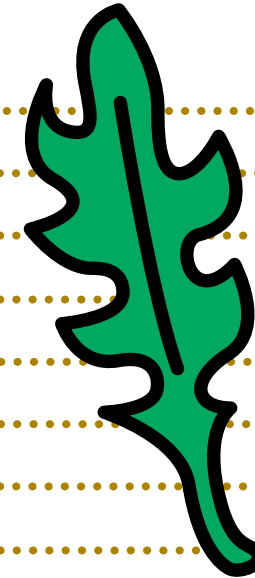
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加拿大一枝黄花	Canadian Goldenrod





葛饰北斋，《万物会本大全图》（内页），1820s-1840s Painted paper, 10.5 cm x 15.2 cm, The British Museum Collection

葛饰北斋：浮世浪荡子 Katsushika Hokusai: Flâneur of the Floating World

76 boho

“美啊，巨大、恐怖而又淳朴的妖魔！”
“O Beauty! Huge, fearful, ingenuous monster!”

—— 波德莱尔, 《恶之花》, 1861 年
Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*, 1861¹

浮世绘画家葛饰北斋只在乎美。他对美的在乎完全体现在他的浮世绘作品中。这种美是浪荡子美学的杰作，是他“毁灭平凡的需要”。

1760 年，北斋出生于江户（今东京）下町。一生中，他很少离开江户，而这座城市塑造了他对美的意识。江户时期拥有着被称作“近世”的城市社会，而江户是一座以巨大消费为傲的都市，繁华程度堪比巴黎。依托着高达百万的人口，江户在一些西方学者眼中甚至称得上现代城市。《续江户往来》记载：“市中工商业栋宇相连”。各色流动小贩带着行头走动，卖烟的、卖小吃的、卖发髻的……在商业中心日本桥，每天有数十艘至百余艘运输船停泊桥下。

江户的另一重写照是“浮世”（floating world），在日本佛教中指充满忧虑的现世。漫长的 260 多年见证了内战与自然灾害的交替发生，而经济繁荣的表象下，江户人的生活是浮动而不安定的。不愿费心处理琐事的北斋生活尤其动荡，每当不堪室内杂乱，他便会搬家。在 93 次搬家中，他还经历了频频缺钱的困窘、两任妻子的离世以及帮孙子还债等坎坷之事。这样的近世里，及时行乐成了最流行的生活观念，上至大名（即地方领主），下至平民，人人活在随时会醒来、随时会沉沦的梦中。武士们在花柳巷吉原大笔挥霍钱财，以“江户儿”自称的匠人们标榜着“钱不过夜，花完了事”。

18、19 世纪欧洲纨绔子弟的生活方式与近世的生活观念有着微妙的共通。他们有闲有钱，看重打扮时髦，人生除了追求快乐别无他事。这种追求在文学上被称为“浪荡”，纨绔子弟相应地被叫做浪荡子（flâneur）。浪

Katsushika Hokusai is all about beauty. His obsession with beauty is fully manifested in his Ukiyo-e works. A masterpiece of the flâneur aesthetic, this beauty represents his “need to destroy triviality.”

Hokusai was born in the Shimomachi district of Edo (now Tokyo) in 1760. He rarely left the city, and in a way it was Edo that shaped his notion of beauty.

The Edo period saw the development of an “early modern” urban society, and the city of Edo, almost as prosperous as Paris, was a metropolis that prided itself on its consumerism. Having amassed nearly one million in population, Edo is even considered a modern city by some Western scholars. According to *The Sequel to Edo Streets (Zoku Edo Ora)* published in 1755, “commercial and industrial buildings link up.” Peddlers of all kinds roamed around carrying their belongings, selling cigarettes, snacks, and chignon hairpieces. Every day, dozens to hundreds of cargo ships moored under the bridge of Nihonbashi, the city’s commercial hub.

The mirror image of Edo is that of the “floating world” (Ukiyo). In Zen Buddhism, the term denotes the fretful, secular world. Civil wars and natural disasters were regular visitors during the 260 years of the Edo period; under the surface of economic prosperity, the lives of Edo citizens were unstable and floating. Hokusai, who had little patience for trivialities, lived a particularly turbulent life. Whenever he became fed up with the mess in his house, he moved home. A variety of adversities had accompanied his total of 93 moves, including

荡子这一概念在文艺界受到了极大关注。克劳德·莫奈等印象派画家将浪荡子直接与中产阶级对等:在《蛙塘》(La Grenouillère, 1869)中,水疗度假胜地里享乐的中产阶级身处长廊和湖中小岛,穿着优质服装,身姿笔挺,悠闲地四处张望。同一时期,印在瓷器、茶叶包装上的日本浮世绘传入欧洲,印象派画家之间兴起了临摹北斋等人画作的风潮,但那时北斋已去世数年,没有人会想到北斋也是个浪荡子。

浪荡子在诗人波德莱尔笔下被描述为巴黎的游荡者、闲逛者。在其著名诗集《恶之花》中,诗人以浪荡子的视角看待并讲述他的所到之地。1852年,巴黎进行了以街道为基础的城市翻新,高大而坚实的建筑构造了浪荡子的漫游场地。德国哲学家本雅明称,对于浪荡子来说,城市时而幻化成风景,时而幻化成房屋。²浪荡子尤其喜欢在拱廊下游荡——大理石拱廊是街道和室内的交接处,作为庇护闲暇的场所,布满出售各色商品的商店,由此成为浪荡子无所事事时可以品鉴、寻求新鲜感的空间,也是最重要的观看对象。

不同于欧洲先有街区的城市规划理念,在历来重视室内空间的日本,人们先是建造房屋,随后街道自然形成。在江户,房屋从来不是稳固的象征。历史上,江户一共经历了九十多起火灾。江户人眼中的火是美的,是巨大、恐怖而又淳朴的妖魔,被形容为“江户之花”。在妖魔时常造访的下町,平民居住的长屋和商铺一夜之间就能化为灰烬。次日,人们用轻便的木材重建房屋,继续生活。

或许出于这样的原因,日本浮世绘画师和巴黎画家的描绘重心完全不同。建筑是巴黎画家喜爱的绘画主题,而大多数浮世绘很少以建筑为主,更多着眼人物和自然风景。两地画家对画中人的观看对象也有着不同的理解。古斯塔夫·卡耶博特(Gustave Caillebotte)的《巴黎街,雨天》(Paris Street; Rainy Day, 1877)中,街道上的中产阶级撑着伞漫步雨中,他们将目光投向被雨水冲刷得发亮的石砖和街边楼群。而在以北斋的《江户日本桥》为代表的浮世绘中,画面上江岸两排建筑向远延伸,视线交集点却最终停留于水天一色的风光。短命的建筑抑或消费现象并非江户人的主要观看对象。相比之下,他们更愿意将目光投向具体的人,以及街道远处象征神圣的富士山。

波德莱尔说:“现代性是短暂的、飞逝的、偶然的;

frequent shortages of money, the passing of his two wives, and his grandsons’ debt issues.

In this premodern world, “Carpe Diem” had become the go-to lifestyle. From Daimyo (feudal lords) to civilians, everyone lived in a dream that was both alluring and brittle. Samurai squandered their money in the pleasure quarter of Yoshiwara; artisans, who called themselves the “Edokko” (child of Edo), lived by the motto “no money should stay overnight; just have it spent.”

The premodern lifestyle shares a curious similarity to that of the dandies from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. They enjoyed the leisure of time and money, obsessing with fashion. There was nothing else in their life except happiness. They and their pursuits have become a literary type: the flâneur.

The figure of the flâneur attracted massive attention from the literary and art worlds. Impressionist artists such as Claude Monet directly equated the flâneur with the bourgeoisie. His painting *Bain à la Grenouillère* (1869) depicts a group of middle-class vacationers at a spa resort, lounging about on the promenade and the floating café on the lake. Finely dressed and well-poised, they idly glance around at their surroundings. Around the same period, Ukiyo-e art, printed on porcelain and tea packaging, entered Europe, introducing a trend among Impressionists to study and emulate the works by Hokusai and others. Hokusai was long dead by then, and no one had considered that he too was a flâneur.

According to the French poet Charles Baudelaire, flâneurs were the strollers and saunterers of Paris, existing in a close relationship with the Parisian cityscape. In his famous poetry collection *Les Fleurs du Mal*, the poet observes and portrays every inch of land he visited, like a flâneur.

In 1852 Paris underwent an urban renovation that treated the streets as the basic units and resulted in the building of a tall and solid architecture, a roving arena for the flâneurs. In the words of German philosopher Walter Benjamin, the city was transformed into a phantasmagoria for its strollers, appearing at times as a landscape, at other times a room.² They particularly enjoyed wandering under the city’s arcades. Linking up streets and interior spaces, these marble structures were a shelter for leisure and a vibrant



克劳德·莫奈,《蛙塘》,1869年,油画,73.7 x 99 厘米,现藏大都会艺术博物馆
Claude Monet, *Bain à la Grenouillère*, 1869, oil painting, 73.7 x 99 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection

它构成艺术的一半, 艺术的另一半是永恒的, 稳定的。”³ 在世事无常的江户, 浮世绘是在捕捉“片刻中的永恒”和“历史中的诗意”, 这两个目的在研究现代主义的学者克里斯托弗·巴特勒 (Christopher Butler) 看来, 也是浪荡子的目的。

“对于一个十足的漫游者、热情的观察者来说, 生活在芸芸众生之中, 在变动不居、熙来攘往、短暂和永恒之中, 是一种巨大的愉悦。”在《现代生活的画家》中, 波德莱尔这样写道。⁴ 浮世绘画家需要不断观看才能创作大量素材丰富的作品。北斋比其他同行的创作都要勤奋, 毕生共留有三万四千幅画稿。他对事物的好奇心强烈到其作品主题几乎要囊括世间万物。我们可以想象, 他曾在下町区游历, 反复在街道上行走, 在人群中观察, 在多地欣赏富士山。

marketplace. The arcades were their most important object of observation, where they would seek and taste a sense of freshness when they had nothing to do.

While Europe predicates its urban design on the existence of streets, Japan has a tradition of prioritizing indoor spaces. Houses are built first, with which neighborhoods naturally emerge. In Edo, houses were never a symbol of stability. Throughout its history, the city suffered over 90 fire disasters. In the eyes of the natives, fire was a beautiful thing. It was a “huge, fearful, ingenuous monster,” described as “the flowers of Edo.” This monster had visited Shimomachi often, burning down nagayas and stores overnight. The following day, people would rebuild their homes with light wood and go on with their lives.

北斋的生命中体现着“粹”的动态转化。他用浮世绘呈现“粹”，《风流七韵癖》（1798）中能见到媚态横生的女性举止：她们大多施淡妆，嘴唇轻张，松弛的和服里微微探出白皙的脖颈，带有魅惑的神色。而北斋画风景时擅用的冷色调，如哲学家九鬼周造所言，有“一种伴有华丽体验的消极余韵”。

对于浪荡子而言, 再平凡的事物也能使他从游荡和观看中获得乐趣。北斋在作品中便传达了这样一种浪荡子的悠闲, 画风流露着幽默感。《北斋漫画》中, 北斋想象着画出武士们滑稽的姿态：武士看起来不再令人生畏, 不过是舞台上逗乐大众的小丑。他对执政者叛逆和反对的野心也从中体现。

浮世绘是映照浮世之梦的镜子。七十岁前, 葛饰北斋的主要收入都源自应出版商的要求绘制浮世绘。这种小木版画两碗拉面的钱就能买到；最受大众欢迎的浮世绘题材全与享乐有关, 能使人见识到歌舞伎的华丽穿着、花魁的媚态、江户美景和神秘的春宫图。

在朝着机械时代发展的巴黎, 享乐是中产阶级特有的权利, 只为安稳增添色彩。而在浮动无常的江户, 人人都意图在灾难降临前尽可能享受人生的美好, 享乐成为一种默认的实用主义。有着门派从属的浮世绘画师收入稳定, 过着安逸的生活；自由职业者北斋则将浮世绘卖给江户众多的享乐主义者, 自己过着极其清简的日子。饭岛虚心的《葛饰北斋传》考据, 北斋每天为了工作起早贪黑, 不去吉原消遣, 讨厌抽烟, 平日只喝粗茶和面汤。对北斋而言, 毕生追求画画进步是最重要的事。祖辈为江户人的当代漫画家杉浦日向子曾表示, 无用的讲究正是“潇洒的本质”。由此看来, 北斋讲究的不是江户意义上的“实用性”。

潇洒便是北斋的本性, 也是江户审美意识“粹”的表现之一。“粹”最初指吉原区与异性交往的媚态, 后来演变为江户人推崇的英雄气概, 以及痛快、潇洒的人生心境。消防员在寒冬里只穿一双白袜, 裹一件披风就去救火, 是江户人的豪气。自知浮生若梦的处境, 尽管前程令人忧郁却会淡然接受, 是日式的达观。

北斋的生命中体现着“粹”的动态转化。他用浮世绘呈现“粹”, 《风流七韵癖》(1798) 中能见到媚态横生的女性举止：她们大多施淡妆, 嘴唇轻张, 松弛的和服里微微探出白皙的脖颈, 带有魅惑的神色。而北斋画风景时擅用的冷色调, 如哲学家九鬼周造所言, 有“一种伴有华丽体验的消极余韵”。⁵ 《富岳三十六景》(1831-1834) 的每一幅画作都运用了蓝绿色系, 透露着洗练和平静。富士山在蓝色的描绘下神圣而肃穆, 却也像是观者无法逃避的幻象。

现实里, “粹”内化为北斋的生活方式。1839 年, 北斋家里起火, 他抓起手边的画笔跳窗而逃。找到新家

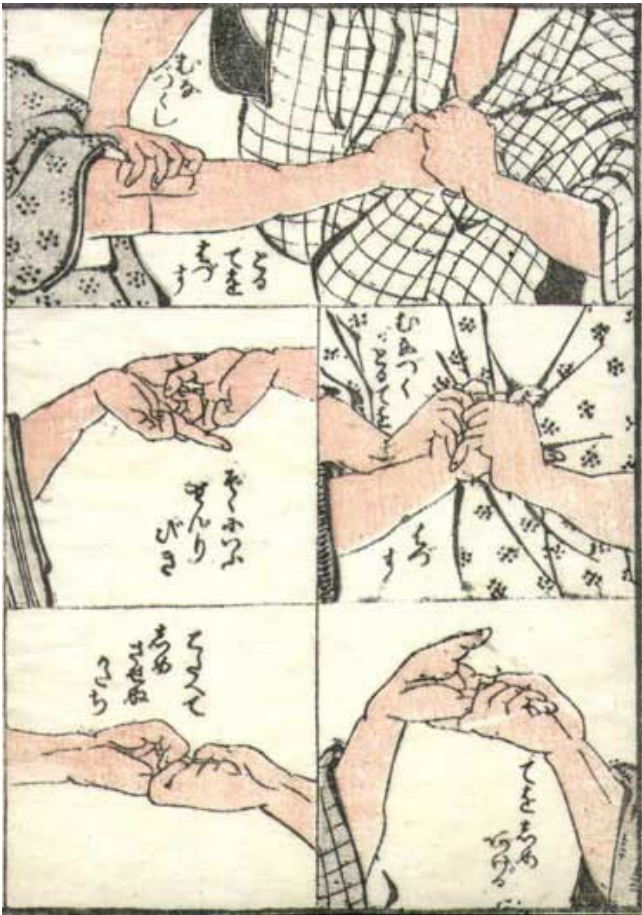
This contrast is likely one of the reasons for the different subject matters of Japanese Ukiyo-e artists and European painters. Parisian artists were fond of painting architecture, while in Ukiyo-e, buildings were rarely seen, and the focus was instead on figures and landscapes. The two groups also demonstrated divergent views on the objects being gazed upon by the painted figures. For example, in Gustave Caillebotte's *Paris Street; Rainy Day* (1877), middle-class pedestrians stroll in the rain with their umbrellas open, the stone bricks and streetside buildings polished by the shower. Whereas in *Nihonbashi in Edo* (c. 1830-32) by Hokusai, an exemplar of the Ukiyo-e genre, two rows of architecture by the riverbank stretch far into the background, intersecting at a vanishing point where the water blends with the sky. Edo dwellers were looking at neither the short-lived architecture nor the bustling, consumerist cityscape. Instead, they preferred directing their gazes at the actual people and the divine Mount Fuji, sitting at the far end of the streets.

“By ‘modernity’ I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable,” writes Baudelaire in his essay “The Painter of Modern Life.”³ In Edo, where nothing was permanent, Ukiyo-e aimed to capture “the eternal from transitory” and “the poetic in the historic.” For Christopher Butler, a scholar on modernism, these two purposes serve the flâneurs, too.

“For the perfect flâneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite,” Baudelaire continues.⁴ For Ukiyo-e artists, it took constant looking to be able to produce a multitude of works rich in references. More industrious than his peers, Hokusai left a total of 34,000 works in his lifetime. He similarly held a more curious mind, aspiring to encapsulate the entire world in his subjects. We could imagine him roaming about the Shimomachi district, strolling its street, observing the crowds, and admiring Mount Fuji at many locations.

In strolling and looking, the flâneurs find pleasure in even the most ordinary of things. Hokusai's art conveys a flâneurial idleness, his style exuding a sense of humor. In *Hokusai Manga* (1840),

Hokusai's life exemplifies the dynamic unfolding of iki, expressed through his Ukiyo-e works. The series *Seven Fashionable Useless Habits* (1798) portrays the demeanors that embody the seductive, feminine beauty, in which women usually wear light make-up, their lips subtly parting. Loosely tied kimonos reveal their pale, alluring necks.



葛饰北斋,《北斋漫画》(内页), 1814 年, 木板刻印彩色折绘本
Katsushika Hokusai, *Hokusai Manga*, 1814
Wood block prints

mechanical age, pleasure was a privilege enjoyed by the bourgeoisie, an embellishment on top of the tranquil life. While in the ever-floating, ever-changing Edo, everyone seized every instant of pleasure they could. Pleasure was by default a form of practicality, a way to indulge in the best of life before disasters dawned. The Ukiyo-e artists who belonged to various schools received stable incomes and lived comfortably. Hokusai chose to freelance, and while selling works to the hedonists of Edo, he led an extremely frugal life himself. According to the *Biography of Katsushika Hokusai*, penned by Iijima Kyoshin, Hokusai burned the candle at both ends for work every day. He never visited Yoshiwara for pastime, hated smoking, and only drank bancha tea and noodle broth. For Hokusai, devoting his life to polishing his art was the utmost priority. It seems that Hokusai was concerned not with practicality, but with what is beyond it. Contemporary manga artist Hinako Sugiura, who came from a family of Edokko, once claimed that in the preoccupation with futility, there is the “essence of blitheness.” Blitheness is, then, the essence of Hokusai.

The blithe spirit manifests the iki aesthetic, which prevailed in Edo. Initially describing the bewitching charm of Yoshiwara women during dates, iki has later evolved into a form of heroism honored by the people of Edo and a carefree state of mind. The heroic virtue of Edo is encapsulated in the image of a firefighter in winter, who would dash out to put out a fire in just a pair of white socks and a cloak. In the sober awareness that life is but a fleeting dream and the peaceful acceptance of the bleakness of the future, there is the Japanese philosophy of Zen.

Hokusai's life exemplifies the dynamic unfolding of iki, expressed through his Ukiyo-e works. The series *Seven Fashionable Useless Habits* (1798) portrays the demeanors that embody the seductive, feminine beauty, in which women usually wear light make-up, their lips subtly parting. Loosely tied kimonos reveal their pale, alluring necks. Hokusai's landscapes show his mastery of cool tones. As philosopher Kuki Shuzo argues, cool colors “offer inactive afterimages that accompany a luscious experience.”⁵ Blue and green colors dominate the prints in the “Thirty-six Views of

后, 他捡起地上的碎瓦片接着画了起来。九鬼周造认为“粹”和西方的“纨绔主义”(Dandyism)有着相似的构造。波德莱尔曾说纨绔主义浪荡子精神是“各个颓废时代中的最后一缕英雄主义光芒”⁶, 这与“粹”的豪气不谋而合。

北斋不仅推崇“粹”, 而且推崇英雄主义。这一点体现在他的阅读爱好上。《水浒传》和《西游记》这两部明清小说自他年少给租书屋打工起伴随了他的大半生。他曾为两部小说绘制大量插画, 印成《绘本西游记》《新编水浒画传》, 也曾为小说家曲亭马琴改编的本地化《水浒传》做插画师。从北斋六十岁创作的《万物绘本大全图》中能看出, 他知晓各种中国和印度传说, 以此为题材创作的小开本插图多数都透露着英雄力量与智慧, 如画作《伍子胥举千斤顶》和《后羿射箭》, 集中展现人体动用

the artist caricatures the image of the samurai. Having lost their daunting position, the samurai is but an amusing clown on a stage, the depiction of whom also reveals Hokusai's ambition to rebel against those in power.

Before reaching 70 years of age, Hokusai's main source of income had been the publishers' commissions for his Ukiyo-e works. Mirroring the dream of the floating world, small Ukiyo-e woodblock prints were no more than the price of two bowls of ramen. The most popular Ukiyo-e subjects were all concerned with pleasure, depicting the magnificent costumes of the kabuki, the enchanting beauty of the oiran, the splendid scenery of Edo, and the clandestine eroticism, as seen in the genre of Shunga.

In Paris, as the city marched toward the

力量的姿态以及英雄的从容不迫。

北斋本人也是英雄主义的践行者。从他决定自立门户起, 他便开始了与贫穷的终身斗争; 他曾在手头拮据时沿街叫卖辣椒和挂历, 晚年一度靠邻居救济的大米度日。同时他不肯降低画作开价, 也在绘画和印刷细节上经常与合作者或出版商起争执。小说家曲亭马琴曾在书信中抱怨北斋画稿要价高而且花钱很快——不知道都花到哪里去了。

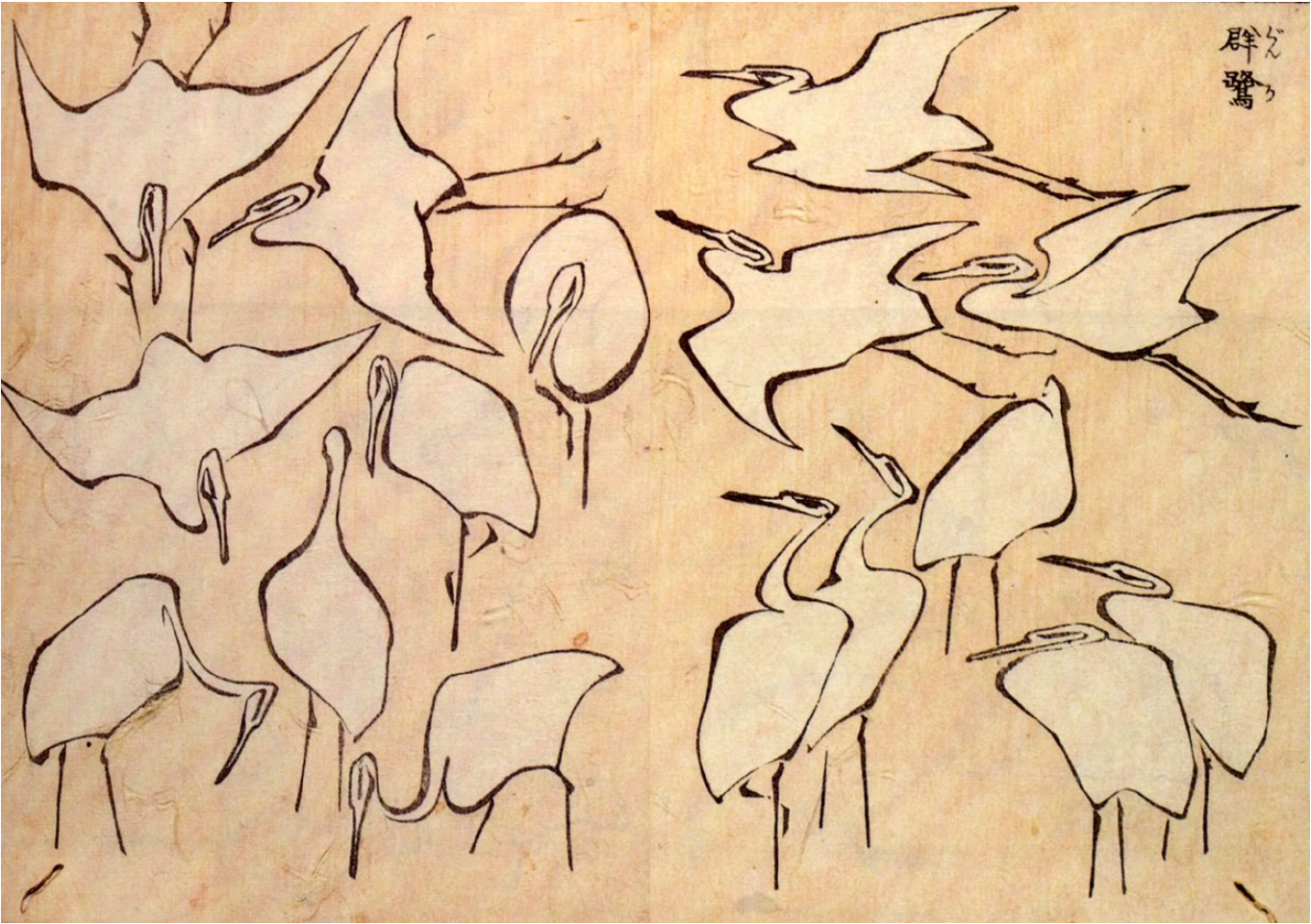
七十四岁时, 北斋越发肯定了自身的英雄主义。他在出版的《富岳百景》的跋文中写道: “余自六岁嗜摹写, 年五十画作已多面世。念七十岁前所作之画无足取者。及七十三, 方悟通鸟兽鱼虫之骨骼, 草木生长之态。年八十愈有进步。至九十则须穷究其奥妙。百岁方能得心应手。百一十岁则所画之物皆栩栩如生矣。但愿余能



葛饰北斋,《江戸日本桥》,“富岳三十六景”系列,1830-1832年,25.2 x 37.5 厘米,现藏大都会艺术博物馆
 Katsushika Hokusai, *Nihonbashi in Edo* (Edo Nihonbashi), from the series “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (Fugaku sanjūrokkei),” ca.1830-1832, 25.2 x 37.5 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection



葛饰北斋,《东海道程谷》,“富岳三十六景”系列,1830-1832年,25.2 x 37.5 厘米,现藏大都会艺术博物馆
 Katsushika Hokusai, *Hodogaya on the Tōkaidō* (Tōkaidō Hodogaya), from the series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (Fugaku sanjūrokkei),” ca.1830-1832, 25.2 x 37.5 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection



葛饰北斋，《群鹭》，收录于《传神开手，一笔画谱》，1823 年出版
Katsushika Hokusai, Egrets from *Quick Lessons in Simplified Drawing*, 1823

长寿，以证吾言不谬也。”⁷ 这番雄心勃勃的宣言印证了《现代生活的画家》对浪荡子精神的定义，即 “一种击退并毁灭平凡的需要”。⁸

北斋正是依照他的宣言度过了他人生中最后时光。晚年起他渐渐远离浮世绘，转而投向绘手本和肉笔画。他仍然生活在江户，却不再对世俗题材感兴趣，转而面向纯粹艺术。八十多岁时，北斋应商人高井鸿山的邀请，穿着草鞋和皱巴巴的衣服，从江户出发，前往两百五十公里外的小布施。从那时起，他无需再按照出版商的要求绘制订单，拥有了更自由的创作空间，作品中开始大量出现鬼、龙、凤凰、钟馗、罗汉等宗教和超自然元素，如妖怪为主题的《百物语》(1830-1844)、《钟馗骑狮图》(1844) 等。这是他离开江户最久的一次出行，这次远行使得他的观看彻底由外在转向内在。“犹如

Mount Fuji” series (1831–1834), calm and refined. Mount Fuji appears sacred and solemn when rendered in blue, almost a mirage that not even the viewers could escape.

In everyday reality, Hokusai’s way of life had internalized the essence of iki. When his house caught fire in 1839, he grabbed his brushes and jumped out of the window without hesitation. After relocating to a new home, he simply picked up a broken tile on the ground and resumed painting.

In the western concept of dandyism, Kuki Shuzo discerns structures similar to those of iki. Baudelaire considers dandyism as the “last spark of heroism amid decadence,”⁶ which echoes the heroic pursuit of iki. Hokusai was an advocate for not only iki, but also heroism itself, reflected in his taste in reading. Beginning from his teenage days

鬼魂般，我轻轻走过夏天的田野”⁹，北斋临近去世时写下的俳句似乎是对这种超脱的回望。在小布施，他留下了岩松院的天井绘《睨视八方凤凰图》。寺庙正院顶上的凤凰双翼张开，无论从哪个方向望去，观者都能感到凤凰的凝视。

不久后北斋去世，江户时代结束，日本正式步入现代社会。浮世之梦破碎，北斋随其他同代浮世绘画家的名字一道被遗忘，直到几十年后被印象派画家们发现，再次以其浪荡子美学震撼世界。

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working at a book rental store, the Ming-dynasty novels *Water Margin* and *Journey to the West* had accompanied Hokusai throughout most of his life. He made a considerable number of illustrations for these two books, published under the titles *An Illustrated Edition of Saiyuki* and *An Illustrated New Edition of Suikoden*. Additionally, he illustrated an adaptation of the *Water Margin* by the local novelist Takizawa Bakin. *The Great Picture Book of Everything*, an illustrated book made by Hokusai when he was 60, showcases his extensive knowledge of Chinese and Indian mythologies. These myth-inspired, small-scale illustrations normally show off heroic strength and wisdom. Such as in the depictions of Wu Zixu supporting a bronze vessel weighing 1,000 catties and Hou Yi shooting down the suns, the strength of the human body is magnified through the figures’ poses, displaying a sense of ease that belongs to heroes.

Hokusai was also a practitioner of heroism. From the moment he decided to support himself through his art, he entered a lifelong battle with poverty. Strapped for cash, Hokusai once had to sell peppers and calendars on the street. At one point in his later years, he survived on rice given to him by a neighbor. Meanwhile, he refused to lower the commission fees for his works, often catching himself in disagreement with collaborators or publishers on the details of his paintings and prints. In a letter exchange, the novelist Takizawa Bakin complained about the high price of Hokusai’s works, and how quickly his money was spent, wondering where it all went.

By the age of 74, Hokusai had progressively affirmed his own heroism. In the postscript to his illustrated book *One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji* (1834–1849), Hokusai writes:

From the age of six I had a penchant for copying the form of things, and from about fifty, my pictures were frequently published; but until the age of seventy, nothing that I drew was worthy of notice. At seventy-three years, I was somewhat able to fathom the growth of plants and trees, and the structure of birds, animals, insects, and fish. Thus, when I reach eighty years, I hope to have made increasing progress, and at ninety to see further into the underlying principles of things, so that at one



葛饰北斋，《浮世两国桥夕凉花火见物图》，1780，23.7 x 35.4 厘米，现藏波士顿美术馆
Katsushika Hokusai, *Enjoying the Evening Cool Viewing Fireworks at Ryôgoku Bridge*, 1780, 23.7 x 35.4 cm
Museum of Fine Arts Collection (Boston)

hundred years I will have achieved a divine state in my art, and at one hundred and then, every dot and every stroke will be as though alive. Those of you who live long enough, bear witness that these words of mine prove not false.⁷

Such an ambitious declaration echoes the spirit of the flâneurs: defined in Baudelaire’s “The Painter of the Modern Life,” it is the very need to “combat and destroy triviality.”⁸

Hokusai spent the last days of his life adhering to his own words. In these later years, he moved away from Ukiyo-e and focused on making illustrated manuals (edehon) and hand-made paintings. He still resided in Edo, but had lost interest in mundane subjects, gravitating towards pure art. During his eighties, Hokusai was invited by the merchant Takai Kozan on a trip. Wearing straw shoes and wrinkled clothes, Hokusai left Edo for Obuse, which was 250 kilometers away. By then he no longer needed to cater to the publishers. With greater artistic freedom, Hokusai began incorporating religious and supernatural elements in his works. The motifs of oni, dragon, phoenix, arhat, and Shoki (Zhong Kui) appear in great amounts, as seen in his *One Hundred Ghost Tales* series (1830–1844) and *Shoki Riding a Shishi Lion* (1844), both inspired by the folklores of yokai monsters.

The trip to Obuse was the longest period Hokusai had ever left Edo, completing the inward turn of his once outward gaze. “Now my soul, a will-o’-the-wisp, can flit at ease over the summer fields.”⁹ This haiku, written by the artist before his death, seems to be staring back at this unworldly stance. In Obuse, he painted *Phenix Glaring in All Directions* on the ceiling of the Ganshoin Temple. The mythical bird stretches its wings, whose gaze follows the viewers from every direction.

Hokusai passed away soon after. So came to an end the Edo period, and Japan officially entered the modern age. Like other Ukiyo-e artists of his generation, Hokusai’s name was buried in the shards of a broken dream, the dream of the floating world. It wasn’t for another 20 years that the Impressionists rediscovered him, when he would, once again, astound the world with his flâneur aesthetic.

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