

Japonisme: Japanese Design in European Decorative Arts

European
Decorative Art
1800-1900

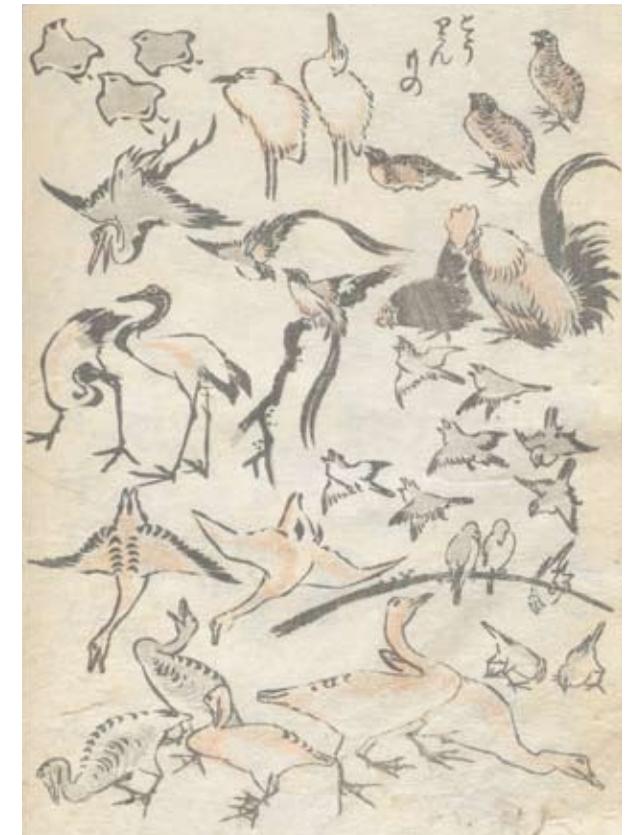
In 1854, the United States and Japan signed a historic trade treaty and the nations of Europe quickly followed suit. Around the same time, the Japanese government repealed its policy of enforced isolation, and Westerners began to understand that Japanese art was much broader than the porcelains and lacquerware made specifically for the export market since the 1600s.

The rich tradition of Japanese art made for their internal market, including woodblock prints, paintings, and textiles, was showcased at international exhibitions held in England, Europe, and the United States throughout the late 1800s. After seeing the simple line quality and natural subject matter of Japanese prints at the London exhibition of 1862, French jeweler Alexis Falize developed enamelwork techniques that masterfully replicated nature in enamel and cloisonné, such as the grasshopper poised in the blowing grass on the tiny locket in CMA's collection (to the right). Many designers followed suit, and soon Japanese-inspired motifs could be seen in every sector of design and decoration.

Locket, 1868–70. Designed by Alexis Falize (French, 1811–1898), executed by Antoine Fard (French). Gold and cloisonné enamel. Andrew R. and Martha Holden Jennings Fund 1979.¹¹



By 1870, Japanese art, particularly woodblock prints, was collected throughout Europe and America. *Manga*, a 15-volume collection of visual investigations of urban daily life by Katsushika Hokusai, resonated with Western artists who were also turning to everyday subject matter. Hokusai's deeply observant and accurate treatment of animals, insects, and flowers particularly inspired Félix Bracquemond, a renowned printmaker who would eventually come to own a full set of the *Manga*.



Katsushika Hokusai (Japanese, 1760–1849).
Manga, 1815. Woodblock print on paper.
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ingalls Library

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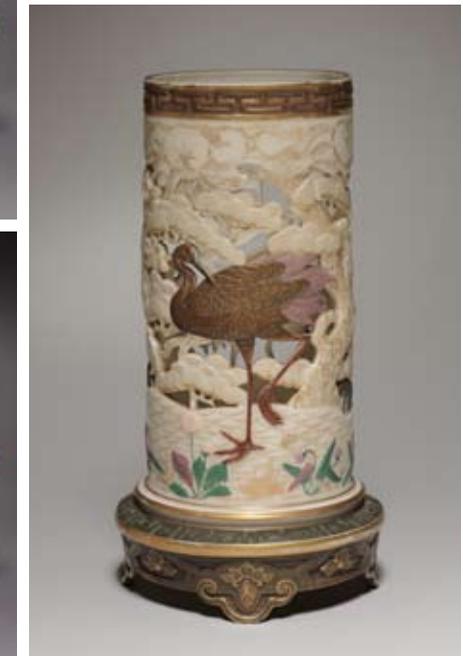
Félix Bracquemond (French, 1833–1914). *Tureen*, about 1870. Made by Creil Factory (French). Porcelain. Gift in memory of Eleanor Goldstein Brody 1997.159



Félix Bracquemond (French, 1833–1914). *Rousseau Dinner Service: Roosters, ducks, etc.* (no. 13), 1866. Etching. Dudley P. Allen Fund 1922.403



below: *Vase*, 1873. Manufactured by Worcester Royal Porcelain Factory (British), probably designed by James Hadley (British). Ceramic. John L. Severance Fund 1991.104



A clear relationship can be seen between Hokusai's bird sketches and Bracquemond's sketch of birds for the *Rousseau Dinner Service*. Rather than copy the Japanese model, Bracquemond similarly explored asymmetrical compositions and the use of natural elements. On the *Tureen*, Bracquemond's dynamic composition envelopes the form of the vessel as a bird, a wasp, and a butterfly are interspersed among leaves and fruit.

Japanese visual symbolism influenced many Western artists. Carp, bamboo, tigers, autumn leaves, peonies, and chrysanthemums all found their way into decorative schemes. In his design for a vase, James Hadley, chief modeler for Royal Worcester Porcelain, employed two of the most popular Japanese pictorial symbols: the crane and the cherry blossom. Hadley animates and adapts these motifs as his cranes—with their long feathers and graceful necks—prance below a full display of spring flowers.