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Shunga: Japanese Erotic Art



Synopsis

A collection of Japanese eroticism by Ukiyo-e artists. A new volume in the Traditional Patterns series, this book features Shunga, a type of Ukiyo-e that is made using the finest Japanese woodblock print techniques and portrays the erotic expressions of men and women; and the pleasure, the pain, and the beauty of the human body. This Japanese erotic art was made by all Ukiyo-e artists and was usually more profitable than "normal" art during the Edo period. It is believed that Shunga, literally "springtime picture," originated from Chinese medical books. It was not only intended to provide the fun that comes from viewing erotic images, but also the book could be held as a charm against evil. Shunga was also used as textbooks for the sexual education of young men and women. Because there were fewer restrictions on Shunga, ukiyo-e artists used a variety of colors usually not seen in usual woodblock prints. Only the best techniques of Ukiyo-e are found in Shunga. This glorious volume features works from the Edo period to the present. Including works by Ukiyo-e artists such as Hishikawa Moronobu, Kitagawa Utamaro, Utagawa Kunisada, Katsushika Hokusai, this Japanese "kama sutra" manages to be erotic, artistic, and fun all at the same time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It is hard to imagine that anyone would give this book more than three stars, I guess sex sells anything. The images reproduced are terrific, BUT(!), most of these prints were made on a horizontal format, the book is printed on a small vertical format, to make up for this most images are printed across two facing pages. Seeing that sexual organs are usually in the center of the body and

consequently at the center of the print most of the sex is obscured by a large deep fold between pages, how stupid! A larger horizontally proportioned book would have made this a five star book but as a visual artist I have to say I feel cheated-whoever designed this book should be publicly flogged!

This hefty little book offers a rich variety of classic Japanese erotic woodcuts. It spans the whole period of shunga's ascendancy, from artists like Moronobu in the late seventeenth century to mid-nineteenth century artists such as Hokusai. By presenting so many eras and artists, Hayakawa also displays the range of visual styles that predominated at various times: passion coyly cloaked beneath rich robes some times, engagement of hugely overblown organs at others, but always with a thread of humor and fun. Although not as large as some picture books, this one comes beautifully printed on heavy stock. The reproductions (in every sense) are bright and clear, and Hayakawa has done an outstanding job of collecting lesser-known images and artists. He organizes the imagery by themes, including places, seasons, positions, moods, and furnishings - which, unlike most Western erotic imagery, contributes heavily towards the voluptuous luxury of many scenes. Hayakawa takes care to translate the calligraphy that adorns each image. This enhances understanding of the pictures, but also gives reason for my one complaint: only younger eyes will be able to pick the tiny lettering out from its noisy background with any ease - a larger font size and more contrast would help. Unlike other anthologists, however, Hayakawa uses endnotes to record the artist, period, and original format of each work. This saves the frustration of becoming enamored with an image or style, but having no way to hunt for more. Even if you already know and love shunga, this could be a valued addition to your library. The number, variety, and quality of prints give lots to enjoy, and at a surprisingly modest price. - wiredweird

As befits a nation (largely) unencumbered by Western Christian notions of "morality", the Japanese have long been without peer in matters erotic. In the Edo era, the joy of sex as an open, natural, and mutually pleasurable part of life was portrayed in prints by some of the most acclaimed artists of the day - Harunobu, Hokusai, Kuniyoshi, and others. These prints were then assembled and sold in "pillow books" for the amusement, instruction, and stimulation of readers. In its compact size, "Shunga: Japanese Erotic Art" evokes the pillow books of old: perfect for the bedside, rather than the coffee table. In its several hundred (mostly color) exquisite and explicit vintage depictions of couplings hetero, homo, solo, al fresco, multinational, bestial, commercial, comical, musical, geriatric, orgiastic, etc. - accompanied by translations of the original captions - art and erotica lovers

of every taste should find something to amuse, amaze, arouse, and delight!

My...the Japanese are imaginative. From an old lady who's not dead yet and never has been.
Thanks for the fast delivery .

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