

Ukiyo-e in Edo Japan



Hokusai Manga

By far the largest of Hokusai's works is his fifteen-volume collection of printed *Manga*. The first twelve editions were published during his life and the final three posthumously, between 1849 and 1878.

The Hokusai *Manga* is a veritable encyclopaedia of images, containing more than 800 pages and almost 4000 motifs. The term 'manga', which today represents the universal phenomena of Japanese comic books, was in fact coined by Hokusai himself in 1814 and can generally be translated to random sketches or comical

drawings. Hokusai's social observations can be humorous and astute, while his illustrations of nature, inventions, architecture, historical figures and mythology, are both entertaining and culturally enlightening. On these three pages we find: young apprentice sumo wrestlers going about their daily chores; instructions on different ways to change appearance by distorting one's face; and a scene from a ghost story of a musician entertaining two long-necked women and a three-eyed ogre receiving a three-lens set of spectacles from an optometrist.

Katsushika HOKUSAI 葛飾北斎
 Japanese 1760–1849
 Vol XII, Vol X and Vol IX
 from *Hokusai Manga* 北斎漫画
 Edo period 江戸時代 1600–1868 Japan
 artist's book: colour woodblocks,
 57 pages each, paper cover,
 stitched binding
 22.7 x 29.0 cm (image and sheet)
 Purchased, 1954 (3134.9-11-4)