

Japan Culture Group

Project Leader

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Collaborating Japanese Literature and Art

Since coexistence of image and text within an artwork characterizes Japanese art, such artworks should be approached from both sides of art and literature. This project aims to interpret what the two types of representation signify, collaborating with each other and investigate the relationship between Japanese literature and art.

This project is unique in its examination of Japanese art from perspectives of researchers with diverse nationalities, based on the network with research institutes abroad. It also seeks to accumulate archival materials internationally.

1. Surimono Research at Rietberg Museum in Zurich

Rietberg Museum in Zurich holds about three hundred surimono, a type of ukiyo-e. Based on the research that began in 2007, we published a full-color catalogue of the entire surimono collection, entitled *Reading Surimono: The Interplay of Text and Image in Japanese Prints* in December 2008. The catalogue includes commentary for each print image, along with essays by some research members involved. In line with the publication of the catalogue, the museum has been having a special exhibition entitled “Surimono—die Kunst der Anspielung” until April 2009. After that, this exhibition will travel to Cologne, Germany and then to Nagoya in 2010.



An exhibition hall of Rietberg Museum

2. UBC-SOAS-ARC: Collaborative Research on “How to Read Early Modern Visual Culture”

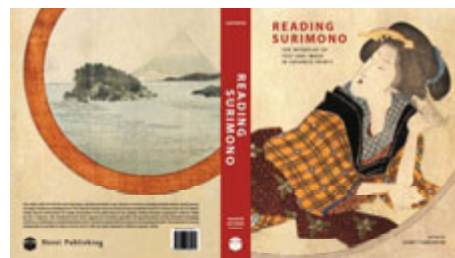


This research group aims to illuminate new functions of ukiyo-e and thereby develop new research approaches and methods for the genre by investigating, from such diverse viewpoints as literature, art, and theatre, what contemporary ideas of the time are reflected in the meanings and representations of ukiyo-e prints as a world of its own. The group is composed of researchers from the University of British Columbia, Canada, SOAS at the University of London, Ritsumeikan University, and Kinjo Gakuin University, whose specialties range from Japanese literature, theatre, calligraphy, to Chinese literature and art. We are planning to conduct research by not only holding seminar meetings regularly but also examining and digital-archiving *etehon* or illustration textbooks, held at European institutes.

Ariwara no Narihira among the series *Nazorae rokkasen*. Collection of Victoria and Albert Museum

3. Research on Imperial Writings in the Fujii Eikan Library Collection

We plan to expand on the research on imperial writings held in the Fujii Eikan Library Collection, a research project that has emerged as a result of our 21st-Century COE Program. This time, we plan to analyze brushworks and calligraphy by taking information technology and scientific approaches.



Exhibition catalogue / 432 pages / 400 colour plates
Rietberg Museum, Zurich (Hotei, December 2008)