

THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
5 WASHINGTON STREET, NEWARK, NJ 07102



PRESS RELEASE

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Sakai Hōitsu, et al. Illustration
from *Flowers of the Four Seasons*
(*Shiki no Hana*), Volume 1 (Spring),
1908. Woodblock. Special Collections
Division, The Newark Public Library.

***Impressions of the Natural World:
Japanese Prints from the Special Collections Division
on view at The Newark Public Library
April 18 - August 6, 2016***

On April 18, 2016, the Newark Public Library will open an exhibit of Japanese prints and *ehon* (woodblock printed illustrated books) from its Special Collections Division. The impressive sampling of *kachō-ga*, (“pictures of birds and flowers”) will range from the early 19th century to the present and will be on display until August 6 in the second floor gallery of the Main Library. Beautiful works by Hiroshige, Koson, Utamaro, Bairei, Yoshida, and many others will be included and will demonstrate the range and richness of *kachō-ga*. The exhibit and related programming aim to explain Japanese printmaking traditions, to expose and promote the library’s exceptional collection, and to develop interest in Japanese art and culture. The show coincides with the celebrated Cherry Blossom Festival at Branch Brook Park and the 350th Anniversary of the City of Newark.

An opening reception will take place on Thursday, April 21, from 6:00-7:30pm. The event will begin at 6:00pm and will feature a guided talk by curator Nadine Sergejeff at 6:30pm. “This is a wonderful time to showcase a sampling of our *kachō-ga* prints,” according to Sergejeff. “There are

hundreds of Japanese prints in the collection and the works on display represent both historic and contemporary examples of the Japanese printmaking tradition. I am hopeful that visitors will acquire a greater understanding of *mokuhanga* (woodblock printing) and recognize the types of treasures held by the Newark Public Library.”

On Saturday, May 21, from 2-4pm, the noted *mokuhanga* artist April Vollmer will present a lecture and demonstration of the printing process at the Main Library. Participants will be able to try printing from woodblocks. April Vollmer is the author of *Japanese Woodblock Print Workshop* (2015) and has exhibited throughout the world. The artist also teaches printing workshops in New York City.

The following month, on Saturday, June 4, from 2-3:30, artist Jennifer Mack-Watkins will present “Mokuhanga and Me,” a workshop for children ages 7+. Children will create a block print inspired by Kawaii pop culture and will use tools and printing techniques similar to *mokuhanga*. Jennifer’s artwork has been exhibited at the Lower East Side Print Shop, the Newark Museum, and Center for the Science of Human Endeavor in Tokyo. This workshop is limited to 20 participants.

The exhibit and programs are free and open to the public and will take place at the Main Library, 5 Washington Street. For more information and to RSVP, please call 973-733-7793. To check whether the Library is open in the case of inclement weather, call 973-733-7784. *Impressions of the Natural World: Japanese Prints from the Special Collections Division*, which opens on April 18 and runs through August 6, 2016, will be on view during regular Library hours. For questions about the exhibit, please email specialcollections@npl.org. A significant portion of this exhibit and related programming have been made possible by the Japan Foundation.

The Newark Public Library began collecting Japanese prints during the early 20th century under the directorship of John Cotton Dana. In March of 1905, John Cotton Dana, whose own collection consisted of hundreds of woodblock prints, arranged an exhibit of Japanese prints at the Newark Public Library. Over the years, the Newark Public Library has presented many exhibitions of Japanese prints.

The number of Japanese prints at the Newark Public Library proceeded to increase as a result of significant donations from collectors in the city. John Cotton Dana was a passionate advocate of art—he believed that by acquiring and displaying Japanese art and books about the country, Newarkers could learn about the culture of contemporary Japan.

The Newark Public Library continues to acquire Japanese prints in its Special Collections Division due to the continued generosity of one donor in particular, Mr. William J. Dane, who was the former “Keeper of Prints” at The Library. Today, the Library’s collection of Japanese art consists of over 500 prints, 500 ehon, scrolls, stencils, woodblocks, tools, and hundreds of books about Japanese prints and art in general.



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