

Twelve Views of Virginia

I hope that each of my fleeting impressions of Virginia is like a once-in-a-lifetime meeting—ichigo ichie or 一期一会 in Japanese—a reminder to treasure every moment, for it will never recur.

—Miwako Nishizawa

Miwako Nishizawa is a California-based Japanese artist specializing in the *moku-hanga* Japanese woodblock printmaking technique, more commonly known as *ukiyo-e*, and still one of the most popular contemporary printmaking methods in Japan.

For Nishizawa, rendering a landscape captures a specific experience rather than just a place. In her travels around Virginia, she listened to blue grass music at the Floyd Country Store, watched Richmonders strolling the paths of Belle Isle, and witnessed a dramatic red sky over the most brutal of Civil War sites, Manassas Battlefield. In her eyes, each and every one of these experiences was intensely real but, at the same time, inevitably transient.

Hasui collectors René and Carolyn Balcer commissioned Nishizawa to execute *Twelve Views of Virginia*. This exhibition complements *Water and Shadow: Kawase Hasui and Japanese Landscape Prints*, on view in the Evans Court Gallery.



Artist Miwako Nishizawa in her studio, 2014. Top to bottom: Brushing, burnishing, and pulling print.

The Japanese Woodblock Print

The process of creating a traditional Japanese woodblock print begins with the artist's sketch, usually made with pencil, Sumi ink, and watercolor. The sketch is then glued onto a wooden block upside down so that when the block is printed, the image will have the same orientation as the original sketch. Specialized cutting tools are used to cut away wood, leaving areas that will not hold color; the uncut areas are inked with a dense, horsehair brush to produce the image. Using a circular hand-held pad called a baren, the artist creates a print by rubbing the back of a piece of dampened paper that has been placed over the inked block. The ink is transferred to the paper, and the print is complete. Most Japanese woodblock prints are multicolored, and each color requires another wooden block to be carved, inked, and layered onto the initial key image.