

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 8, 2014

Water and Shadow: Kawase Hasui and Japanese Landscape Prints

Exhibition features three handpainted screens never before exhibited

Water and Shadow: Kawase Hasui and Japanese Landscape Prints presents more than 100 woodblock prints, rarely-seen screens, scroll and fan paintings, and preparatory materials that explore the dynamic early work of famous Japanese landscape artist Kawase Hasui. The exhibition, on display November 15, 2014 – March 29, 2015, is drawn primarily from VMFA’s noted collection of Hasui prints.

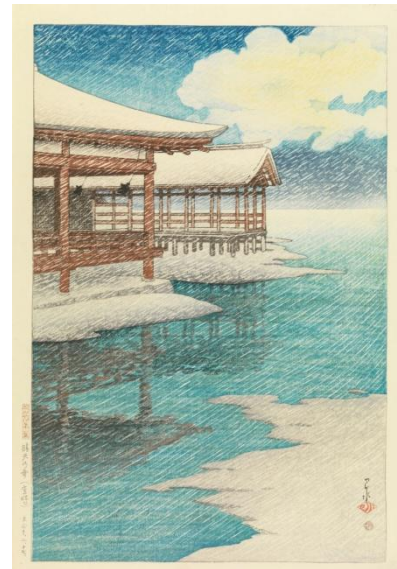
The exhibition spans Hasui’s most imaginative period, the years from 1918 to the Great Earthquake of 1923. It shows the interplay between his prints, his graphic design, and his rare paintings. It demonstrates Hasui’s popularity as possibly the greatest landscape artist of the 20th century, and why his art has been embraced by American and Japanese audiences for nearly a century.

The exhibition focuses on Hasui’s pre-earthquake prints, images that are his most lauded and difficult to collect as many were destroyed in the great disaster. Also of special note are three two-panel screens that will be exhibited for the first time in North America.

Drawing from the unparalleled collection donated to VMFA by preeminent Hasui collectors René and Carolyn Balcer, the exhibition exemplifies the creativity and cultural hybridity Hasui’s work embodies. Named Japan’s premier “poet of place,” Hasui manifests influences of the early *shin-banga* (new prints) movement, as well as stylistic nods to artistic traditions ranging from *ukiyo-e* and French *Japonisme* to Post-Impressionist painting.

“Thanks to the Balcers, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts now has the finest collection of the work of Kawase Hasui of any art museum in the United States,” Director Alex Nyerges said. “These prints reveal not only Hasui’s keen aesthetic vision, but also reveal the tremendous skill of the artisans who worked closely with him to produce these images.”

A video adapted from a 1956 film with English narration accompanies the exhibit, displaying Hasui sketching and demonstrating the production of his prints. The exhibition includes relevant prints by seminal Japanese landscape masters Hiroshige and Kiyochika, as well as works by Hasui contemporaries Takahashi Hiroaki and Ito Shinsui. This comparative work will allow viewers to



Kawase Hasui (Japanese, 1883-1957), *Fine Winter's Sky, Miyajima* from the series *Souvenirs of Travel, Second Series*, February 17, 1921, woodblock print, ink and color on paper. René and Carolyn Balcer Collection. Photo: Travis Fullerton © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

understand Hasui's appropriation of pre-modern and modern styles and themes, establishing visual and ideological resonances within the exhibition.

The exhibition is organized by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and guest curated by Dr. Kendall Brown, professor of Asian art history at California State University, Long Beach.

Related Programs:

Kawase Hasui and the Power of Landscape with guest curator Dr. Ken Brown, Professor of Asian Art History at California State University, Long Beach

November 14, 2014

6 p.m., Leslie Cheek Theater

7 p.m., Hasui Catalogue Signing

\$8 (VMFA members \$5)

Why is Hasui so popular? This lecture will answer that question as it explores how this artist's works fulfill fundamental aspects of human interest in landscape. Brown will also explore how Hasui's dynamic balance of light and darkness, clarity and uncertainty, prospect and refuge connect to our brain's desire for "moderate complexity" in the physical world.

Hanako's Teahouse with Hanako Miwa, artist

November 16, 2014

2 p.m., Marble Hall

Free, no reservations required

The Japanese tea ceremony is a way of communication and a way to appreciate arts while enjoying tea. Hanako Miwa will perform tea ceremonies with her special tea objects and her portable Teahouse.

Gallery Talk: 3 in 30 Japanese Art Sampler

Mary Holland, The Thomas C. Gordon Jr. Director of the Studio School

March 3, 11 a.m.

March 5, 6:30 p.m.

The Japanese Landscape through Prints: A Forum

March 28, 2015

10 a.m. – 3 p.m., VMFA Cheek Theater

\$10 (VMFA members \$8)

International speakers discuss the vibrancy and history of the Japanese Landscape through prints, including the legacy of Kawase Hasui.

Scheduled speakers include:

- Dr. Ken Brown, professor of Asian art history at California State University, Long Beach and guest curator of *Water & Shadow: Kawase Hasui and Japanese Landscape Prints* and author of studies of Hasui, the Shin-hanga movement and Japanese Art Deco.
- Dr. Christine Guth, Head, Asian Design, Royal College of Art, London, and History of Design Program, Victoria and Albert Museum.
- Dr. Noriko Kuwahara, Lecturer at Seitoku University, Chiba, Japan.
- Dr. Mitchell Merling, Paul Mellon Curator & Head of the Department of European Art, VMFA.

About *Water and Shadow*

- TITLE: *Water and Shadow: Kamase Hasui and Japanese Landscape Prints*
- DATES: November 15, 2014 – March 29, 2015
- CURATOR: Dr. Kendall Brown, professor of Asian art history at California State University, Long Beach
- NUMBER OF WORKS: 107
- ADMISSION: Free
- CATALOGUE: The catalogue will be the first publication in the English language devoted to the early prints by Hasui. The first part of the 228-page catalogue includes five essays by scholars and curators from the United States, Canada, and Japan, including Kendall Brown, Shimizu Hisao, James King, Koyama Shūko, and Miya Elise Mizuta. The essay topics include Hasui's early prints, the evolution of the Japanese landscape prints, the *shin-banga* prints, and Hasui's travel in Japan, as well as the architecture in Hasui's prints. The second part comprises full-color, full-page illustrations of Hasui's prints and paintings, which are grouped chronologically, thematically and geographically. \$39.95
- SPONSORS: René and Carolyn Balcer

About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

VMFA's permanent collection encompasses more than 33,000 works of art spanning 5,000 years of world history. Its collections of Art Nouveau and Art Deco, English silver, Fabergé, and the art of South Asia are among the finest in the nation. With acclaimed holdings in American, British Sporting, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist, and Modern and Contemporary art – and additional strengths in African, Ancient, East Asian, and European – VMFA ranks as one of the top comprehensive art museums in the United States. Programs include educational activities and studio classes for all ages, plus lively after-hours events. VMFA's Statewide Partnership program includes traveling exhibitions, artist and teacher workshops, and lectures across the Commonwealth. VMFA is open 365 days a year and general admission is always free. For additional information, telephone 804-340-1400 or visit www.vmfa.museum.

#

Press Contact:

Suzanne Hall, suzanne.hall@vmfa.museum, 804.204.2704

Pryor Green, pryor.green@vmfa.museum, 804.204.2701

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 200 N. Boulevard, Richmond VA 23220-4007