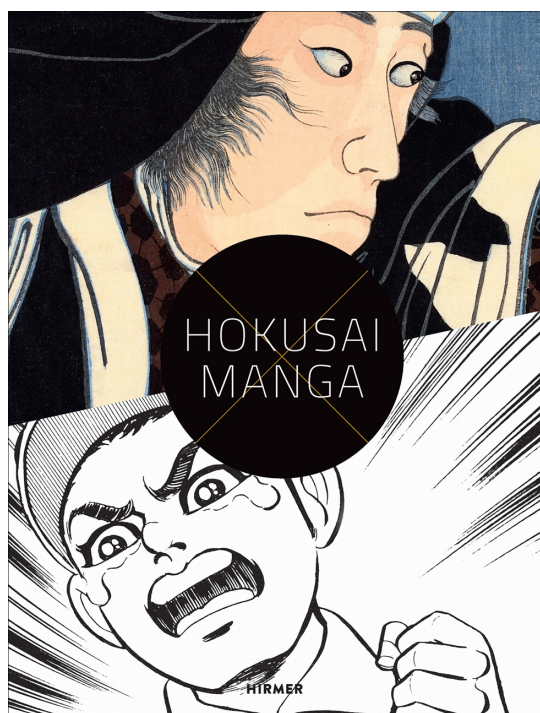


Hokusai x Manga: Japanese Pop Culture since 1680

ed. by Sabine Schulze, Nora von Achenbach, and Simon Klinger. Hirmer, dist. by University of Chicago Press, February 2017. 240p. ill. ISBN 97837777426679 (pbk), \$34.95

Reviewed May 2017 Virginia Roberts, Director, Rhinelander District Library,
director@rhinelanderlibrary.org



Hokusai x Manga is a good overview of the history of publicly available Japanese woodblock prints and the storytelling process, using the fifteenth century as a starting point and the artist popularly known as Hokusai as a touch point to the past and connection to Manga-style art. This book is a companion for the exhibit of the same name at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg.

An exciting addition to the literature discussing Japanese art, this volume draws direct parallels in the kinds of archetypes and techniques found in today's Manga from four hundred years of art. It discusses various portraiture, shunga (erotic prints), landscape contemplation, travel, and heroic illustrations. The editors make the leap to "The Birth of the Comic Book" as artists begin to illustrate ancient and new stories as other cultures claim similar panel or progressive illustrations during the period before actual

modern comics, at the turn of the nineteenth century, and the advent of comic books in the 1930s.

The rich illustrations found throughout the book drive each corresponding point found in the short chapter essays. Each essay contained in Hokusai x Manga delves into the history of Japanese culture after discussing in some detail the history of each type and style of woodblock print in historic context. While the book does and easily can draw most of its conclusions in the connection between this older art and modern illustrated art topics and techniques, rarely is the point made in the essays.

In addition, well over three-quarters of the material is a discussion of the previous 400 years of history, leaving little discussion or space for modern Japanese Manga, or its place in history. The illustrations in the later portions of the book are German, rather than the original Japanese. Despite this, there is little like this comprehensive comparison in book form with the exception of *Manga: The Pre-History of Japanese Comics*, by Nobuyoshi Hamada, 2013, which is a difficult book to find, making this new volume a welcome addition.

Extensive descriptive captions place the illustrations into an insightful context. The bibliography gives a brief, interesting list of sources. *Hokusai x Manga* is recommended for all libraries with an interest in illustrated art, Japanese art, comic books, and/or Manga or Manga-style collections.