



Ukiyo-e Painting and the Long Shadow of the Shunpōan Incident

Julie Nelson Davis

On April 26, 1934, a headline in the Asahi Shinbun newspaper announced the “greatest discovery of the world”: two Sharaku paintings found in the hitherto unknown Shunpōan collection. These rare works, along with fifteen other ukiyo-e masterpieces, were slated for auction in May, it continued. Organizers produced a deluxe, full-color catalogue featuring details of key elements. At the auction preview, one expert was so impressed that he called for the paintings to be brought to the committee on Important Cultural Properties. But the mood changed when others noticed familiar figures, settings, and compositions. Suddenly, the jig was up. These were not rare masterpieces. They were forgeries. In this talk I will discuss the Shunpōan Incident, the deluxe catalogue produced for the exhibition, and the impact of this event on the field ever since.

Julie Nelson Davis is the Paul F. Miller, Jr. and E. Warren Shafer Miller Professor of History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania. Davis is author of *Utamaro and the Spectacle of Beauty* (2007, 2021), *Partners in Print: Artistic Collaboration and the Ukiyo-e Market* (2014) and *Picturing the Floating World: Ukiyo-e in Context* (2021), along with numerous articles and essays. Davis has received fellowships from the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, the Clark Art Institute, and the Guggenheim Foundation, among others. Currently a research fellow at Sophia University, she is completing on a book about imitation, homage, and fabrication in ukiyo-e and conducting research for a second project on the history of the illustrated book in Japan.

This talk is organized by Bettina Gramlich-Oka (Professor, Sophia University)

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Sophia University**

In person

No registration necessary

