Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*)
by Tamami Shima
Introduction

Birds have appeared in the printed art of Japan for more than three-hundred years. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries birds were used primarily as symbols of human traits and seasons of the year. Each species had its own symbolic association so artists drew birds with sufficient accuracy to allow viewers to identify the particular species depicted and thereby recognize the artist’s intended message. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries birds were used much less often as symbols. Artists drew birds in a more imaginative way because it was less necessary that viewers recognized the species depicted. In addition, the modern philosophy of art encourages artists to use their imagination and express themselves in a novel, creative way. Seventy examples of imaginative modern Japanese bird prints are included in this virtual exhibition. They are part of the Reader Collection of Japanese Art which includes more than one thousand Japanese bird prints published between 1950 and the present day.

The prints included in this exhibition were chosen to illustrate the following seven ways of drawing birds in an imaginative way:

**False color** - The artist intentionally changes the bird’s actual colors. Four examples are included here: domestic fowl (prints 1-2), cranes (prints 3-4), owls (prints 5-6) and pigeons (prints 7-8).

**False color and distorted shape** – The artist intentionally changes both the bird’s color and shape such that neither matches any real bird species. Six examples are included here (prints 9-14).

**Texture** - The artist adds texture to the picture in one of four ways; namely, embossing the bird’s surface features (prints 15-16), chequering the bird’s surface features (prints 17-18), adding a patterned picture background (prints 19-20) or using multiple birds to create a pattern (prints 21-24).

**Unexpected view** - Instead of presenting the viewer with the typical side view or front view of a bird, the artist provides one of the following four unexpected views: back (prints 25-26), top (prints 27-28), stacked (prints 29-30) or multiple (prints 31-34).

**Unfamiliar objects** - The artist adds imaginary objects to the picture (prints 35-40).

**Unexpected familiar objects** - The artist adds a familiar object not normally associated with birds to the picture; for example, a ball (prints 41-42), books (prints 43-44), a plant (prints 45-48), an animal (prints 49-50), humans (prints 51-62) or a landscape (prints 63-64).

**Humorous text** - The artist adds a humorous title or poem to the picture (prints 65-70).

In the exhibition below the following information is given for each print: primary imaginative feature, bird’s name (if real), artist’s name, printing method and print size.
1  **False color** – domestic fowl (*Gallus gallus*) by Masahiko Saga, digital print, 300 x 420 mm

2  **False color** – domestic fowl (*Gallus gallus*) by Masao Ohba, screenprint, 195 x 265 mm
3  **False color** – crane (Grus sp.) by Tadashi Nakayama, woodblock print, 320 x 820 mm

4  **False color** – crane (Grus sp.) by Shin'ichi Yoshizu, screenprint, 440 x 330 mm
5 False color – scops owl (*Otus* sp.) by Yoshiharu Kimura, woodblock print, 320 x 370 mm

6 False color – scops owl (*Otus* sp.) by Hiroshi Kabe, screenprint, 155 x 200 mm
7 False color – pigeon (Columba livia) by Shingo Imai, lithograph, 270 x 360 mm

8 False color – pigeon (Columba livia) by Teruo Ōnuma, lithograph, 360 x 420 mm
9 False color and distorted shape – unknown bird by Kunihiro Amano, woodblock print, 170 x 230 mm

10 False color and distorted shape – unknown bird by Ay-ō Iijima, screenprint, 250 x 175 mm
11 False color and distorted shape – unknown bird by Fumio Fujita, woodblock print, 320 x 445 mm

12 False color and distorted shape – unknown bird by Umetarō Azechi, woodblock print, 285 x 385 mm
13  **False color and distorted shape** – unknown bird by Masanari Murai, lithograph, 570 x 760 mm

14  **False color and distorted shape** – unknown bird by Takeji Asano, woodblock print, 400 x 295 mm
15 **Texture** – unknown bird by Haku Maki, woodblock print, 170 x 220 mm

16 **Texture** – unknown bird by Yutaka Takayanagi, screenprint, 170 x 120 mm
17 **Texture** – scops owl (*Otus* sp.) by Masasuke Chiba, screenprint, 300 x 600 mm

18 **Texture** – unknown bird by Toyohide Akiyama, woodblock print, 240 x 310 mm
19 Texture – duck (*Anas* sp.) by Susumu Yamaguchi, woodblock print, 585 x 370 mm

20 Texture – common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) by Tadashi Ikai, intaglio print, 440 x 300 mm
21 **Texture** – crane (Grus sp.) by Fumio Fujita, woodblock print, 190 x 170 mm

22 **Texture** – penguin (Family Spheniscidae) by Hideshi Yoshida, woodblock print, 150 x 150 mm
23 **Texture** – swan (*Cygnus* sp.) by Tōshi Yoshida, woodblock print, 280 x 405 mm

24 **Texture** – goose (*Anser* sp.) by Ray Morimura, woodblock print, 135 x 155 mm
25  **Unexpected view** – peafowl (*Pavo* sp.) by Shigeru Izumi, lithograph, 300 x 420 mm

26  **Unexpected view** – peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) by Kōhei Wakatsuki, intaglio print, 395 x 305 mm
27 Unexpected view – long-tailed duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) by Izumi Fujita, woodblock print, 320 x 400 mm

28 Unexpected view – Japanese white-eye (*Zosterops japonicus*) by Hidetaka Yamanaka, intaglio print, 255 x 310 mm
29 **Unexpected view** – unknown bird by Yasuhide Kobashi, woodblock print, 195 x 255 mm

30 **Unexpected view** – Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*) by Motomi Tsunoda, lithograph, 210 x 295 mm
31 **Unexpected view** – pigeon (*Columbia livia*) by Kōzō Inoue, screenprint, 120 x 170 mm

32 **Unexpected view** – gray wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) by Akira Fujie, intaglio print, 375 x 265 mm
33 **Unexpected view** – day-night view of a Ural owl (*Strix uralensis*) by Shirō Kasamatsu, woodblock print, 285 x 405 mm

34 **Unexpected view** – four seasons view of a brown-eared bulbul (*Ixos amaurotis*) by Shirō Kasamatsu, woodblock print, 290 x 410 mm
35 **Unfamiliar object** – unknown bird by Tamami Shima, woodblock print, 530 x 840 mm

36 **Unfamiliar object** – crane (*Grus* sp.) by Yuji Watanabe, woodblock print, 715 x 575 mm
37 *Unfamiliar object* – owl (*Strix* sp.) by Fumiaki Fukita, woodblock print, 605 x 470 mm

38 *Unfamiliar object* – domestic fowl (*Gallus gallus*) by Yasoji Wakayama, screenprint, 270 x 280 mm
39  **Unfamiliar object** – unknown birds by Gō Yayanagi, screenprint, 420 x 570 mm

40  **Unfamiliar object** – short-tailed albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) by Kōsuke Kimura, lithograph, 400 x 440 mm
41  **Unexpected familiar object** – Japanese robin (*Erithacus akahige*) by Ushio Takahashi, intaglio print, 355 x 535 mm

42  **Unexpected familiar object** – great hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*) by Waichi Hayashi, woodblock print, 265 x 295 mm
43 **Unexpected familiar object** – scops owl (*Otus* sp.) by Yoshiharu Kimura, woodblock print, 335 x 375 mm

44 **Unexpected familiar object** – scops owl (*Otus* sp.) by Makiko Hattori, intaglio print, 155 x 170 mm
45  **Unexpected familiar object** – unknown bird by Motoi Ōi, screenprint, 560 x 760 mm

46  **Unexpected familiar object** – oriental turtle-dove (*Streptopelia orientalis*) by Hideko Nagahama, intaglio print, 200 x 250 mm
47 **Unexpected familiar object** – northern lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) by Mitsuru Nagashima, intaglio print, 340 x 505 mm

48 **Unexpected familiar object** – large-billed crow (*Corvus macrorhynchos*) by Naoko Tanikawa, screenprint, 460 x 350 mm
49  **Unexpected familiar object** – large-billed crow (*Corvus macrorhynchos*) by Hiroko Ikezumi, woodblock print, 240 x 320 mm

50  **Unexpected familiar object** – swan (*Cygnus* sp.) and unknown birds by Fumiko Hori, screenprint, 645 x 375 mm
51  **Unexpected familiar object** – Daurian redstart (*Phoenicurus auroreus*) by Masumi Ozawa, screenprint, 135 x 165 mm

52  **Unexpected familiar object** – unknown bird by Masao Yoshida, intaglio print, 615 x 480 mm
53 **Unexpected familiar object** – unknown birds by Akiko Ohba, woodblock print, 180 x 175 mm

54 **Unexpected familiar object** – unknown birds by Shiho Murakami, intaglio print, 100 x 150 mm
55  **Unexpected familiar object** –
unknown bird by Kazu Wakita,
lithograph, 500 x 405 mm

56  **Unexpected familiar object** –
unknown bird by Koichi Sakamoto,
intaglio, 380 x 285 mm
57  **Unexpected familiar object** –
dodo bird (*Raphus cucullatus*) by Hideshi Yoshida, woodblock print, 150 x 150 mm

58  **Unexpected familiar object** –
pigeon (*Columba livia*) by Seishi Ozaku, intaglio print, 465 x 320 mm
59  **Unexpected familiar object** –
parrot (Family Psittacidae) by
Hideo Yoshihara, intaglio print,
165 x 225 mm

60  **Unexpected familiar object** –
cassowary (*Cassuarius* sp.) by
Tamiji Kitagawa, intaglio print,
250 x 215 mm
61 *Unexpected familiar object* – woodpecker (*Dendrocopos sp.*) by Kaoru Kawano, woodblock print, 265 x 405 mm

62 *Unexpected familiar object* – unknown bird by Umetarō Azechi, woodblock print, 125 x 105 mm
63 Unexpected familiar object – owl (Family Strigidae) and unknown birds by Masaki Shibuya, woodblock print, 160 x 110 mm

64 Unexpected familiar object – greater-spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*) by Hirokazu Fukuda, woodblock print, 325 x 250 mm
Humorous text – owl (Family Strigidae) by Masaki Shibuya, woodblock print entitled “I came to play”, 110 x 140 mm

Humorous text – narcissus flycatcher (*Ficedula narcissina*) by George Ueda, screenprint entitled “talk about …”, 200 x 135 mm
Humorous text – owl (Family Strigidae) by Iwao Akiyama, woodblock print with poem “owl and I, we are not together but both of us cannot sleep”, 360 x 460 mm

Humorous text – owl (Family Strigidae) by Iwao Akiyama, woodblock print entitled “holiday for the hunters”, 455 x 305 mm
69 **Humorous text** – Ural owl (*Strix uralensis*) by Kiyoharu Yamada, woodblock print with poem “I don't need a posthumous Buddhist name, you can't tell who is who”, 290 x 380 mm

70 **Humorous text** – scops owl (*Otus* sp.) by Kan Kozaki, woodblock print with poem “leaves are falling down, I am tipsy and falling apart”, 235 x 320 mm

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