Bird Silhouettes in Japanese Screenprinted Art
Introduction

If the source of light illuminating an object is behind it we may see only a silhouette (i.e., outline of the object’s shape). For example, in the picture below the sun is behind the two birds so we see only their shapes clearly.

This picture of silhouetted gulls (*Larus* sp.), entitled journey III, is one of a series of screenprints made by the Japanese artist Shigeyuki Ōhashi. To make this screenprint, the picture’s design was first drawn on a screen (i.e., piece of mesh fabric held taunt in a frame) using an ink-resistant substance. Then a piece of paper was placed beneath the screen and ink was applied. The ink only passed through areas of the screen not covered by the ink-resistant substance to reproduce the design in reverse on the paper below. The strongly graded color evident in this screenprint was achieved by placing the ink at one end of the screen and drawing it to the other end using a squeegee. The color became progressively lightly as the quantity of ink decreased. This method of printmaking is very useful for making pictures of silhouetted objects and silhouetted birds are particularly well represented in Japanese screenprinted art. Twenty additional examples are included in this virtual exhibition. These screenprints of silhouetted birds are part of the Reader Collection of Japanese Flower-and-Bird Art. For each print the following information is given: names of the bird (if known) and artist, picture title (if any), date (if any) and print size.
1  Gull (Larus sp.) by Shin’ichi Yoshizu, entitled Breeze I, 275 x 290 mm

2  Gull (Larus sp.) by Shin’ichi Yoshizu, entitled shadow dance I, 300 x 310 mm
3 Crane *(Grus sp.)* by Shin’ichi Yoshizu, entitled dancing crane, 440 x 330 mm

4 Crane *(Grus sp.)* by Shin’ichi Yoshizu, entitled stardust, 480 x 365 mm
5  Hawk (*Accipiter* sp.) by Hidenobu Oshima, 210 x 275 mm

6  Egret (*Egretta* sp.) by Hidenobu Oshima, 210 x 275 mm
7 Dove (*Columba* sp.) by Hiroshi Kubota, 260 x 270 mm

8 Dove (*Columba* sp.) by Hiroshi Kubota, 315 x 270 mm
9  Gull (*Larus* sp.) by Kōzō Inoue, entitled *gull IV*, 1982, 660 x 500 mm

10  Gull (*Larus* sp.) by Kōzō Inoue, entitled *seagull*, 330 x 255 mm
11  Dove (*Columba* sp.) by Kōzō Inoue, 120 x 170 mm

12  Sandpiper (*Calidris* sp.) by Kōzō Inoue, 120 x 170 mm
13 Unknown bird by Kōtarō Yoshioka, entitled shade, 480 x 380 mm

14 Gull (Larus sp.) by Teruo Emori, entitled bird group, 275 x 200 mm
15  Gull (*Larus* sp.) by Teruo Emori, entitled flying, 195 x 275 mm

16  Eagle (*Aquila* sp.) by Shigeru Sano, entitled dance, 310 x 360 mm
17 Unknown bird by Shigeyuki Ōhashi, entitled white bird VI, 1987, 260 x 270 mm

18 Gull (Larus sp.) by Shigeyuki Ōhashi, 1995, 290 x 300 mm
19  Gull (Larus sp.) by Shigeyuki Ōhashi, 1990, 380 x 275 mm

20  Gull (Larus sp.) by Shigeyuki Ōhashi, 1990, 375 x 275 mm

Back to Exhibitions