Designers of EDGY Japanese Bird Prints

LARGE-BILLED CROW
BY SEITEI WATANABE
Introduction

Artists typically place objects near the center of a picture, presumably because we center objects in our field of view when we look at them in real life. Yet, Japanese artists routinely place objects off-center, either close to or at the picture’s edge. This practice creates a more dynamic picture by suggesting that these objects have just come into view, either because they are moving or that we have just noticed them out of the corner of our eye as we scan a scene. Twenty examples of these “edgy” pictures, each designed by a different Japanese artist, are presented in this virtual exhibition. These “edgy” pictures are part of the Reader Collection of Japanese Art which focuses on printed flower and bird art. Birds are the artists’ subject of interest in these prints. For each picture the following information is provided: name of the artist and the bird depicted (if known), picture source if it was included in a book, print date and title (if any), printing method and print size. Pictures with birds close to the top and left edges are presented first followed by others in which birds are closer to other edges, moving in a clockwise direction.
1 Shigeyuki Ōhashi – unknown bird, 1987, entitled white bird VI, screenprint, 260 x 270 mm
2 Kaoru Kawano – red-crowned crane (*Grus japonensis*), woodblock print, 290 x 420 mm
Seitei Watanabe – great tit (*Parus major*), included in Kachō Jō (Album of Flowers and Birds), 1903, woodblock print, 275 x 210 mm
4 Hiroshige Utagawa – golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), 1856, entitled Fukugawa Susaki and Jūmantsubo, woodblock print, 220 x 340 mm
5 Koson Ohara – lesser cuckoo (*Cuculus poliocephalus*), woodblock print, 285 x 275 mm
6  Zeshin Shibata –
large-billed crow (*Corvus macrorhynchos*),
woodblock print, 260 x 245 mm
7 Tōshi Yoshida – oriental turtle-dove (*Streptopelia orientalis*), 1970, entitled cherry blossoms, woodblock print, 560 x 360 mm
8 Hokusai Katsushika – little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*), 1834, entitled Fuji at sea, woodblock print, 150 x 105 mm
Sadanobu II Hasegawa – barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), woodblock print, 285 x 230 mm
10  Tamami Shima – unknown bird, 1961, entitled ascension, woodblock print, 430 x 600 mm
11 Sōzan Itō –
crow (Corvus sp.),
woodblock print,
105 x 200 mm
12  Satarō Nagao – varied tit (*Sittiparus varius*), 1891, included in Kachō Sōmoku Saishiki Gafu (Dainty Picture Album of Flowers, Birds and Plants), woodblock print, 120 x 180 mm
13 Tadashirō Fukui – red-crowned crane (*Grus japonensis*), 1990, entitled fly, intaglio print, 310 x 230 mm
14 Saburō Hattori –
hawk (*Accipiter* sp.),
screenprint, 275 x 340 mm
15  Tadashi Ikai – common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), entitled river breeze, intaglio print, 440 x 300 mm
Ryōhei Tanaka – rock dove (*Columba livia*), 2010, entitled stone paving, intaglio print, 300 x 255 mm
17  Hidetaka Yamanaka -
Japanese white-eye
(*Zosterops japonicus*),
2005, entitled cold wind,
intaglio print, 250 x 345
mm
Hirokazu Fukuda - greater-spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*), entitled gentle rain, woodblock print, 325 x 250 mm
Izumi Fujita - long-tailed duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), entitled between the waves long-tailed duck, woodblock print, 320 x 400 mm
20 Hōbun Kikuchi – barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), 1890, included in Hōbun Gafu (Picture Album by Hōbun), woodblock print, 165 x 240 mm