

<b>Institution: SOAS</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 34 Art and Design, History, Practice and Theory</b>
<b>Title of case study: Bringing Kabuki Prints of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries to Modern Audiences and Modern Art Markets (Andrew Gerstle)</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Professor Andrew Gerstle's research and conceptualisation of the first exhibition of Osaka Kabuki prints since 1975 has proved a catalyst in radically reinvigorating interest in Osaka visual culture of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, which had hitherto been eclipsed by that of Tokyo. <i>Kabuki Heroes</i> (2005), both as exhibition and detailed catalogue, has prompted further exhibitions on the subject, significantly enhanced the international market for Osaka prints, constitutes a primary source for museum curators and others and has had a significant influence on the British Museum and its curation and planning of its autumn 2013 exhibition <i>Shunga</i>, to which Gerstle has also substantially contributed.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Professor C. Andrew Gerstle completed a PhD at Harvard and then worked at both Australian National University before joining SOAS as Professor of Japanese Studies in 1993. He currently is Head of the Departments of the Languages and Cultures of Japan and Korea, and the Languages and Cultures of China and Inner Asia. He is a leading scholar in the English-speaking world on Japanese traditional drama. He specializes particularly in the work of Chikamatsu Monzaemon and the kabuki and jôruri (puppet theatre) traditions of Kyoto and Osaka.</p> <p>Gerstle's extensive experience of researching the literary forms and translations of Japanese drama was the foundation for his new project started around the year 2000 on the visual representation of Osaka Kabuki theatre and the actors themselves. Kabuki is an actor-centred drama, and did not publish authorized texts of plays like its sister art Bunraku Puppet Theatre. Realizing that in order to research Osaka Kabuki he needed to focus not only on play texts and other literary sources, but also on the rich visual record, he began exploring this area by surveying public and private collections of Osaka actor prints in Europe and by working with Japanese scholars. In his first publications on actor prints and surimono (privately-printed images and poetry) in 2002-03 (d, e and f below), he focused on the fierce rivalry between the leading actors Arashi Kichisaburô II (1769-1821) and Nakamura Utaemon III (1778-1838), and how this was represented visually in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In publications a and c, he explores how fan clubs and poetry circles supported the production of actor prints and other visual material that helped to create celebrity and stardom for the actors. These articles laid the foundation for the essays and approach in 'The Kabuki Heroes' project, which was jointly run with the British Museum and Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, and funded by a grant from the AHRC, which enabled Gerstle and his team to set up a network of scholars and to survey and photograph public and private collections in Europe, Japan and America in order to prepare the exhibition. The scholarly catalogue (output b), published in separate English and Japanese editions, includes input from fifteen scholars from a wide range of disciplines from Britain and Japan. The exhibition was shown at the British Museum and then at the Osaka Museum of History and the Waseda University Theatre Museum in Tokyo. A distinctive aspect of the exhibition and catalogue was the presentation of the visual material in the context of a vibrant 'Kabuki culture' that had fostered the production of a huge range of visual and literary materials by publishers and fans, including visual material (surimono) created by poetry clubs that promoted their favourite actors. This model, in which the exhibition showed how the art was produced, why it was popular and the contemporary impact of the material, was influential in the planning of the British Museum exhibition and catalogue <i>Shunga: Sex and Pleasure in Japanese Art</i> (2013) to which Gerstle has also substantially contributed.</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

**3. References to the research** (indicative maximum of six references)

- a. "Kamigata yakusha to haikai, kyōkaren: shodai Arashi Rikan to sono hiiki tachi." *Ukiyo-e geijutsu* 150 (2005): 6-23. ("Osaka Kabuki Actors and Poetry Salons: Arashi Rikan")
- b. and Timothy Clark. *Kabuki Heroes on the Osaka Stage, 1780-1830*. London: British Museum Press, 2005; and edition in Japanese.
- c. "The Culture of Play: Kabuki and the Production of Texts." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 66/3 (2003): 358-79.
- d. "Kabuki yakusha-e ni miru suta- no taikō to sedai keishō: Nidaime Arashi Kichisaburō tai sandaime Nakamura Utaemon no baai." *Kokugo kokubun* 72/3, (2003): 574-95. Trans. by Iwata Hideyuki. ("Kabuki Actors through Visual Representation: Arashi Kichisaburō II and Nakamura Utaemon III")
- e. "Representing Rivalry and Transition in Kabuki: Arashi Kichisaburō II versus Nakamura Utaemon III." *Andon* 72-73 (2002): 52-64.
- f. et al. *Masterful Illusions: Japanese Prints from the Anne van Biema Collection*. Seattle and Washington D.C.: University of Washington Press and Freer and Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian Institution, 2002.

**Outputs b and c were submitted to RAE 2008.**

**Research grants that supported the above include:**

Arts & Humanities Research Council: "Creating Celebrity: Kabuki Actors, Poets & Artists," which ran from 01.12.03 to 30.09.08 ( £118k)

Japanese Ministry of Education sponsorship enabled publication of the catalogue in Japanese and supported the mounting of the exhibition at museums in Osaka and Tokyo in Japan. (c. £70,000)

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

Kabuki theatre and the rich culture of printmaking that attended it developed and thrived in Japan in two regions, each with their own distinctive theatrical and visual cultures and styles: Osaka (incorporating Kyoto) and Edo (modern-day Tokyo). The more gentle and realistic images of Osaka Kabuki have been very much eclipsed by the more austere and static images of Tokyo, particularly in the post-World War II period given the rapid ascendancy of Tokyo as principal economic and cultural centre. As the first exhibition of Osaka prints since 1975, and the very first in Europe, *Kabuki Heroes* as both exhibition and catalogue has had a significant and enduring influence on subsequent exhibitions and the international market for and more general interest in Osaka prints, and has served as a primary source of information for the accessioning and cataloguing of major international collections.

A recent exhibition of Osaka prints in Luxembourg, "Schatze der Kamigata' / Trésors de Kamigata: Gravures sur bois japonaises d'Osaka 1780-80," which ran from November 2012 until March 2013, relied heavily on the research activities associated with the preparation of *Kabuki Heroes* as well as the catalogue (6, below). The exhibition featured works from the private collection of Osaka Prints of the German collector Hendrick Lühl. As part of the *Kabuki Heroes* research project, Gerstle and his collaborator from Japan, Professor Ryo Akama, photographed his extensive collection over a one-week stay at his house in 2003, taking more than 3,000 photographs. Many of his works were then included in the British Museum exhibition in 2005, the success of which helped in the negotiations with museums in Luxembourg, and more recently, Krakow (October 2013), who agreed to host the exhibition (7). The Bibliography of the Luxembourg catalogue lists *Kabuki Heroes* c under the abbreviation "AK London" as the most recent of five key sources for the exhibition.

As the first major international exhibition to feature the prints of Osaka, so long overshadowed by the works of Edo, *Kabuki Heroes* both garnered the interest and enthusiasm of new audiences, even in Osaka itself, who had been unaware of the city's distinctive printmaking history and imbued Osaka prints with a commercial legitimacy that had hitherto been absent.

Kôichi Sawai, Curator at the Osaka Museum of History, has recently commented in an email to Professor Gerstle (5):

*“Osaka prints were not so well known even in Osaka itself before the 2005 Kabuki Heroes exhibition. The exhibition itself was successful in raising the profile with the general public, but the sustained impact has been on Yamamoto-School Traditional Dance and other Osaka traditional arts which have seen a steady revival in recent years stimulated directly by the Kabuki Heroes exhibition.”*

Peter Ujlaki, international dealer in Japanese prints, who is based in the Osaka area, has also confirmed the importance of *Kabuki Heroes* in raising awareness of and interest in Osaka traditions and the positive impact the exhibition and catalogue have had on his business (1):

*“Before that exhibition opened, one could find curators of important institutions in Osaka who had no idea that Kamigata-e [Osaka prints] ever existed. Others knew of their existence, but thought of them as a poor provincial tradition unworthy of serious study. By the time the show closed, every local art scholar knew otherwise, and so did Kansai's art establishment... if not also Tokyo's.”*

*“We can see continuing repercussions in, for example, the make-up of the recent Hokusai exhibit at The Osaka Municipal Museum of Art [in late 2012]. Instead of the standard museum survey of this artist, a large section of the show was devoted to the work of Osaka artists who had come in contact with Hokusai. I don't believe this slant would have occurred to the organizers without the spotlight on Kamigata-e, still fresh in their memory, provided by the British Museum show.”*

*“Personally, I now rarely have to explain the term Kamigata-e when I meet well-informed Kansai residents, which is a dramatic change from a decade ago. The impressive catalogue -- I always keep both the English and Japanese versions close at hand -- give added weight and credibility to the subject, and this helps me greatly in my business... it is now much easier to interest institutions and individuals in the idea of collecting Kamigata-e.”*

Izzy Goldman, London-based art dealer in Japanese art and prints remarked in an interview in January 2013 that there has been a continuous rise in demand and prices paid for Osaka prints since the exhibition, which has legitimised the trade of these previously undervalued images, and that he keeps a copy of the catalogue for ready consultation when selling Osaka prints (2).

Major museums have also benefitted from the exhibition and catalogue throughout the period January 2008-July 2013 and beyond. A curator at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, which has the largest collection of Japanese prints in the world with more than 50,000 items, has confirmed that she and her colleagues regularly use the catalogue to support that museum's own externally-funded projects (running from 2006-07 to the present) to accession many thousands of prints for the first time. The process of accessioning has meant that the Museum has been able to host exhibitions of Osaka prints and to lend its Osaka prints to other museums internationally (3).

Timothy Clark, curator at the British Museum, has highlighted the influence of *Kabuki Heroes* on the curation and planning of that museum's landmark Shunga exhibition, which opened in September 2013 (4):

*“The Kabuki Heroes research project and exhibition had an impact on two aspects of our work at the British Museum. The first is the process of working closely with academics on a multi-year research project in preparation for an exhibition. The ‘Kabuki Heroes’ AHRC grant enabled us to establish a network of scholars in Japan and Europe/America. This pattern then influenced the*

current exhibition project on 'Shunga: Sex and Pleasure in Japanese Art' (2013). We were able to build on this earlier network, extend it and create a group of more than 30 scholars. This scholarly base enabled us to present a strong case to the Museum's exhibition department to prepare an exhibition on explicitly sexual art. The second impact of Kabuki Heroes was in the example of constructing an effective exhibition. The creation of a theme of 'kabuki culture' within the exhibition to show how the prints and books were produced and circulated was effective for the audience. We have used this model again for Shunga in making sure that the audience was able to grasp how shunga circulated, who consumed it, and how it related to non-shunga works and to society in general. The Kabuki Heroes project was also the occasion for BM to add major works of kabuki-related art from Osaka to the national collections and these are now available to scholars and the public worldwide through the BM's Collections Online."

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Musée National d'Histoire et d'Art, Luxembourg. *Schatze der Kamigata / Trésors de Kamigata: Gravures sur bois japonaises d'Osaka 1780-80*. Du 16/11/2012 au 17/03/2013. <http://www.mnha.public.lu/actualite/agenda/2012/11/Kamigata/index.html> [Most recently accessed 25.11.13].
2. Krakow Muzeum Sztuki i Techniki Japonskiej Manggha 2013. (13 Oct 2013- 5 Jan. 2014), (Polish language edition) Catalogue: *Skarby Kamigaty: teatr kabuki i drzeworyt barwny / The Treasures of Kamigata: Kabuki Theatre and the Colour Woodblock Print*, by Małgorzata Martini (Język polski, angielski), Rok wydania 2013 Oprawa miękka. [http://manggha.pl/publikacje/book\\_kamigata](http://manggha.pl/publikacje/book_kamigata) [Most recently accessed 25.11.13].
3. Kôichi Sawai, Japanese language email text can be supplied upon request.
4. Peter Ujlaki, International Dealer in Japanese Prints, Osaka
5. Izzy Goldman, Dealer in Japanese Art and Prints, London
6. Assistant Curator, Japanese Prints, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
7. Timothy Clark, Head of the Japanese Section, British Museum and curator of Shunga: Sex and Pleasure in Japanese art