Woodblock print - The Great Wave

Object: Woodblock print

Place of origin: Japan (made)

Date: ca. 1831 (made)

Artist/Maker: Katsushika Hokusai, born 1760 - died 1849 (Artist)

Materials and Techniques: Colour print from wood blocks, on paper

Credit Line: Gift of the Misses Alexander

Museum number: E.4823-1916

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description

Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) is perhaps Japan's most famous artist. He is best known for his designs for prints and printed books, although later in life he focussed increasingly on paintings.

This print is from Hokusai's ground-breaking series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji, the first to exist exclusively of large-format prints of landscapes. It also made plentiful use of Prussian blue, a pigment which had only recently been introduced to Japan and was both expensive and rare.

This print is the most celebrated of the series, and indeed of all Japanese prints. In it, Mount Fuji is pictured through the hollow of a giant wave which threatens to engulf the boats below. The chaos of the scene at sea contrasts with the stately serenity of Fuji in the background.

Descriptive line

Colour print from wood blocks, In the Hollow of a Wave off the Coast at Kanagawa, from the series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji, by Katsushika Hokusai, circa 1831

Physical description

Colour print from wood blocks by Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) from the series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji. In the hollow of a wave off the coast at Kanagawa (Kanagawa oki nami ura). Often referred to as "The Great Wave".

Dimensions

Width: 372 mm, Height: 259 mm

Museum number

E.4823-1916

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O73124/the-great-wave-woodblock-print-katsushika-hokusai/