

## Press Release

**UKIYOENOW: Tradition and Experiment**

Press Conference	Friday, 25 October 2019, 10:30 a.m.
Opening	Friday, 25 October 2019, 7 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK GALLERY
	MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	26 October 2019 – 16 February 2020
Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m.–10 p.m., Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Starting on 26 October 2019, Kiss, Iron Maiden, and David Bowie are going to rock around the aesthetic of the *ukiyo-e* in the MAK GALLERY. The exhibition *UKIYOENOW: Tradition and Experiment* is opening up new dimensions in the contemporary treatment of the Japanese art form and poses the question of how far the different forms of production—traditional handicraft and digital print—and also the new context of global/transnational pop cultures are impacting the further development of the *ukiyo-e*.

For the first time in Europe works are being presented by the painters and illustrators Masumi Ishikawa (b. 1978 in Tokyo), and Megumi Ōishi (b. 1985 in Shizuoka), as well as by the graphic designer Andrew Archer (b. 1986 in Auckland) that translate the motifs from pop culture and sport into the aesthetic of the *ukiyo-e*. They stand for the renewal of the visual imagery of the Edo period and are trailblazers in the globalization of Japanese art.

While theme, style, and technique of the *ukiyo-e* remained specifically Japanese until the early twentieth century, a hundred years later it has become an artistic idiom that serves artists across the world. Both Ishikawa and Archer borrow from traditional motifs and techniques of Japanese woodblock prints, but their subjects are taken from the global world of music and sport.

The Japanese *ukiyo-e* master Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861), the central subject of the simultaneous exhibition *KUNIYOSHI +: Design and Entertainment in Japanese Woodblock Prints* in the MAK DESIGN LAB, also the visual imagery of the Utagawa school convey numerous connecting factors, nevertheless, the focus of the exhibition *UKIYOENOW* is directed onto new contents and the potentials of digitalization.

**UKIYO-E PROJECT**

With the aim of reviving the *ukiyo-e*, in 2014 the UKIYO-E PROJECT was founded, which interprets new motifs using traditional production techniques.

The initiator Yuka Mitsui collected the best wooden block cutters and printers in order to produce Masumi Ishikawa's and Megumi Ōishi's contemporary designs using the traditional Japanese printing technique. Ishikawa trained in the art of Japanese illustration with Utagawa Toyokuni VI (1903–2000) and thus still continues the tradition of the Utagawa school after 200 years.

In 2015 the collaboration started with the US hard rock band Kiss, whose stage shows are renowned for their aesthetic allusions to the Japanese kabuki theater. The success of this project led at the end of 2016 to the collaboration with Iron Maiden and in June 2018 posthumously with David Bowie. The elaborately designed prints emerging from these projects are on show in the MAK exhibition *UKIYOENOW* for the first time in their entirety outside Japan.

#### **Andrew Archer**

In contrast to the traditional production methods of the UKIYO-E PROJECT, Andrew Archer's works are produced digitally. The graphic designer, who lives in Melbourne, combines his passion for basketball and the *ukiyo-e* in his most extensive series yet, *Edo Ball*. This dynamic picture series produced in high-quality digital print follows Kuniyoshi and his pupil Yoshitoshi in style and spellbinds viewers with its individual vein of wit and humor.

Besides this print series Archer is showing two smaller series in the MAK exhibition, likewise in *ukiyo-e* style, showcasing the Chinese singer Chris Lee and the American actor and rock star Jared Leto.

Parallel to *UKIYOENOW*, the MAK is celebrating the 150th anniversary of Austrian-Japanese friendship with the exhibition *KUNIYOSHI+: Design and Entertainment in Japanese Woodblock Prints* in the MAK DESIGN LAB. The show focuses on the great Japanese *ukiyo-e* designer Utagawa Kuniyoshi—later so influential for manga and anime—and his artistic and cultural environment.

The main feature of MAK DAY on 26 October 2019 is the anniversary *150 Years of Austrian-Japanese Friendship* and will present numerous program items relating to the two newly opened MAK exhibitions. Program details at [MAK.at](http://MAK.at)

Press photos are available for download at [MAK.at/en/press](http://MAK.at/en/press)

Kindly supported by



Press Data

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Curator	Mio Wakita-Elis, Curator, MAK Asia Collection
Guest Curator	Johannes Wieninger
Supporting Program	In preparation
MAK Admission	€ 12 / Reduced € 9 / Family Ticket € 15 Every Tuesday 6–10 p.m.: admission € 5 Free admission for children and teens under 19
MAK Press and PR	Judith Anna Schwarz-Jungmann (Head) Cäcilia Barani Sandra Hell-Ghignone Veronika Träger T +43 1 711 36-233, -212, -229 <a href="mailto:presse@MAK.at">presse@MAK.at</a> <a href="http://www.MAK.at">www.MAK.at</a>

Vienna, 6 September 2019