



Stadt Ulm

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Museum Ulm | Marktplatz 9 | D-89073 Ulm

: Press release

# Of Magical Creatures, Monsters & Ghosts

Myths and legends in Japanese colour  
woodcuts from the 18th and 19th century

23.11.18 – 14.02.19

Opening | Friday | 23 November 2018 | 6 pm



: The fantastic realm of **magical creatures, monsters and ghosts** is featured much more extensively and theatrically in **Japanese colour woodcuts** from the **18th and 19th century** than in Western art. The **Japanese myth of ghosts** is similar to our concept: People who suffered harm, injustice or violence during their lifetime won't find peace in death, haunting their tormentors as ghosts. Furthermore, many Japanese ghosts are incarnations of natural elements: Mountains and waters, snow and wind, animals, plants, and even tools become animated beings (BAKEMONO or HENGE), who have the ability to confuse and even kill people. The YOKAI, chimerical monsters, are mostly summoned in uncanny places. Even until this day, the belief in the existence of ghostly spirits and rituals of appeasement are an inherent part of **Shinto**, the traditional religion in Japan.

As a result of an increase in book production during the Edo period (1603-1868), **Japanese colour woodcuts** became the primary medium for artistic expression. Portraits of actors and scenes from **KABUKI theatre** were particularly popular. In the 19th century, the KABUKI repertoire featured the thrilling and sometimes familiar ghost stories. The theatrical finesse of KABUKI, which incorporated revolving stages, quick costume changes, candle light effects and invisible stagehands, was a suitable framework for eerie dramaturgy and the presentation of transcendental beings. Since the colour woodcuts reproduced the KABUKI scenes on a high technical and artistic level, the ghost myths presented in this medium became popular works of art that were often bought as souvenirs.

The magical creatures' appearance unleashed both the director's and the wood block artist's creative fantasy, which is where the relatedness to modern Japanese **comic strips (MANGA)** and **animated films (ANIME)** becomes particularly evident.

Curated by **Hannspeter Kunz** (Sigmaringen), the exhibition at the **Museum Ulm** comprises around **200 works**, including woodcuts, manga books, books, drawings on paper and plastic and merchandising figures. An extensive program accompanies the presentation.

Fig.: Taiso Yoshitoshi, The thirty-six ghosts, The old woman brings back her arm cut off, woodcut, 1889, © Galerie Ukiyo-e-Gallery, Hannspeter Kunz Sigmaringen.

With works of art by (selection):

**OGATA GEKKO (1859–1910)**

**JED HENRY**

**HIROKAGE (tätig 1854–1868)**

**UTAGAWA HIROSHIGE (1797–1858)**

**UTAGAWA HIROSHIGE II (1826–1896)**

**TOTOYA HOKKEI (1780–1850)**

**EDOGAWA HOKKI**

**KATSUSHIKA HOKUSAI (1760–1849)**

**TSUKIOKA KÔGYO (1869–1927)**

**TOM KRISTENSEN (\*1962, Australien)**

**TOYOHARA KUNICHIKA (1835–1900)**

**UTAGAWA KUNIMARO (tätig um 1850–75)**

**UTAGAWA KUNIMASA (1773–1810)**

**UTAGAWA KUNISADA (1786–1865)**

**KUNITSUNA (1805–1868)**

**UTAGAWA KUNIYOSHI (1797–1861)**

**KAWANABE KYÔSAI (1831–1889)**

**HAYAO MIYAZAKI**

**GYOKURANSAI SADAHIDE (1807–1873)**

**RYURYUKYO SHINSAI (tätig 1799–1820)**

**KATSUKAWA SHUN'EI (1762–1819)**

**YAMAMOTO SHOUN (1870–1965)**

**KAIGEI TENNEN (Lebensdaten unbekannt)**

**UTAGAWA TOYOKUNI I (1769–1825)**

**UTAGAWA TOYOKUNI II (1777–1835)**

**KITAGAWA UTAMARO I (1753–1806)**

**IPPOSAI YOSHIFUJI (1827–1887)**

**UTAGAWA YOSHIIKU (1833–1904)**

**UTAGAWA YOSHIKAZU (tätig 1840–1860)**

**UTAGAWA YOSHITORA (tätig 1850–1880)**

**TAISO YOSHITOSHI (1839–1892)**

**UTAGAWA YOSHITOYO (tätig 1830–1866)**

**Press conference | Thursday | 22 November 2018 | 11 am**

With the curator Hannspeter Kunz and the director of the museum Dr. Stefanie Dathe

Press photos and further information can also be found at <https://museumulm.de/presse-downloads/> and [www.museumulm.de](http://www.museumulm.de).



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**Öffnungszeiten**

Di - So : 11 - 17 Uhr  
Do : 11 - 20 Uhr  
[www.museumulm.de](http://www.museumulm.de)