

# UC San Diego

## Articles

### Title

Review of Awash in Color: French and Japanese Prints, by Chelsea Foxwell and Anne Leonard. Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 2012.

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6hd6h6cz>

### Journal

Art Documentation, 5(2013)

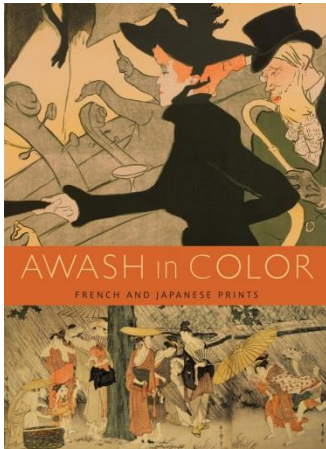
### Author

Abrams, Leslie

### Publication Date

2013-04-01

**Awash in Color: French and Japanese Prints**, by Chelsea Foxwell and Anne Leonard. Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 2012. 224 p. col. ill. ISBN 9780935573510, \$30.00.



*Awash in Color: French and Japanese Prints* by curators Chelsea Foxwell and Anne Leonard, with six additional contributors including David Waterhouse and other leading print scholars, is the catalog of an exhibition held in 2012-13 at the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago. This is the eleventh in a series of Mellon supported exhibition catalogs for the Smart, and it is an elegantly conceived and produced publication.

The catalog contains nine essays, useful notes, and over 100 beautifully reproduced color illustrations providing a detailed history of the technical development of color printing in Japan and France from the eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries. The overarching thesis of the exhibition and the catalog focuses upon the idea that significant technical developments in color printing occurred separately but in parallel in both Japan and Europe that predate the normalization of trade and cultural relations that occurred in the 1850s. These independent technical advances in the production of color prints provided a foundation that fueled a period of highly productive and creative artistic cross-engagement between the West and Japan during the second half of the nineteenth century. The prints chosen for the exhibition, many from the Smart Museum, and the essays included in the catalog provide ample and well-documented evidence in support of this thesis.

Detailed information is provided about the development of tools and techniques used to create prints, from the invention of woodblock registration processes in Japan and chromolithography in France, to advances in the formulation and export of inks. The authors tie the importance and influence these innovations had on the production of graphical works in both the East and West. The catalog includes a "Checklist" describing the 124 high quality reproductions of French, American, and Japanese color prints and a "Selected Bibliography." A useful and unique addition to the catalog is the "Printed Color: A Timeline" appendix that summarizes and presents, side by side, the technical advances achieved in printmaking in both Europe and Japan.

*Awash in Color: French and Japanese Prints* is a major contribution to the literature on the technical developments in color printmaking in Japan and Europe. It would be an excellent and essential addition to academic, art and museum libraries that collect materials about prints or printmaking techniques as well as Japanese art.

Leslie Abrams, Head – Arts Library, University of California, San Diego, labrams@ucsd.edu