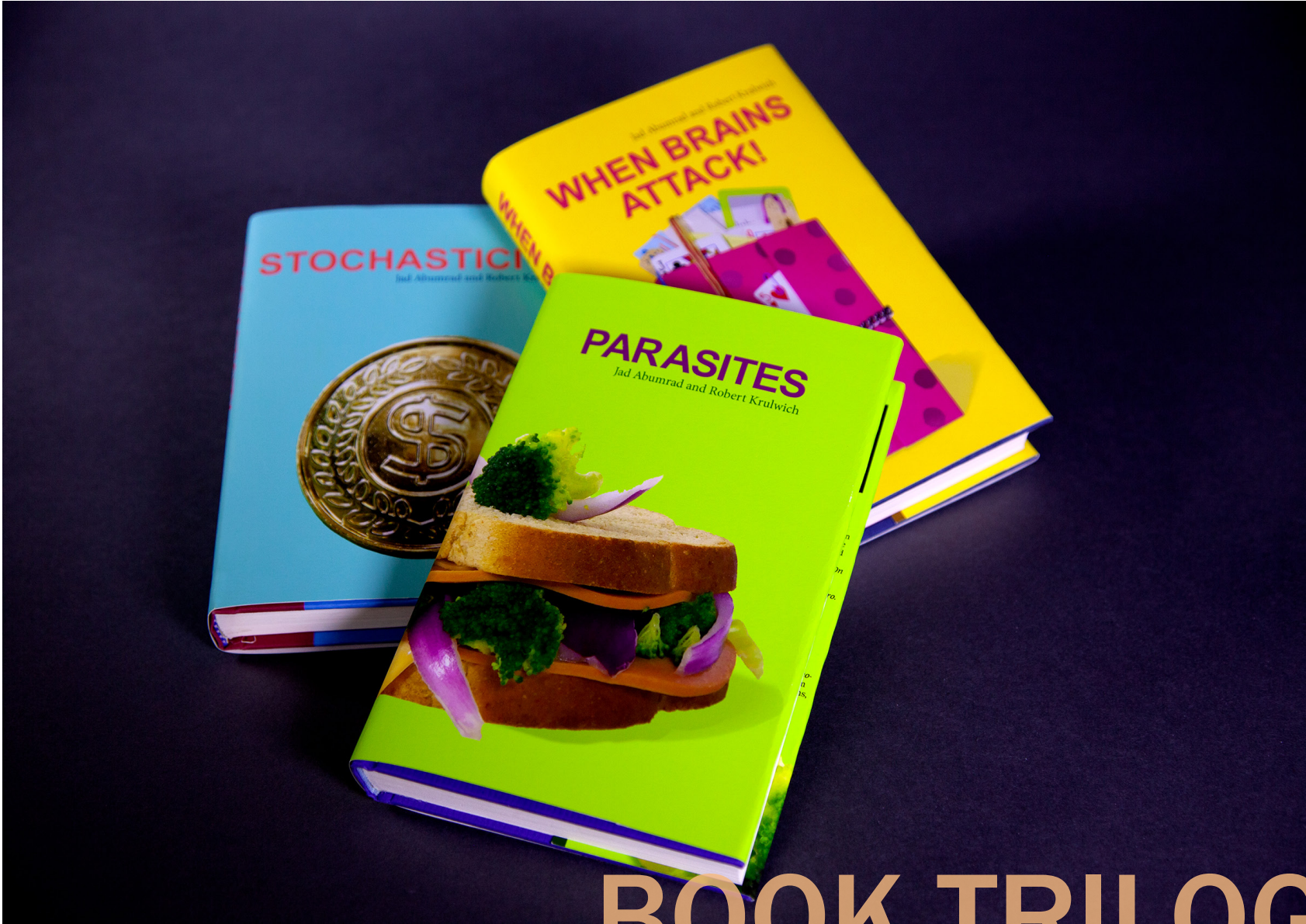
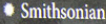


Joanna Yee



# BOOK TRILOGY



# Kiyochika Kobayashi

## Master of the Night

May 2018 - June 2020

Born in 1847 to a military retainer of the Tokugawa Shogun, Kobayashi Kiyochika was the ninth and last child of Kobayashi Mohei. Kiyochika has been described as "the last important ukiyo-e master and the first noteworthy print artist of modern Japan." He is said to be the last ukiyo-e artist to lyrically depict Tokyo during the Meiji cultural enlightenment. Kiyochika, while best known today as a print designer, was also an illustrator and cartoonist. When Kobayashi Kiyochika (1847-1915) returned to his birthplace, which he had known as Edo, in 1874, he found a city transformed. Renamed Tokyo (Eastern Capital), it was filled with railroads, steamships, gaslights, telegraph lines, and large brick buildings—never-before-seen entities that were now ingrained in the cityscape.


Kiyochika was unique at his time for not having any allegiance to a master or school of art. Self-trained as an artist, Kiyochika set out to record his views of Tokyo in a series of 100 prints. An 1881 fire engulfed the city and ended the project, but the 93 works he

**"Beyond describing the odd juxtapositions of traditional and modern, Kiyochika lingers on more subtle shifts in communal sensibility."**

had completed were unlike anything previously produced by a Japanese artist. Avoiding the celebratory cityscapes of traditional woodblock prints, Kiyochika focused on light and its effects on his subjects. Dawn, dusk, and night were his primary moments of observation, and his subjects—both old and new—are veiled in sharply angled light, shadows, and darkness. To accommodate his new approach of seeing things, Kiyochika effectively invented a visual vocabulary that incorporated elements of oil painting, copperplate printing, and photography. Interest in Kiyochika's prints revived in the 1970s, when Tokyo intellectuals began to interpret the series as a critique of modernity.

Smoke Rises in Night by Kiyochika Kobayashi, Woodblock print, 1881, 10.5 x 15.5 cm (4 1/8 x 6 1/8 in.)

In the exhibition, approximately half of the prints from the Kiyochika's views of Tokyo are displayed in thematic groupings that represent the artist's unique visions and site selections. Beyond describing the odd juxtapositions of traditional and modern, Kiyochika lingers on more subtle shifts in a communal sense. He shows a population inclined to spectatorship over participation and introduces solitary figures sleepwalking in a new landscape.



Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

1050 Independence Ave SW,  
Washington, DC 20560

2025433-1000  
publicaffairs@si.edu  
www.hearsackler.si.edu

Hours  
10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily  
Closed on December 25

Admission Free

Parking  
Public Transportation Recommended: When you visit, we recommend taking public transportation, including taxis, as on-street parking is extremely limited.

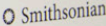


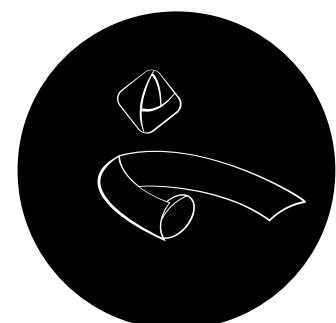
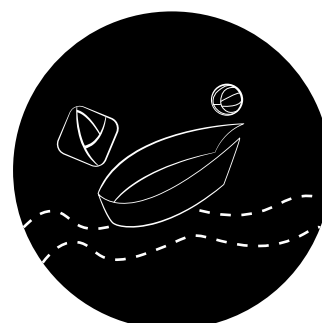
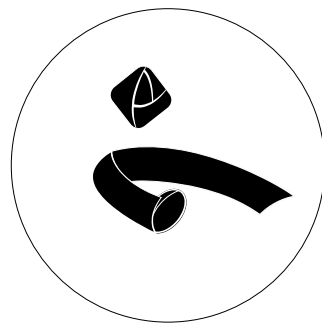
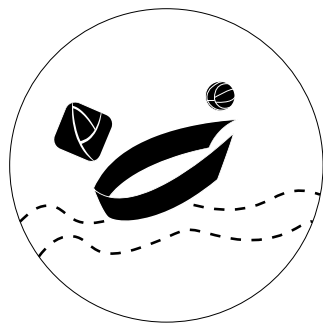
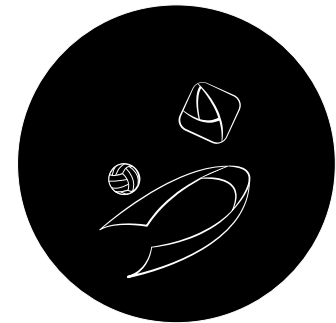
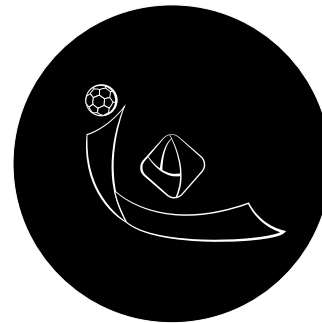
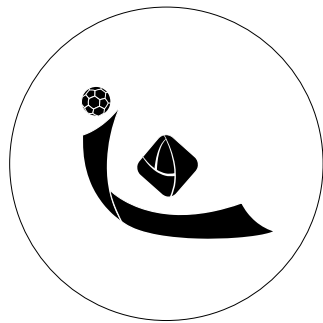
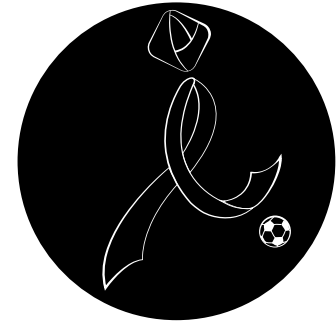
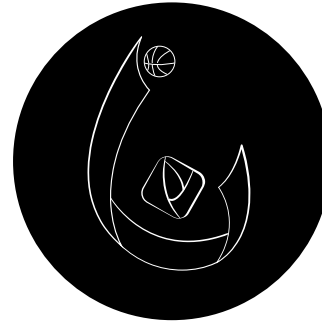
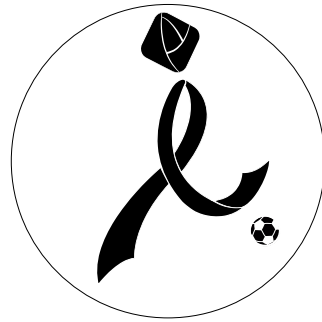
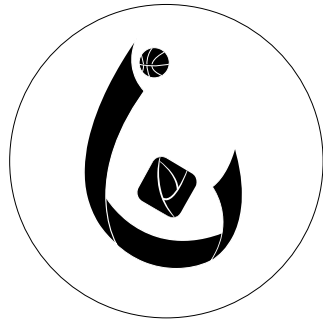
Image: Kenjiro Hara  
View of Temple by  
Kiyochika Kobayashi  
Woodblock print, 1881  
10.5 x 15.5 cm (4 1/8 x 6 1/8 in.)

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