



120
444
THS



This is to certify that the

thesis entitled


THE INFLUENCE OF UKIYO-E WOODCUTS ON
THE PRINTS OF ARTHUR WESLEY DOW

presented by

Kaoru Watanabe

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

M.A. degree in History of Art


Major professor
Phyllis Floyd

Date September 3, 1996

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
<div>MA0132004</div> <div>271</div>		
<div>1024660009</div>		

MSU is An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution

c:\circ\datedue.pm3-p.1

THE INFLUENCE OF UKIYO-E WOODCUTS ON
THE PRINTS OF ARTHUR WESLEY DOW

By

Kaoru Watanabe

A THESIS

Submitted To
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Art

1996

ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF UKIYO-E WOODCUTS ON THE PRINTS OF ARTHUR WESLEY DOW

By

Kaoru Watanabe

Arthur Wesley Dow, an artist and art educator who contributed to lead the development of Modernism in American art, established a style for his woodcut prints through the influence of Japanese art, especially *Ukiyo-e* prints and Zen ink paintings. The influence of Japanese art can be observed more clearly in his prints than in this paintings; therefore, his prints will be the focus of this study in order to expand the existing scholarship on the influence of Japanese art on Dow's artistic theories and style. This project suggests that Dow was much more inspired by Hiroshige's poetic expression of natural scenery than that of any other *Ukiyo-e* artist, as Dow's adaptation of Hiroshige's compositional devices shows. His mature style demonstrates an exploration of a harmonious relation of colors and tones, which reflects the gradation technique of Zen ink painting as well as Japanese *Ukiyo-e* prints.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . .	1.
Chapter 1. Critical Writing About Arthur Wesley Dow . . .	5.
Chapter 2. Dow's Prints And Ukiyo-E . . .	27.
Chapter 3. Idealism And Dow's Artistic Style . . .	43.
CONCLUSION . . .	58.
APPENDIX . . .	63.
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . .	70.

INTRODUCTION

According to Chisaburo Yamada, Japanese influence on Western art can be divided into three phases: the first phase occurred during the Baroque and Rococo periods, dating from the second half of the 17th century to the early 19th century; the second phase was from the mid-19th century to the outbreak of World War II; and the third phase is from 1945 to the present time.¹ Western artists' attitudes toward Japanese art during these three phases were very different. Artists from the first phase appreciated Japanese art only for its exoticism and sensual beauty.² They were not attentive to the underlying principle of Japanese art. However, artists from the second phase approached Japanese art with a more positive attitude.³ They began to understand Japanese culture as foreign, rooted in totally different ideas than those of the West, even though, in general, they did not appreciate the fundamental ideal of Japanese culture.⁴ Artists from the third phase had strong doubts about Western civilization and industrialization. At this

¹Chisaburo Yamada, Japonisme in Art, (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1980), p.12

²ibid., p.12

³ibid., p.13

⁴ibid., p.12

stage, they genuinely understood the ideal and spirit of Japanese culture.⁵

During the second phase, especially between the late 19th and early 20th century, Japonisme, (the influence of Japanese art on Western art,) contributed to the development of modern Western art. By presenting what was seen in the West as a new sense of beauty and a different approach to nature, Japanese art led Western artists away from academic realism.⁶ Not only Japanese but other non-Western cultures inspired Western artists to turn away from realism. However, the important role of Japanese art was notable, particularly in Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Symbolism and Art Nouveau.⁷

In the late 19th century the influence of Japanese art on Western artists gave birth to different movements. For the Impressionists and the Post-Impressionists, Japanese prints, known as *Ukiyo-e*, were appreciated and found to be useful. Through study of *Ukiyo-e*, the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists liberated themselves from the classical conception of modeling and naturalistic illusionism. For example, they created paintings with flat surfaces of brilliant color arrangements.⁸

In Symbolism, spiritual inspiration, which was at the heart of Far Eastern art, stimulated symbolic realism and anti-objective

⁵ibid., p.16

⁶ibid., p.13

⁷Siegfried Wichmann, Japonisme (New York: Harmony Books, 1981), p.10

⁸ibid., p.10

reality.⁹ The emphasis on interior states or spirituality in Symbolist paintings was also characteristic of Far Eastern religious art, as found, for example, in Japanese Zen painting.

The beauty of curving lines and the naturalistic designs of Japanese fine and applied art contributed much to the creation to Art Nouveau.¹⁰ Artists of this movement adapted the naturalism of Japanese art in order to emphasize natural beauty against the dehumanization of industrialization and mechanization.¹¹ A similar development took place in the Arts and Crafts movement in America. Even though different reactions to Japanese art created individual styles, the inspiration of Japanese art moved Western style toward similar refinements, culminating in abstraction, which later led Western art to Modernism.

Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922) was a modern artist and art educator whose art style was influenced by Japonisme, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Symbolism and the doctrines of the Arts and Crafts movement.¹² Inspired by Japanese art, Dow created a new art theory and art style that liberated both his own and his American followers from academic and classical modes of representation.¹³

⁹ibid.

¹⁰ibid., p.15

¹¹Yamada, 1980, p.149

¹²Nancy Green, Arthur Wesley Dow and His Influence (Ithaca, New York: Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, 1990) p.7

¹³Many scholars such as Fenollosa, Chisolm, Lancaster, Moffatt, Hook, Meech and Green note Dow's contribution to Modern art. Their research will be discussed later.

The influence of Japanese art on Dow's art theory and work have been discussed by many critics and scholars. The first chapter will review chronologically the existing research on the impact of Japanese art on Dow to comprehend the diverse studies of this topic. This will be followed by an analysis of the influence of *Ukiyo-e* prints on Dow's prints, mainly his woodcuts, because the influence of Japanese art can be more particularly observed in his prints than his paintings. Since this topic has already been examined by Julia Meech and Gabriel Weisberg, I will focus on specific prints by the artist to analyze how he adopted the characteristics of Japanese art from his earlier to his later works. Finally I will discuss Japanese artists who were most influential to Dow. Chapter 3 will consider the reasons why Dow was attracted to Japanese art, by examining the theories of modern art dominant in the late 19th century and Dow's ideas about modern art. I will conclude by examining how Japanese visual expression of beauty, through Dow's perspective, contributed to the ideas of modern artists and their artistic practices.

Chapter 1. Critical Writing About Arthur Wesley Dow

Many writers have discussed the influence of Japanese art on Dow's artistic theory and his work. Two main approaches appear to have been followed. One focuses on the relationship between Fenollosa and Dow, clarifying how Fenollosa's thoughts, including his interpretations of Japanese art, effected Dow's theory and his work. The other discusses Dow's works more directly, examining how he adopted Japanese methods of representation. Since so much research about this topic exists, I would like to review this work in order to clarify the influence of Japanese art on Dow's work and to elucidate issues needing further research.

Ernest F. Fenollosa was the first critic to point out the influence of Japanese art on Dow's woodcut prints. Fenollosa wrote an introduction to the catalogue of Dow's first color print exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1895. In the catalogue Fenollosa praised Dow for "an independent use of oriental principles in a free application to the rendering of characteristic beauties in New England scenery."¹⁴

According to Fenollosa, principles derived from Japanese woodcut prints were new to Westerners in two respects: "first, in

¹⁴Ernest F. Fenollosa, (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), Special Exhibition of Color Prints, Designed, Engraved, and Printed by Arthur W. Dow (Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1895), p.3

that it deals with tones as shaded on, and printed from, flat wooden blocks; and second, in that it seeks through such tones to reach a composition of color as solid and intense as anything arrived at by water-color painting."¹⁵ In Western engraving, artists historically had captured the effect of shading by hatched lines and had not fully developed the use of color.¹⁶ Fenollosa claimed that Dow learned how to use color with tones to reach a solid and intense color composition through the study of old Japanese prints.¹⁷ Although Fenollosa does not use the word, *notan*, which means the contrast of light and dark, he indicates that various tones, created by the *notan* technique, make effective coloring for landscape pictures.¹⁸

Fenollosa emphasized the non-Japanese techniques of Dow's woodcut production, even though Dow adopted *Ukiyo-e* methods. While following *Ukiyo-e* practices, Dow performed all the necessary roles himself. He was the designer, carver, color mixer and printer,¹⁹ roles which in Japan were performed by different laborers. Fenollosa appreciated Dow's methods of woodcut production. Describing them as having "no unsympathetic machinery" and "no division of labor between hand and hand,"²⁰ Fenollosa agreed with Dow's concern about handcraftsmanship expressed through Dow's method of woodcut production.

¹⁵ibid., p.3

¹⁶ibid.

¹⁷ibid.

¹⁸ibid.

¹⁹ibid.

²⁰ibid., p.4-5

In the museum catalogue, Fenollosa did not suggest the reasons why Dow was inspired by Japanese art, nor why he was concerned with the humanity expressed through his method of woodcut production. Fenollosa concluded that Dow's woodcuts were "an epoch-making event" in Western art because Dow's individuality and originality, although inspired by Japanese art and methods, were particularly new to the West.²¹

Bunkyo Matsuki, a Japanese art dealer who administered the sale of Dow's estate in 1923, briefly noted the relationship between Fenollosa and Dow.²² In the estate auction catalogue, Matsuki suggested that Dow was inspired by Japanese art directly from the collections of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.²³ These collections were assembled by Fenollosa and brought to the museum about 1887. Matsuki also applauded Dow's creation of color woodcuts, noting that Dow alone performed the four roles of "painter, wood engraver, pigment concocter, and pad-printer."²⁴

Arthur Warren Johnson published a biography of Dow in 1934. In this book, Johnson examined the reasons why Dow was attracted to Japanese art and the influence of Fenollosa on Dow's theories.

Thus the life of Dow turned as the tide turns. He had drifted out of the sea of academic tradition and into new water of inspiration. ...In May,

²¹ibid., p.6

²²The American Art Galleries, The Important Private Collection of The Late Professor Arthur Wesley Dow (New York: The American Art Association, 1923), "Prefatory Note" by Matsuki.

²³ibid.

²⁴ibid., "The Ipswich Prints" by Matsuki.

Fenollosa, with a certain flair he had for the dramatic, opened a door and showed Dow two magnificent screens by Okio. Dow looked at them in silence for a space and then exclaimed, "Why can't I do that?" To this question Fenollosa replied, "You can if you dare, but you don't dare!" Dow instantly replied, "I will dare!" This pleased the Orientalist and he exclaimed, "You will, you will, and I dare you to do it."²⁵

One reason Dow searched non-western cultures, Johnson noted, was that Dow was questioning both French academic art and the commercialized Boston art circles.²⁶ Dow was struggling to establish his individual style as an American artist; therefore, he was looking to certain kinds of art that were not rooted in academic traditions.²⁷

As the weeks went on he became convinced that he was not a great painter, nor even an American painter, nor were any of those about him. Boston was but an artistic suburb, a back-wash of Paris, and Paris but a hard rock of dead and unyielding tradition.

Discouragement led as was natural to despair. Yet even then he did not put down his brushes but kept on in a struggle to perfect within the limitations of his training, ...But there was something wrong with his conception and he realized it.

...and there [Boston Public library] he began a course of reading and study in the history and

²⁵Arthur Warren Johnson, Arthur Wesley Dow, Historian - Artist - Teacher (Boston: The Ipswich Historical Society, 1934), p.56

²⁶ibid., p.53

²⁷ibid., p.53-4

evolution of art. ...He began with Egyptian art and paralleled it with Egyptian history. ...Then he transferred his interest to Aztec art.²⁸

The reason for Dow's strong attraction to Japanese art, and that of other foreign cultures, was that he realized how much Japanese art influenced his adored James McNeil Whistler and Joseph Pennell. At the same time, Japanese art, particularly the works of Hokusai, gave Dow an inspiration for composition and decorative effects.²⁹

As for Fenollosa's influence on Dow's artistic theories, Johnson observed that Fenollosa's interpretation of Japanese art was one of three critical sources for Dow's art theories as published in *Composition*.³⁰ The other two sources were Dow's own creative work and his knowledge of composition gained through teaching. Although Johnson recognized the influence of Fenollosa's ideas on Dow's theory, he does not comment further on how Dow's concepts are linked with those of Fenollosa.

These ideas (theory of composition) took origin from three sources; first, his study of Japanese art and the Fenollosa interpretation of the same; secondly, his own creative work when this knowledge had been put to the test of individual

²⁸ibid., p.53

²⁹ibid., p.54

³⁰ibid., p.61

practice; thirdly, the knowledge gained in teaching and in contact with students.³¹

According to Johnson, Dow thought that art should not be a mere truthful representation of nature but the "expression of an idea."³² For the ideal work of art, harmonious composition is essential, and is formed by the "synthesis of Line, Dark and Light (*notan*) and Color."³³ Dow believed that "pictorial and ornamental art are inseparable"³⁴ and strove for the "synthesis of Eastern art and Western art."³⁵

Johnson did not identify clearly the origin of these ideas or how Dow developed them. However, given their close association one may assume that Fenollosa's ideas about art and the characteristics of Japanese art influenced Dow's ideas.

Lawrence W. Chisolm further researched the connection and interaction between Fenollosa and Dow in his book, *Fenollosa: Far East and American Culture*, published in 1963. He established the Fenollosa - Dow relationship through a study of Fenollosa's contribution to modern American culture.³⁶ Chisolm discussed the contribution of Fenollosa to Dow's theories, as found in Dow's book, *Composition*. This work, he said, liberated American art

³¹ibid.

³²ibid.

³³ibid., p.61-2

³⁴ibid., p.56

³⁵ibid., p.57

³⁶Lawrence W. Chisolm, Fenollosa: Far East and American culture (New Heaven, London: Yale University Press, 1963), p.117

education from academic realism and toward an inclination of idealism.³⁷ As Chisolm stated:

Dow pointed to the universality of the grammar of Japanese art and launched his attack on the narrowly representational criteria of the academies. In Fenollosan language Dow maintained that beauty was a matter not of accurate description but of ideal synthesis.³⁸

...Composition, with the subtitle, "A Series of Exercises Selected from a New System of Art Education." Dow paid tribute to Fenollosa's key role in the formulation of the new system and launched a frontal attack on the orthodoxies of realistic drawing.³⁹

In evaluating the collaboration between Fenollosa and Dow in establishing a new art theory, Chisolm emphasized that the origin of Fenollosa's concepts of universalism and idealism were rooted in the writings of the sociologist and philosopher, Hegel.⁴⁰

Fenollosa's idea of universalism, the synthesis of East and Western culture, is based on Hegel's "world-spirit."⁴¹

"The History of the World travels from East to West," wrote Hegel, "for Europe is absolutely the end of history, Asia the beginning." In the New World he found "only an echo of the Old World," and he urged that America "abandon" the old ground

³⁷ibid., p.182-3

³⁸ibid.

³⁹ibid., p.187

⁴⁰ibid., p.25

⁴¹ibid.

of development, for "America is the land of the future."⁴²

Chisolm also claimed that "Fenollosa's aesthetics developed within this idealistic (Hegelian aesthetic) tradition"⁴³ and that Fenollosa found the ideal representation in Japanese art.⁴⁴

[Japanese art] is really far superior to modern cheap western art that describes any object at hand mechanically, forgetting the most important point, expression of Idea.⁴⁵

By describing Dow as an artist as well as teacher, and Fenollosa as a theorist, Chisolm presented Dow's artistic theories as parallel to those of Fenollosa. When Fenollosa, as an Imperial Commissioner, prepared the curriculum for the Tokyo Fine Arts Academy, which opened in 1889, he stressed that artists should learn the language of line, *notan* (light and dark), and color.⁴⁶ Chisolm wrote that Dow agreed with these ideas; "pictorial" and "decorative" art were used equally in Japanese art, and Dow insisted on the importance of "line, *notan*, and color" as "the trinity of power" for designing the picture.⁴⁷

Moreover, Chisolm pointed out the idealism underlying Dow's theories. He wrote that Dow attacked the narrow "representational

⁴²ibid.

⁴³ibid.

⁴⁴ibid., p.50

⁴⁵ibid.

⁴⁶ibid., p.81

⁴⁷ibid., p.181

criteria of the academies" in favor of the subjective representation of Japanese art.⁴⁸ Dow thought that "beauty was a matter not of accurate description but of ideal synthesis."⁴⁹

Chisolm additionally evaluated the contributions of Fenollosa's and Dow's theories to American art education, and the relationship between Fenollosa's perspective of Japanese art and Dow's artistic theories.⁵⁰

Clay Lancaster also focused on the connection between Fenollosa and Dow with respect to their artistic theories. In his article, "Synthesis: The Artistic Theory of Fenollosa and Dow", in *Art Journal* (1969), Lancaster claimed that the artistic theories of Fenollosa and Dow led to the beginning of the modern movement in American art. He wrote: "Fenollosa and Dow stood together in deploring the strict realism that stifled American art at the close of the nineteenth century."⁵¹

Through an examination of Fenollosa's writings, Lancaster concluded that Fenollosa's idealism derived from Platonic and Ruskinian ideas.⁵² Fenollosa thought that "visual representation in painting is limited to the level of a scientific text" and art, especially painting and sculpture, "should not be bound to mere reflection of things seen."⁵³ His idealism revealed the problems of

⁴⁸ibid., p.182

⁴⁹ibid., p.183

⁵⁰ibid., p.181-195

⁵¹Clay Lancaster, "Synthesis: The Artistic Theory of Fenollosa and Dow " *Art Journal*, vol. 28 (1969 Spring), p.286-7

⁵²ibid., p.287

⁵³ibid., p.286-7

contemporary Western art. According to Lancaster, Fenollosa thought that his concept of artistic "beauty" flourished in three time periods: "The first was five centuries before Christ at Athens; the second, twelve centuries after Christ at Hang-Chow; the third, fifteen centuries after Christ at Florence and Venice,"⁵⁴ After which contemporary Western art "has run dry with imitating the first and third."⁵⁵ As a result, he thought, Western art was lacking the unity of subject matter and form. To revive Western art, Fenollosa suggested studying the art of the Chinese Sung Dynasty, which synthesized "the beauty in the subject and the beauty in the pictorial form."⁵⁶ Lancaster noted that Fenollosa claimed to completely change the rigid methods of American art education by accepting Oriental manner of representation, particularly those of Japan and China.⁵⁷

Like Chisolm, Lancaster pointed out the relationship between Fenollosa's idealism and Dow's artistic theories, and emphasized the tremendous influence of Japanese idealistic representation on Dow's *Composition*.⁵⁸ Among the three elements of composition, "line, light-and-dark, and color," Dow preferred the Japanese term, *notan*, to the English words, light-and-dark, "shading" or

⁵⁴ibid., p.287

⁵⁵ibid.

⁵⁶ibid.

⁵⁷ibid.

⁵⁸ibid.

"spotting."⁵⁹ Lancaster noted that the Japanese term conveys the idea of "abstract harmony."⁶⁰

By mentioning Dow's students, such as Max Weber and Gerogia O'Keeffe, Lancaster concluded that Fenollosa and Dow's artistic theory contributed to liberating artistic styles from strict realism and led art to abstraction.⁶¹ Both Fenollosa and Dow found the ideal representation and abstract qualities of Japanese art, they then adopted these principles to American art.

Frederick C. Moffatt published the first scholarly book on Dow's philosophy and art work, *Arthur Wesley Dow*, in 1977. Moffatt described the influence of Japanese art, his interaction with Fenollosa's ideas, and the influence of current artistic doctrines, such as Art Nouveau and the Arts and Crafts movement, on Dow's art works after the 1890s. The significance of Moffatt's research lies in his examination of Dow's actual works to articulate how Dow adopted Japanese methods of representation.

Moffatt examined the influence of certain Japanese artists on Dow's works by comparing images from both cultures, Dow had access to Japanese art through Fenollosa's private collection and the Japanese collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.⁶² Moffatt was the first to point out, the influence of the Kano school and Sesshu on Dow's sketchbooks and ink drawings during the 1890s. He

⁵⁹ibid.

⁶⁰ibid.

⁶¹ibid.

⁶²Frederick, C. Moffatt, Arthur Wesley Dow (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), p.51

presented Dow's study of Sesshu's *haboku*, or splashed-ink technique and use of *notan*.⁶³

Moffatt wrote that "Dow moved easily between the realms of Sesshu, the Kano, Ukiyo-e, and the Great Decorators."⁶⁴ According to Moffatt, Dow studied the color and lines of the Rimpa, *Ukiyo-e*, and Shijo schools as decorative sources.⁶⁵ Moffatt also implied that Dow was able to define the trinity of artistic power in line, *notan*, and color through, the study of Japanese art because Dow emphasized the flat, simple and decorative qualities of the pictorial space resulting from these three elements.⁶⁶ As for composition, Moffatt found many Japanese devices in Dow's pictures, such as the bird's eye perspective, the high horizon line and the ambiguous treatment of distance.⁶⁷

Moffatt noted that Dow returned to making woodcuts in 1891 and continued to create them until late in his career. Through an examination of Dow's woodblock prints, Moffatt identified areas of Japanese influence.

First, Moffatt claimed that Dow followed the Japanese method of producing woodcuts, and observed that Dow also preferred using Japanese materials such as paper and baren.⁶⁸ This was during the time that Dow was involved with the doctrines of the English Arts and Crafts movement.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p.51.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p.53

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p.59

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.53-7

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.65

It was clearly a "Japanese method" Dow followed, but one especially adapted to the English arts-and-crafts doctrines he was embracing. For the artist, the distinct advantages of his operation were proved by its calculated simplicity its freedom from a requirement for a division of labor, and its results - prints that stood as independent works of art, not facsimiles of paintings.⁶⁹

While following traditional *Ukiyo-e* methods, Dow was "freed from a requirement of a division of labor."⁷⁰ His aversion to machinery and his preference for handmade qualities emphasized a sense of humanity parallel to that found in the philosophy of the Arts-and-Crafts movement.

Moffatt focused on the differences between the prints made prior to 1895 and the prints made after that year. For example, the early prints are smaller, they are more vertical in composition and they are crowded with images that are "treated with a brocade of vivid coloring."⁷¹ Later prints show simpler compositions, a preference for panoramic views, and more concern with varied textures.⁷²

Moffatt identified the influence of Art Nouveau and the Arts and Crafts movement on Dow's prints.⁷³ Dow's connection with Art Nouveau and its abstract qualities can be observed in his

⁶⁹ibid., p.66

⁷⁰ibid.

⁷¹ibid.

⁷²ibid.

⁷³ibid., p.76

lithographic poster for *Modern Art*, the cover page designs for Fenollosa's journal, *The Lotos*, and illustrations for Dow's book, *Composition*.⁷⁴ Moffatt claimed that the tendency toward Art Nouveau aesthetics increased in these later works compared to Dow's earlier works.

Moffatt also discussed Dow's involvement with Aestheticism. Dow was attracted to Japanese art, because Dow found the beauty in it to be a "real refinement of perception," a "higher aesthetic sense," "pure atmosphere," "extreme refinement of feeling," and "art of perfect taste."⁷⁵ These aspects of beauty were exactly what Dow wanted to represent in his pictures.

Through Moffatt's research, one can clearly see which Japanese artists particularly influenced Dow, what Dow learned from Japanese representation, how Dow applied these principles to his works, and why Dow was attracted to Japanese art.⁷⁶

In her dissertation, completed in 1987, Dorothy Hook focused on the philosophical interaction between Fenollosa and Dow. Hook stated that although they exchanged ideas to establish a new art theory and educational system, the basic concepts came from Fenollosa's idealism, universalism and aestheticism.⁷⁷

Hook's thesis examined documents for both Fenollosa and Dow. She noted that the origin of Fenollosa's ideas were rooted in

⁷⁴ibid., p.76-80

⁷⁵ibid., p.62

⁷⁶ibid., p.51-80

⁷⁷Dorothy Hook, Fenollosa and Dow: the Effect of an Eastern and Western Dialogue on American Art Education (Dissertation at The Pennsylvania State University, 1987)

Hegelian concepts of fine art.⁷⁸ For Hegel, the "beauty of art" does not exist in a simple imitation of nature but in an expression of a creative spirit. Fenollosa found such a spiritual quality in the ideal expressions of Japanese art.⁷⁹

On the relationship between Fenollosa and Dow, the centerpiece of her research, Hook explored how one influenced the other.

If Dow had never become friends with Fenollosa in 1891, most certainly his course of action would never have attained the same impetus and perhaps the same form of structure in Japanese philosophies and aesthetics of art. Dow was receptive to Fenollosa's ideas, viewed the issues in a generalized individual basis, and had the previous training to bring these ideas into contact with the student on a personal level.

Fenollosa greatly broadened Dow's outlook as well as set him up with a formula and a direction for implementing successful art principles. These principles, which Dow later incorporated in his textbook Composition as "progressive synthetic exercises," were based on the same ideas that Fenollosa implemented at the Tokyo Normal School of Art.⁸⁰

Although she noted the combined contribution of Fenollosa and Dow to American art education, Hook emphasized the tremendous philosophical influence Fenollosa had on Dow.

⁷⁸ibid., p.33

⁷⁹ibid.

⁸⁰ibid., p.175

In *Japonisme Comes to America* by Julia Meech and Gabriel P. Weisberg, published in 1990, Meech searched for the Japanese influence in Dow's graphic work.⁸¹ The significance of Meech's research is that it focuses on Dow's graphic art and shows the influence of both Japonisme and the Arts and Crafts movement. Japanese art contributed to "the service of social responsibility and the search for an indigenous, organic American culture."⁸² Meech stressed in particular the contribution of Fenollosa and Dow to American art and the birth of abstraction through Japanese influence, which rejected the literal representation previously favored in Western art.⁸³

Showing Dow's link with the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement, Meech emphasized Dow's dissatisfaction of the automation system of the *Ukiyo-e* production method, as had Fenollosa, Matsuki and Moffatt. Dow disagreed with the "impersonal division of labor" in producing woodcuts, and instead stressed his admiration of "personal craftsmanship."⁸⁴ This was because of Dow's stand against "modern standardization and mechanization," as well as his affinity with the concept of "handcraftsmanship," the Arts and Crafts ideal.⁸⁵

To ascertain the influence of certain Japanese artists on Dow, Meech searched for Japanese sources in the catalogue of Dow's

⁸¹Julia Meech and Gabriel P. Weisberg, Japonisme Comes to America (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1990)

⁸²ibid., p.163

⁸³ibid., p.165

⁸⁴ibid., p.169

⁸⁵ibid.

private collection. Dow built a huge collection of Japanese prints. Among several thousand prints, about five hundred of the best were sold at auction in 1923. The auction catalogue shows that Dow's various prints ranged from early 18th century works to Hiroshige's landscapes from the mid-19th century.⁸⁶

Meech examined how Dow rendered the ideal representation of Japanese art in his own work and the particular Japanese models the artist used. Following other scholars, Meech stated that Dow emphasized the creation of beautiful design, the arrangement of line, color and *notan* (contrasting masses of dark and light), features that could apply to painting, prints, photography and other applied arts.⁸⁷

Japanese influence was apparent in the vertical format, flat planes and decorative curving lines of Dow's early prints. According to Meech, Dow claimed that his earlier woodcut series, showing views along the Ipswich River, were inspired by Hiroshige's series of *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido*.⁸⁸ Ukiyo-e artists, such as Kuniyoshi and Tokyokuni were models for Dow's small vertical compositions and monochrome color schemes. Moreover, Hiroshige's series, *Famous Places in the Eastern Capital* was a particular model of subject and composition for Dow.⁸⁹ Dow had access to Hiroshige's prints, Meech wrote, "by the late nineteenth

⁸⁶ibid., p.165

⁸⁷ibid., p.169

⁸⁸ibid., p.168

⁸⁹ibid., p.169

century miniature replicas of Hiroshige's popular series were in production for the tourist trade," and "Dow may have collected these, as well."⁹⁰

Dow's later prints display simplified compositions, and abstract style.⁹¹ Examples are found in Dow's lithographic poster for the 1896 exhibition, and in his woodcuts, *Rain in May*, dating from 1908, and the *Moonrise* series of 1910-15. Dow's poster reflected the simplified manner of Hiroshige with its curvilinear lines, that showed his inspiration from the American Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts movement. In Dow's woodcuts, there is a less decorative style, and these move closer to abstraction. Meech claimed that Dow's late style would "move towards modernism."⁹² This was in part due to the influence of Japanese contemporary *Ukiyo-e* artists, whose styles are abstract and patterned, which can be seen in Dow's *Moonrise*.⁹³

Although she observed that Dow's later style increasingly displayed abstract qualities, the factors that influenced the movement in this direction are unclear. Is this lack of clarity due to Dow's adherence to aestheticism, his inspiration from the abstract style of contemporary Japanese artists, or his concern with color effects?

Nancy Green's *Arthur Wesley Dow and His Influence*, published in an exhibition catalogue in 1990, is another integrated work

⁹⁰ibid.

⁹¹ibid., p.178

⁹²ibid.

⁹³ibid.

about Dow's prints and his artistic theory. Green focused on Dow's concern with color effects and pointed out that Dow's discovery of Japanese prints changed his palette to brighter tones.⁹⁴ Concerning Dow's experiments with color, she noted that Dow tried to discover new color effects "by printing one on top of another,"⁹⁵ resulting in the exploration of subtle color shifts, similar to *Ukiyo-e* coloring.

Dow's adoption of Japanese principles can be found in his earliest prints, that date before 1895. Green observed the following Japanese characteristics in these prints: Japanese pillar style, unusual perspectives, and truncated forms of objects.⁹⁶

Green also noted the influence of Art Nouveau designs in combination with Japanese principles in Dow's lithographic poster, *Modern Art*, dating from 1895.⁹⁷ Dow's prints from the mid-1890s showed a more "straightforward partnership of eastern and western traditions in art" than that found in other American artists. Dow's style combined "American landscape" and "an impressionistic approach to light" with "oriental decoration and composition."⁹⁸

In his later prints, such as *Moonrise*, *August Moon*, and *Marsh Creek*, dating from about 1905, Dow concentrated on the depiction of the changing colors of the day. Green emphasized Dow's experiments as a colorist, his interest in depicting light effects and working

⁹⁴Nancy Green, Arthur Wesley Dow and His influence (New York: Herber F. Hohnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, 1990), p.10

⁹⁵ibid.

⁹⁶ibid.

⁹⁷ibid., p.11

⁹⁸ibid.

out color variations, and his concern with tonal effects.⁹⁹ Dow never wavered from Japanese influence after his first discovery in 1891,¹⁰⁰ and his later prints emphasized flat color areas, simplistic beauty, and design qualities.

Green found an increased Oriental flavor in the woodcut, *Rain in May*, which was created after Dow's travels to Japan in 1903. This print is similar to Hokusai and Hiroshige's depiction of atmospheric effects like snow, rain, sunshine, mist and wind.¹⁰¹ Like the Japanese artists, Dow was concerned with varying textures and color effects. He worked on several variations of this print before rendering the slashes of rain.¹⁰² Green described this print as his best known work for "the soft beauty of the landscape and the precise handling of the rain itself."¹⁰³

Finally Green examined Dow's impact on his students. Georgia O'Keeffe, one of the most famous, appreciated her teacher's theories for their style of emotional rather than realistic detail and the rendering of "personal expression and abstraction."¹⁰⁴ As Dow stated, "a study of Japanese art derived from the drawn line, and the elusive suggested tones ...[gives]... the same kind of experience that music gives."¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ibid.

¹⁰⁰ibid., p.14

¹⁰¹ibid., p.15

¹⁰²ibid.

¹⁰³ibid.

¹⁰⁴ibid., p.16

¹⁰⁵ibid.

Like Moffatt and Meech, Green noted that Dow's work became increasingly abstract during his later years. Even though Green does not directly mention the reason for this increasing abstraction, one may assume that Dow's inclination towards abstraction was caused by his intention to create visual art similar to music.

This review of the literature about Dow highlights several issues. First, there is the influence of Fenollosa's love of Japanese art and its idealism, rooted in the writings of Plato and Hegel, on Dow's theories and his works. Second, Dow held the concept that art should not be a mere imitation of nature, but an expression of an idea. Fenollosa found this notion in Japanese art; he thought that Japanese art conveyed strong spirituality because of its abstract and simplified forms. This is one reason why Dow was attracted to Japanese art.¹⁰⁶ Dow also found Japanese art similar in its tenets with aestheticism and the Arts and Crafts movement, which were popular at the turn of the century.¹⁰⁷

The influence of *Ukiyo-e* prints, especially those of Hokusai and Hiroshige, on Dow's prints has been noted by many authors. According to Meech, Dow was greatly influenced by the *Ukiyo-e* artists, Kuniyoshi, Tokyokuni and Hiroshige.¹⁰⁸ In particular, Hiroshige's series of the *Fifty-three Stations the Tokaido* and the *Famous Places in the Eastern Capital* had a considerable impact in

¹⁰⁶Chisolm, 1963; Lancaster, 1969; Moffatt, 1977; Hook, 1987; Meech and Weisberg, 1990; Green, 1990.

¹⁰⁷Moffatt, 1977; Meech and Weisberg, 1990; Green, 1990.

¹⁰⁸Meech and Weisberg, 1990, p.169

subject and composition on Dow's woodcuts.¹⁰⁹ Building on this research, I would like to propose further artistic models by comparing certain *Ukiyo-e* works with those of Dow.

Finally Dow's style changed from his earlier to his later works. Prints made before 1895 show crowded images, vivid color, and Japanese compositional devices. In the later prints, Dow's work became more abstract and simplified, exploring varying colors and tones.¹¹⁰ However, the particular reasons for his move toward abstract styles has not yet been discussed. Possible reasons may be suggested by an examination of Fenollosa's and Dow's writings and publications to determine why Dow was attracted to Japanese art.

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*

¹¹⁰Moffatt, 1977; Meech and Weisberg, 1990; Green, 1990.

Chapter 2. Dow's Prints And Ukiyo-e

Fenollosa described Dow's woodcuts as being the result of "an independent use of oriental principles in a free application to the rendering of characteristic beauties in New England scenery."¹¹¹ By incorporating the concepts, forms and techniques of Japanese art, Dow developed a new aesthetic in his pictorial woodcut prints. This is exactly what Fenollosa had been expecting from the fusion of Eastern and Western art. Julia Meech identified the Japanese artists such as Kuniyoshi, Toyokuni and Hiroshige as possible sources for Dow. She referred to Hiroshige's *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido* and *Famous Places in the Eastern Capital* as models for subject and composition.¹¹² In order to confirm that Hiroshige's works, particularly his series the *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido*, and the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* are directly related to Dow's prints, I will discuss the impact of Japanese art, especially those of Hiroshige, on the development of Dow's individual style.

¹¹¹Ernest Fenollosa, Special Exhibition of Color Prints. Designed. Engraved and printed by Arthur Wesley Dow (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1895), p.3

¹¹²Meech and Weisberg, 1990, p.169

Dow and Hiroshige

On the evening of February 24, 1891, Dow came upon Japanese art, illustrations of Hokusai's prints, at the Boston Public Library.¹¹³ This was the first time Dow felt a strong inspiration from Japanese art, and there after he turned away from the academic style in order to create one with greater self-expression.

Fenollosa described Dow's woodcuts as the "rendering of characteristics beauties" of New England landscapes; creating a beautiful landscape with "the air of poetry"¹¹⁴ was always Dow's concern. Dow loved natural scenes, especially the landscapes of New England where he was born, and tried to capture their natural beauty throughout his life.¹¹⁵ What Dow wanted to express in his picture was his poetic impression of a natural scene, such as a sunset, a sunrise, a moonrise, or a rainy day.

Dow's enthusiasm for poetic nature paralleled the Japanese appreciation of natural scenery. Japanese sentimental scenery for Nature was such that Japanese painters had created poetic and sentimental landscapes since the 10th century.¹¹⁶ Hiroshige, a famous *Ukiyo-e* master, was one artist who tried in his pictures to express an empathy with nature, which he saw as the subjective reflection of human feelings such as love, joy and sorrow.¹¹⁷ He attempted to convey these human emotions through atmospheric

¹¹³Moffatt, 1977, p.48

¹¹⁴Johnson, 1934, p.27

¹¹⁵ibid.

¹¹⁶Muneshige Narazaki, Study in Nature (California: Kodansha, 1970), p.15

¹¹⁷ibid., p.20

landscape pictures. Fenollosa admired Hiroshige's extraordinary rendering of atmospheric effects in his prints. He wrote "In special atmospheric effects, such as moonlight, snow, mist, and rain, he [Hiroshige] achieved a variety of effects such as neither Greek nor modern European art had ever known."¹¹⁸

In a comparison of Hokusai's work with that of Hiroshige, one can recognize which artist was closer to Dow's notion of artistic creativity. Muneshige Narazaki described the difference between them:

Hokusai's work is subjective only in the sense that everything he depicts is infused with his own great vitality. ...Hiroshige is romantic, evocative, and poetic. His prints summon up a mood that is deeply imbued with the artist's own sensitive, compassionate personality. ...Hokusai's humanity is more robust and dynamic, whereas Hiroshige is more resigned and melancholy.¹¹⁹

Hiroshige's picture are tranquil, peaceful and sentimental. Through simplified pictorial compositions, Hiroshige conveyed a poetic feeling of nature. According to Fenollosa, Hiroshige could create "something here in feeling which even Hokusai cannot reach."¹²⁰ It is Hiroshige, rather than Hokusai, who could create the poetic and

¹¹⁸Ernest F. Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese & Japanese Art* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1921), vol. II, p.204

¹¹⁹Narazaki, 1970, p.27

¹²⁰Ernest F. Fenollosa, *The Master Of Ukiyoe. A Complete Historical Description Of Japanese Paintings And Color Prints Of The Genre School* (New York: W. H. Ketcham, 1896), p.113

atmospheric landscapes fitting Dow's own notion of artistic creativity. Hiroshige emphasized his impression of nature and was more concerned with expressing his inner emotions and sensibilities in his work.

It is well known that Dow was first fascinated by Hokusai's book illustrations.¹²¹ However, it is probable that Dow's woodcuts were more influenced by Hiroshige than by any other Japanese artist, although Dow's artistic theory was inspired by not only *Ukiyo-e* but also by traditional Japanese ink painting technique represented by Sesshu and the Kano school and the decorative style represented by the Rimpa and the Shijo school.¹²²

Dow's Private Collection

A catalogue of Dow's private collection, published after his death in 1923,¹²³ is one source that reveals his knowledge of Japanese art. Dow's diverse collection shows his affection for Japanese art; he assembled woodcut prints, lacquers, portttery and illustrated books.¹²⁴ These include many distinctive Japanese styles such as Sesshu's ink paintings, works from the Kano and the Tosa

¹²¹Johnson, 1934; Moffatt, 1977; Hook, 1987; Meech and Weisberg, 1990; and Green, 1990

¹²²Moffatt, 1977, p.51-3

¹²³Meech and Weisberg, 1990, p.165

¹²⁴The American Art Galleries, The Important Private Collection of the Late Professor Arthur Wesley Dow (New York: The American Art Association, 1923)

schools, paintings and lacquers by Korin, pottery by kensan, and large number of *Ukiyo-e* prints.¹²⁵

Among *Ukiyo-e* artists, Hokusai and Hiroshige are notable; the Hiroshige collection, especially, is very comprehensive. Dow collected Hiroshige's series such as the *Fifty-three Stations of Tokaido*, *Sixty-nine Stations of the Kisokaido*, *Famous Places of the Eastern Capital*, *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, and *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*. This shows Dow's special interest in Hiroshige's prints, which Dow used as models for his own.

Dow's Early Woodcuts

Dow's use of Japanese ink painting techniques can be seen clearly in his drawing. For Dow line was an important factor in producing a harmonious spacing with "a beautiful movement of rhythm"¹²⁶ Dow tried to achieve a rhythmic arrangement of spacing through Japanese lines.¹²⁷ *Notan* comes directly from the Japanese, meaning "dark, light." The term "refers to the quantity of light reflected, or the massing of tones of different values."¹²⁸ Moffatt pointed out the influence of Sesshu's ink painting such as the blurred edges, spontaneous lines and spiritual intensity in Dow's

¹²⁵ibid.

¹²⁶Arthur Wesley Dow, "Talks on Appreciation of Art," The Delineator, January 1915, No. I

¹²⁷Hook, 1987, p.145. She quotes Dow's sentence: "...there is always in the Oriental a hidden rhythm or something more than the visible line." from "Modernism in Art" The American Magazine of Art 8, 1917, p.116

¹²⁸Arthur Wesley Dow, Composition (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1916), p.7

sketchbooks and ink drawings made during 1890.¹²⁹ The ink drawing reproduced here as Figure 1 shows Dow's enthusiasm for Japanese ink painting techniques such as *haboku*, or the splashed-ink technique, rhythmic line qualities akin to calligraphy, and the contrast of masses in different tones.

Besides practicing with black-and-white pictures, Dow experimented with color effects in his woodcuts after 1891.¹³⁰ Like the Japanese representation of simple beauty, Dow successfully expressed the simple and harmonious beauty of the New England landscape.

Among his earliest color prints, Dow created a series of ten works, called *Along Ipswich River*, dating from 1893 to 1895, which show view of the river. Some Japanese characteristics can be seen in these prints. The series reveals how Hiroshige's *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido* inspired Dow.¹³¹ A series of prints of landscapes is a very Japanese idea, both Hiroshige and Hokusai created series prints, such as the Mt. Fuji series, the famous view series, and the river scene series.

Dow's compositional devices, such as truncated forms, asymmetry, and extremely high or low viewpoints, are also derived from Japanese sources.¹³² These characteristics, often used by French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, can be observed particularly in the pictures of Hokusai and Hiroshige. Such

¹²⁹Moffatt, 1977, p.51

¹³⁰Meech and Weisberg, 1990, p.168

¹³¹ibid., p.168

¹³²Moffatt, 1977; Meech, 1990; and Green, 1990

compositional devices were exaggerated by Hiroshige, as seen in his series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*.¹³³

Dow's early prints also show the influence of Hiroshige. A comparison between these artists' prints reveals Dow's strong interest in compositional devices, inspired by those of Hiroshige. I believe Dow got the idea of making some of his own compositions directly from Hiroshige's *Ukiyo-e*, especially the *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido* and *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*.

Dow's *Harbor Scene* (Fig. 2), dating from 1895, displays the same compositional form as Hiroshige's *Benkei Moat from Soto-Sakurada to Kojimachi* (Fig. 3) from the series *One Hundred Famous View of Edo*. A truncated triangle mast of a yacht on a broad and gently curving river in *Harbor Scene* echoes Hiroshige's triangular banks and zigzag moat. This is an example of Dow's adaptation of Hiroshige's zigzag composition. A small tower in the distance in the *Harbor Scene* is similar to the Japanese temple tower placed in the background of the Hiroshige's print.

Along Ipswich River (Fig. 4), dating from 1890, also shows a Japaneseque composition, seen in the close-up and truncated forms of the irises. Hiroshige's *Horikiri: The Iris Gardens* (Fig. 5) from *One Hundred Views of Edo* can be considered as a model for Dow's print. This subject is also seen in Vincent van Gogh's famous painting, *Irises* (Fig. 6) which shows the close-up objects and the cropping of the scene. Dow already knew the works of artists who were inspired by *Ukiyo-e* prints from his stay in France, therefore,

¹³³Julian Bicknell, *Hiroshige in Tokyo* (San Francisco: Pomergrante Artbooks, 1994), p.103

he was influenced by the ideas and techniques of these European artists as well.

An untitled print (Fig. 7), dating from 1895, is a good example of Dow's adoption of Japanese asymmetrical composition. The cluster of houses on the left bank contrasts with the spatial area of the river on the right and draws the viewer's eye from left to right. The depiction of a large truncated house next to smaller houses along the diagonal line of the river bank gives a sense of deep distance. It shows exactly Hiroshige's experiments with western perspective as seen in his *Narumi: Arimatsu Shibori* (Fig. 8) from the *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido*. Dow re-imported Hiroshige's interpretation of western perspective as rendered in this print.¹³⁴

The bridge is a popular subject among Western artists who were inspired by Japanese art.¹³⁵ Dow also chose the bridge for the subject of his vertical composition, *Ipswich Bridge* (Fig. 9), dating from about 1895. In this print, Dow took a low viewpoint to depict a scene that emphasizes the reflection of structures in the water. Taking an extremely high or low view point to picture a scene is a characteristic of Hiroshige's. Hiroshige's bridge picture, *Ryogoku Bridge* (Fig. 10), is a clear example of the low viewpoint and asymmetrical composition. James McNeil Whistler's painting, *Old Battersea Bridge: Nocturne in Blue and Gold* (Fig. 11), also inspired by Hiroshige's print, shows the poetic

¹³⁴Hiroshige's experiments with Western style can be considered one of reasons for Dow's attraction for Hiroshige's prints.

¹³⁵Siegfried Wichmann, *Japonisme* (New York: Harmony Books, 1981), p.139

expression as well as the compositional devices, such as the low viewpoint and the cropping of scene. Since Dow admired Whistler very much,¹³⁶ Whistler's picture can also be considered as an important sources for Dow's print.

One of Dow's finest color lithographs is *Modern Art* (Fig. 12), dating from 1895 and created for a poster to advertise the journal of the same name.¹³⁷ This is a typical example of Hiroshige's zigzag compositional style, as seen in *Basho's Hermitage and Camellia Hill on the Kanda Aqueduct at Seiguchi* (Fig. 13) from the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*. As Moffatt and Green have noted, the poster shows an abstract and Art Nouveau quality;¹³⁸ the flowing lines of the flower motif in the frame are obviously influenced by Art Nouveau, but the unnatural curving of Hiroshige's tree branches in *Basho's Hermitage and Camellia Hill* might be considered another source of inspiration. Hiroshige's other print, *Chiyodagaike Pond* (Fig. 14), shows the reflection of the trees in the water, and can also be considered an inspiration for Dow's *Modern Art*.

The earlier prints discussed above emphasize simple forms, decorative qualities and flat planes. Without modeling or three-dimensional perspective, these prints abandoned the style of naturalistic illusionism in favor of simple beauty, and can be seen to show the influence of *Ukiyo-e* on Dow's woodcuts.

¹³⁶Johnson, 1934, p.54

¹³⁷Moffatt, 1977, p.76

¹³⁸Moffatt, 1977, p.76; Green, 1990, p.11

For example, *Bent of a River* (Fig. 15), dating from 1895, parallels Hiroshige's *Chiryu: Horse Fair in Early Summer* (Fig. 16) from the *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido*. It is likely that Dow rendered Hiroshige's horizontal composition as a vertical composition. The decorative featured tree in an open field in Hiroshige's picture is moved off-center in the foreground in Dow's print. By adopting Hiroshige's zigzag composition Dow shows increasingly decorative qualities through the use of the flat plane, an unnaturally curved bend, and expressive coloring.

The color composition in Dow's earlier prints is bright; Moffatt described it as "a brocade of vivid coloring."¹³⁹ The *Nishiki-e*, or brocade print, is famous for its vivid color schemes. The color in *Ukiyo-e* prints was not used for making objects appear true to nature but was applied to make the picture vividly appealing to spectators. Hiroshige's series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* is famous for its "bright coloring and a distinctive composition."¹⁴⁰ The series can be considered one of Dow's sources in designing his color schemes as well as his composition. The *Harbor Scene* (Fig. 2) and the riverside scene in the untitled print (Fig. 7) show solid and vivid coloring with subtle change of dark to light like those found in Western watercolor paintings.

¹³⁹Moffatt, 1977, p.66

¹⁴⁰Henry D. Smith II and Amy G. Poster (The Brooklyn Museum), Hiroshige: One Hundred Famous Views of Edo (New York: George Braziller Inc., 1986), p.12

Dow's Later Woodcuts

After 1895 Dow's prints show a decreasing concern for Japanese compositional devices; in contrast, these prints reveal an increased interest in simple and harmonious spacing, texture and color schemes composed of hue, value and intensity. The exploration of these elements display a more simplified and abstract structure than found in his earlier prints. According to Dow, color varies not only in hue, but in value from light to dark, and intensity from bright to gray (dull).¹⁴¹ By adopting the contrast of dark and light in Far Eastern ink painting, Dow explored the effect of various tones of different values in his color prints, which makes the coloring more evocative. Following his interest in color, Dow recomposed the same series of prints several times in different color schemes, just as Hiroshige experimented with different color effects in the same picture. Hiroshige also adopted the contrast of masses in dark and light tones used in ink painting techniques to his color prints in order to depict atmospheric conditions. Hiroshige applied bright colors such as red and blue with subtle gradations and subdued hues to explore the full range of bright pigmentation.¹⁴² His balanced and harmonious color arrangements in various values are applied effectively in depicting picturesque skies and rivers in misty, windy, snowy, sunset, sunrise, and moonrise scenes.

The Calm House and *The Yellow House*, both dating from 1910, show Dow's experiments with color schemes. They are the same

¹⁴¹Dow, 1916, p.100

¹⁴²Smith II, 1986, p.12

composition as *The Blue House* but in different color schemes. Dow created different color versions of *The Calm House*; *The Calm House* in winter (Fig. 17), at night (Fig. 18), and a spring scene, *The Yellow House*. Like Impressionists, Dow experimented with depicting different light conditions by coloring and tones, such as white snow scene with a dark house, and a dark night scene with a darker house. As Impressionists learned how to depict light conditions from the Japanese print artists, it is probable that Dow was also inspired by Hiroshige's print, a snow scene at night in Kanbara. (Fig. 19)

Dow's exploration of color to depict atmospheric conditions such as sunset, moonlight, rainy and night scenes can be seen in the following prints: *Bend of a River* (Fig. 20), *Flowering Orchard* (Fig. 21), *Evening Glow, Willows in Bloom, The Desert* (Fig. 22) (in two color variations), *August Moon* (Fig. 23), *Moonrise* (Fig. 24), *Marsh Creek* (Fig. 25) and *Rain in May* (Fig. 26).

Dow had applied vivid color in his earlier works. However, his later prints show an increasing development of coloration with the value effects. Color became limited but was harmoniously arranged with values and intensity; the harmonious relation of softer and warmer hues with various tones and values explored a range of coloring.

The print, *Bend of River* (Fig. 20), depicts a sunset scene. Although a limited yellowish color, reflecting sunlight, is applied over the picture surface, the range of color is expanded. Because of varied values, the color of each mass is slightly different and combines to depict a gentle and impressive sunlight.

The tree prints, *Flowering Orchard* (Fig. 21), *Evening Glow* and *Willow in Bloom*, also show Dow's exploration of color. He depicts different times of the day by applying different coloration. Dow's same experiments with color for depicting light conditions can be seen in his three prints, *August Moon* (Fig. 23), *Moonrise* (Fig. 24) and *Marsh Creek* (Fig. 25). He experimented with different color schemes to depict how moonlight effects dark night. Dow depicts in clear and bright full moon night in *Moonrise*, a darker moon night in *Marsh Creek*, and a clear full moon night in *August Moon*. Contrasts dark and light is a valuable vehicle for depicting night scenes. Dow portrayed these night scenes in moon light by a limited color palette with varied values of a subtle transition from dark to light.

Dow's later works show fewer compositional devices and simpler structures. These prints portray similar panoramic views of landscapes including flat marshes, a river, a creek, and a pond depicted from a high viewpoint. Dow did not render extremely enlarged and truncated forms in the foreground or zigzag compositions, elements often observed in his earlier prints. Dow's later structures became more restrained. However, Dow did not abandon Japanese composition. One may find similarities between Dow's later prints and Hiroshige's *Benten Shrine; Inokashira Pond* (Fig. 27) showing a typical "bird's eye view" perspective. Dow's sense of distance, the relationship between foreground and background, became more and more ambiguous and abstract. At the same time, the style of Dow's later prints became more abstract.

Because Dow omitted the details of things, the forms of his prints became more simplified and essential.

An outstanding print, *Rain in May* (Fig. 26), dating from about 1908, show Dow's increasing abstract structure and development of gradation in the color print. The composition shows a Japanese "bird's-eye view" perspective, high horizon and an ambiguous treatment of distance. However, there are fewer compositional devices than in Dow's earlier prints. Here the style is still flat, but has a simplified and less decorative quality, even simpler than that found in *Ukiyo-e*. With a lack of detail, calligraphic flowing lines divide the picture space into simplified masses. These masses or shapes are arranged on the same picture plane. Hence objects such as trees, hills, streams, marsh and sky are drawn very simple. The more structure is simplified, the more the abstract quality of the print increases.

This print is the finest example of arrangement of tones and colors. In this print the tonal harmony of subtle values shows Dow's adaptation of *notan* (濃淡) technique of Zen ink painting. Harry Mayne's *House* (Fig. 28) from the *Composition* shows Dow's experiment with *notan* technique to Western black and white drawing; the picture shows black color in five values, such as white, light gray, middle gray, dark gray and black. Dow applied more than five values of colors for the *Rain in May*. The color is very limited, only green, blue and yellow are applied. However, the arrangement of value from light to dark makes color effects deep and profound. The arrangement of tones and colors in this print is used for not only depicting a mysterious mood but also giving the sense of

distance often found in Japanese prints like Hiroshige's *Benten Shrine* (Fig. 27). Foreground objects are drawn darkly to make them appear with a gradual value transition from dark to light to reach an almost colorless sky. The harmonious tone-relations with limited colors effectively expresses the mysterious beauty of a rainy landscape in May.

Through a simplified structure and the harmonic relation between tone and color, Dow developed a mysterious poetic beauty conveying "musical harmony,"¹⁴³ similar to that found in Hiroshige's works. Hiroshige's compositions, especially as represented in the *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* and the *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido*, were much more influential in Dow's earlier prints than in his later prints. Dow, in his earlier work, adopted Hiroshige's compositional styles including the use of zigzag, diagonal, asymmetrical and truncated elements. However, in his later work, Dow was more concerned with depicting atmospheric conditions by exploring the harmonious unity of simple and rhythmic spacing, coloration and tone-relation. Dow's exploration of gradation technique from Zen ink painting made his color prints more quiet and subdued, in contrast to the brocade quality of his earlier prints. At the same time, his structure and style became simpler and more abstract. Dow's increasingly abstract style and sensuous color in his later prints powerfully expresses an "air of poetry and mystery."¹⁴⁴ The feeling which comes from his later prints, especially *Rain in May* and the moonlight series, is very close to

¹⁴³ibid., p.54

¹⁴⁴Johnson, 1934, p.27

that included by Hiroshige's sensitivities poetic scenes depicting rain, snow, wind, sunset and moonlight.

In his early period, Dow was very influenced by Hiroshige in develop his composition; however, Dow later became increasingly interested in conveying poetic atmosphere. Dow's structure became simpler, but his interest in exploring color and gradation relation increased. Dow's established style is close to abstraction and is simpler than Hiroshige's *Ukiyo-e*, and expresses Dow's inner emotions. This is the style of Dow's personal expression.

Chapter 3. Idealism and Dow's Artistic Style

Dow's simple and abstract woodcut style after the mid-1890s directly conveys the sensuous beauty of the New England landscape. As Clay Lancaster points out, the contribution of Dow's work liberated American art from strict realism; at the same time, it helped to give birth to abstraction, which led to American Modernism.¹⁴⁵ In other words, the ideal representation of Japanese art, through Fenollosa and Dow's perspectives, indirectly contributed to the birth of American Modernism. As some scholars and artists in the second half of the 19th century have pointed out, Japanese paintings of Zen priests, the Kano and Rimpa schools are not mere illusionistic representations of nature but the expressions of the artists' inner emotions and spirits. Particularly, the style of Zen paintings is simple, abstract and essential rather than realistic. Dow was an artist who learned from this more abstract manner of Japanese representation and used it to establish his own style. Dow's woodcuts were greatly influenced by the *Ukiyo-e* print, however, his mature style after the mid-1890s shows a quality more abstract even than *Ukiyo-e*. In order to understand the reasons for Dow's move towards abstraction, I would like to explore, first, why western artists who preceded Dow looked

¹⁴⁵Lancaster, 1969, p.287

to Japanese art. Second, I will present the way Japanese representation of beauty contributes to Dow's move to abstraction through the examination of Dow's, as well as Fenollosa's, writings about modern art.

The Problems in Western Art

When Japan opened its doors to the world, European realist painting had reached its peak and was seeking new directions. European applied arts were seen to suffer from deteriorating artistic quality. Because of industrial mass-production, the applied arts in Europe were losing both their beauty and spirituality.¹⁴⁶

The artists who opposed the science and technology of Western society did so for what they saw as a loss of spirituality. Industrialization found its way into works of art and consequently sacrificed beauty for commercialism. The art critic James Jackson Jarves was concerned that European artists depended too much on scientific techniques in order to paint objects that looked real through the rendering of perfect modeling and tint. He wrote:

European art of our time has a marked tendency towards the scientific extreme, contenting itself over-much with the dumb show of material objects, and finding its supreme satisfaction in their outward likeness. Japanese art tips the aesthetic scale towards the other extreme, paying less heed to the grammar of art, and bestowing its greatest

¹⁴⁶Yamada, 1980, p.15

attention on the vivid rendering of the specific motive in its highest scale of idealization.¹⁴⁷

Jarves pointed out that it was a fallacy in modern theory that "genuine art consists of a blind adherence to nature."¹⁴⁸ Art does not imitate nature, but the artist can learn and study the methods, laws and principles, derived from nature, and subsequently could invent, imagine, and create art works. Artists, according to Jarves, should be concerned with the representation of "specific motive in its highest scale of idealization."¹⁴⁹

Like Jarves, Fenollosa thought that contemporary Western art was too concerned with the depiction of accurate form based on scientific techniques. In the Report of the Japanese Fine Arts Commission, which went to Europe in 1886-7 to research art institutions, Fenollosa, who was one of the commission members, stated that between the 12th and late 15th centuries, the unity of beauty in Idea (subject) and the form of Western art, that was not based on the classical style, had rapidly developed. However, he continued, after the 16th century, artists were too eager to study scientific techniques, such as anatomy and chiaroscuro, in order to create art works that were true to nature. Artists lost an interest in spiritual insights and the knowledge of how to reveal the beauty

¹⁴⁷James Jackson Jarves, A Glimpse at the Art of Japan (Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1984 [first published in 1876]), p.44-45

¹⁴⁸ibid., p.165

¹⁴⁹ibid., p.45

of a subject.¹⁵⁰ Fenollosa thought that Western art was more scientific than its more spiritual Eastern counterpart; hence he concluded that Western art was inferior to Eastern art.¹⁵¹ He asserted that classical Japanese art was superior to that of the West because it expressed the idea at the heart of the painting.¹⁵²

Okakura Kakuzo, a pupil of Fenollosa, agreed with Jarves and Fenollosa about the loss of spirituality in Western art. Okakura criticized Western industrialization for destroying artistic inspiration. He thought that industrialism sacrificed art because the purpose of industrial art was not to attain aesthetic quality, but to make cheap mass-produced objects.¹⁵³ Artists were forced to be art-making machines; they were asked to produce as many pieces as they could.¹⁵⁴ According to Okakura, Western artists became more concerned with "the hand [rather] than the soul, the technique [rather] than the man."¹⁵⁵ Therefore, Okakura thought, traditional Japanese art could express a higher spiritual awakening than Western art. Okakura's ideas about Japanese art versus Western art were based on concepts of idealism versus materialism. Okakura's anti-materialism was expressed by his words: "We boast that we have

¹⁵⁰Akiko Murakata, The Ernest F. Fenollosa papers (Japan: Museum Shuppan, 1982), Japanese Edition vol. II, p.49-66

¹⁵¹Chisolm, 1963, p.50

¹⁵²ibid., p.60

¹⁵³Okakura Tenshin, Okakura Tenshin Zensyu (Japan: Heibonsha, 1979), p.84

¹⁵⁴ibid.

¹⁵⁵Okakura Kaokuzo, Book of Tea (Tokyo: Kenkkyusha, 1952), p.70

conquered Matter and forget that it is Matter that has enslaved us.¹⁵⁶

For Okakura, art existed to express the thoughts of each epoch as a mirror of people's minds; therefore, art should flourish when the Idea, or spirit, was dominant over Matter. He wrote:

Nothing is more hallowing than the union of kindred spirits in art. At the moment of meeting, the art lover transcends himself. At once he is and is not. He catches a glimpse of Infinity, ...Freed from the fetters of matter, his spirit moves in the rhythm of things. It is thus that art becomes akin to religion and ennobles mankind. It is this which makes a masterpiece something sacred.¹⁵⁷

Jarves, Fenollosa and Okakura also shared the belief that contemporary Western art was losing its spirituality in scientifically accurate representations of the subject. This lack of spirituality in art resulted from the progress in Western science and technology.

Materialism removed not only spirituality but was also the cause of a decline in aesthetic quality in art. Jarves thought that a large number of low-quality works were produced in Europe and America with the development of Western industry and the growth of commercialism. Jarves wrote:

But the mischievous confounding of the fundamental purpose and limitations of the industrial, with

¹⁵⁶ibid., p.80

¹⁵⁷ibid., p.72

the fine arts, is but too common in Europe and almost universal in America. We produce in consequence a vast number of things incongruous in constructive principles, vulgar in ornamentation, garish in colors, and at the same time of little poetical value; whilst those intended particularly to gratify taste are tortured out of their legitimate forms by a futile desire to force them to subserve some domestic need.¹⁵⁸

As materialism progressed, thought Jarves, Western houses were decorated with inappropriate objects neither useful nor beautiful. The Western world was filled with "a pitiable poverty of aesthetic invention" because Westerners, both Americans and European, confounded "the fundamental purposes and the limitations of industrial, with fine arts."¹⁵⁹

The principles of the Arts and Crafts movement emphasized similar points. These artists were convinced that industrialization caused the deterioration of artistic quality by sacrificing aesthetic and spiritual values.¹⁶⁰ The critic, John Ruskin, thought that "all cast and machine work was bad" because machinery deprived humanity of craftsmanship and made artists "anonymous laborers".¹⁶¹ Hence, he suggested a return to handwork to regain aesthetics and spiritual quality.¹⁶² Another aim of the Arts and Crafts movement

¹⁵⁸Jarves, 1984, p.141-2

¹⁵⁹ibid.

¹⁶⁰Wendy Kaplan, The Art that is Life: The Arts & Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987), p.52

¹⁶¹ibid., p.54

¹⁶²ibid.

was to unify art and labor, designer and craftsman.¹⁶³ William Morris took this idea one step further and advocated the unity of all the arts.¹⁶⁴

Echoing the concepts of the Arts and Crafts movement, Fenollosa was critical of contemporary Western art for losing a sense of beauty and neglecting spiritual matters.¹⁶⁵ He thought that the visual expression of the conceptual idea and spirit which had existed before the high-Renaissance were neglected by a great dependence on scientific techniques. Fenollosa, like other Japonists, found a beauty of spiritual representation in Japanese academic paintings.¹⁶⁶

Americans in the late 19th century, especially the educated and affluent, had been haunted by a "feeling of over civilization,"¹⁶⁷ based on dissatisfaction with modern culture; dissatisfaction with science, rationality, and materialism. People began to long for a freshening of the cultural atmosphere and, at the same time, they looked for the experience of real life, something simple and naturalistic. Therefore, these early Japonists turned to Japanese culture to find a way to solve the artistic problems of modern society. They found real human life and real art in the aesthetic and spiritual representation of Japanese art in

¹⁶³ibid.

¹⁶⁴ibid., p.55

¹⁶⁵Seiichi Yamaguchi, Fenollosa, (Japan: Sanseido, 1982) Vol. 2, p. 60

¹⁶⁶ibid., p.63

¹⁶⁷Jackson T. J. Lears, No Place of Grace (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), p.4

contrast to the strict realism of Western art whose technique greatly depended on science.¹⁶⁸

Jarves was one of the first scholars to suggest the study of Japanese art as a source on which to draw in order to overcome the limitations of realism in Western art. Chisolm points out that Jarves hoped to "enlarge our Anglo-Saxon art-horizon" by "assimilated examples ...drawn from all sources" and free from "invidious nationalism."¹⁶⁹ Jarves emphasized accepting "new ideals and rules," and tried to elaborate on these different principles and manners while putting aside "familiar ideals and ordinary rules."¹⁷⁰ Jarves suggested using Japanese art, whose representation of both beauty and spirituality, he thought, was lacking in Western art at the turn of the century, as a prime source for constructing the principles of American art.

Fenollosa developed Jarves's notion of universalism to create a fusion of Eastern and Western artistic theory.¹⁷¹ Fenollosa believed that Eastern spiritualism could invigorate the decline in Western art. He thought that American artists could integrate Japanese spirituality and Western naturalism and that Japanese artistic styles could contribute to creating a new synthetic style of American art.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ibid., p.5

¹⁶⁹Chisolm, 1963, p.61

¹⁷⁰ibid., p.62

¹⁷¹ibid., p.54

¹⁷²ibid.

Modern Art and Abstraction

As an artist, Dow seemed to embody Fenollosa's views of the fusion of Japanese methods of representation and Western expression. Dow's fundamental artistic theories were based on Fenollosa's idealism, which held that art should not be a mere imitation of nature but a harmonious representation of the Idea.¹⁷³ Fenollosa understood Japanese academic painting as a representation of conceptual beauty and suggested that Western artists learn the traditional three elements of line, *notan* (light-and-dark) and color.¹⁷⁴ Dow developed this concept and defined these elements in relation to the design of picture composition. Dow's woodcuts neglect realism in favor of simplified and abstract forms, which can be observed increasingly in his later prints.

In Dow's later woodcuts, created after the mid-1890s, the structure became simplified, at the same time, the line qualities and the harmonic relations of tone and color were developed. What factors prompted Dow to increase these abstract qualities? As Johnson noted in describing the music-like quality in Dow's art works,¹⁷⁵ Dow was increasingly concerned in his later prints with designing his work as visual music. It was Japanese art, particularly the rhythmic line and harmonious tone relationships of Japanese brush drawings, which inspired Dow to create a picture as visual music. Green cites Dow's statements about Japanese art and music: "A study of Japanese art derived from the drawn line, and

¹⁷³Hook, 1987, p.33

¹⁷⁴Chislom, 1963, p.81

¹⁷⁵Johnson, 1934, p.108

the elusive suggested tones...[gives]...the same kind of experience that music gives."¹⁷⁶

Dow explained that visual music would be a perceptual image created by "Synthetic"¹⁷⁷ forms through the harmonious arrangement of rhythmic lines, masses, tones and colors. For example, Dow's woodcut, *Rain in May* (Fig. 26), was created by a harmonious combination of each element. The picture does not show a realistic natural scene but represents the artist's subjective image. The style is closer to abstraction; however, it is still representational. Dow thought that visual art should involve two things: "the representative element of the subjects," and "the formal element, or laws of beautiful line, notan, and colour."¹⁷⁸ The former, representation of subjects, is similar to poetry and the latter, form, is similar to music. Hence, Dow considered "form" as a vehicle for conveying a "mysterious beauty," like the "sound of music"¹⁷⁹ The *Rain in May* reveals Dow's concepts; the flat and abstract form conveys a natural beauty like the sound of music through the rhythmic pattern of lines, masses and tonal color. In order to increase this musical quality Dow used staccato lines to depict rain. Thus viewers can powerfully perceive the artist's poetic impression of nature.

¹⁷⁶Dow's lecture syllabus on Japanese art given at Yale University, New Haven, CT, February 17, 1917, quoted by Green, 1990, p.16,

¹⁷⁷Dow, 1913, p.50

¹⁷⁸Johnson, 1934, p.107

¹⁷⁹ibid.

Fenollosa discussed the link between visual art and music in his writing, *Modern Arts and Literature*.¹⁸⁰ Defining modern art as being free from the "classical formula and shackles,"¹⁸¹ Fenollosa regarded literature as "the music of verbal feeling,"¹⁸² and painting as "the music of color and line."¹⁸³ Modern painting, according to Fenollosa, was formed by "new combinations of line, mass and color" to convey harmonies, like singing birds, sweeping storms and symphonies of orchestras.¹⁸⁴ Fenollosa called painting a "pictorial idea"¹⁸⁵ because painting represents a conceptual image of nature through the simple pictorial form of color and line. The modern form, according to Fenollosa, was the "transition from the sculptural and intellectual, to the musical and the formal."¹⁸⁶ Fenollosa considered modern painting to be harmony, melody and music created by the unity of line, mass and color. With respect to Chinese and Japanese painting, he found their symbolic and musical qualities as the motivating force of his modern concept.¹⁸⁷

Dow's agreement with Fenollosa's concepts is revealed in his statement: "He [Fenollosa] vigorously advocated a radically different idea, based as in music, upon synthetic principles. He

¹⁸⁰Fenollosa's paper, "Modern Arts and Literature," (no date available), from Murakata, 1987, vol. 3, p. 111-4

¹⁸¹ibid., p.111

¹⁸²ibid., p.112

¹⁸³ibid.

¹⁸⁴ibid.

¹⁸⁵ibid.

¹⁸⁶ibid.

¹⁸⁷ibid.

believed music to be, in a sense, the key to the other fine arts, since its essence is pure beauty; that space art may be called "visual music", and may be studied and criticized from this point of view."¹⁸⁸ Dow fostered the idea that art reflects the link he saw, between visual arts and music.¹⁸⁹

In his 1915 article, *Talks on Appreciation of Art*, Dow discussed the importance of space, rhythm, *notan* and color as key elements in picture design akin to visual music. According to Dow, good design could attract spectators like good music.¹⁹⁰ To create good design, artists should look for "the best spacing, the most rhythm, the most mysterious *notan* and color."¹⁹¹ Good design would be created by rejecting all useless detail. Dow noted that "Truth to nature has nothing whatever to do with the art of this picture."¹⁹²

In order to convey sensuous and perceptual qualities through form, Dow based the ideal form of design on Japanese art. The rhythmic arrangement of space, the cropping of the scene, a flat and bold coloring, and decorative qualities are taken from *Ukiyo-e* prints. Moreover, to make the picture appeal more directly to the spectator's senses, Dow further developed the gradation technique of Zen ink painting to create the harmonic relation between color and tone.

¹⁸⁸Dow, 1913, p.5

¹⁸⁹Johnson, 1934, p.107

¹⁹⁰Arthur Wesley Dow, "Talks on Appreciation of Art," The Delineator, January 1915, No. I

¹⁹¹ibid.

¹⁹²ibid.

According to Dow, a harmonious combination of lines produced a balanced composition with a beautiful movement or rhythm. Dow appreciated the artistic quality and power of Japanese brush lines which also created a rhythmical arrangement. He particularly admired the linear quality of Shubun, Kenzan and the Kano school which are shown in his book *Composition* as fine models for students to study. In one of his articles, Dow praised a rhythmical line of Japanese landscape painting and wrote: "...he [the Japanese artist] presents that to us in a few powerful brush strokes showing how the willow curves in the wind and rain. If we are looking for quality in art, we shall look at his line and admire it."¹⁹³

Dow noted that dark-and-light was "a kind of music that comes to the eye just as sounds do to the ear."¹⁹⁴ The expression of poetic and mysterious feeling can be delivered like melodies through a harmonious arrangement of black and white lines. Dow noted that the picturesque quality of a natural scene could be found in the Japanese rough ink paintings which represent a scene like musical harmony through mysterious dark-and-light effects.¹⁹⁵ By observing the spiritual interpretation of nature through a simplified form composed by the fewest lines and tones of ink, Dow suggested that artists look for "dramatic, mysterious, elusive tone-harmony" and masterful brushwork.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ibid.

¹⁹⁴Arthur Wesley Dow, "Talks on Appreciation of Art," The Delineator, January 1915, No. III

¹⁹⁵Dow, 1913, p.54

¹⁹⁶ibid., p.96

Some of these priest-artists of the Zen, Mokkei, Kakei, Bayen in China; Shubun, Sesshu in Japan, rank with the great painters of all time. ...To them we look for the truly artistic interpretation of nature; for dramatic, mysterious, elusive tone-harmony; for supreme skill in brush-work.¹⁹⁷

Dow's adoption of the concept of dark-and-light to color resulted in giving an increased mysterious and harmonious feeling to his pictures. He applied the arrangement of *notan* that represented "the harmonies of tone-composition" of Japanese ink painting to his color prints.¹⁹⁸ Dow's color prints reveal his use of the "*notan* of color"¹⁹⁹ (colors in light to dark values) in their use of subtle values. *Ukiyo-e* landscape prints are fine examples of the adoption of the dark-and-light technique of ink paintings to color prints, and Dow suggested using these prints to teach "peculiar color-feeling" and "refinements of tone." Dow defined them as the "most convenient and inspiring color-models."²⁰⁰

Dow found a musical quality in the arrangement of rhythmic lines, masses and the harmonious relations of color and tone. Hence Dow increasingly explored rhythmic linear textures and tonal

¹⁹⁷*ibid.*

¹⁹⁸*ibid.*, p.113

¹⁹⁹*ibid.*, p.102

²⁰⁰*ibid.*, p.117

harmonies in order to convey visual music. As a result, Dow's later prints moved closer to abstraction.

Dow's simple and flat style shows the picture as not imitating nature but representing a conceptual idea of nature. Dow's woodcuts were deeply influenced by Japanese *Ukiyo-e* prints and Zen ink paintings in their composition, style, color, format and techniques. Later, he found that developing the color composition with light-to-dark values would convey an increasingly harmonious melody similar to visual music.

Compared to the traditional Western system of realism, Dow's mature style was very simple and abstract, however, he never abandoned representation, unlike some European non-representational artists such as Wassily Kandinsky, Robert Delaunay and Piet Mondrian.²⁰¹ As did Fenollosa, Dow believed that painting is the union of a representational subject and harmonious form.²⁰² If the subject is more powerful than the form, it would be in the realm of poetry; and if the form controls the subject, it would be in the realm of music.²⁰³ While his harmonious form expressed music-like qualities, he absolutely needed to represent a subject because he thought that visual art should represent both subject and form, unlike poetry or music. Consequently, throughout his life Dow's subjects were beautiful natural landscapes.

²⁰¹Lancaster, 1969, p.287

²⁰²Johnson, 1934, p.107

²⁰³ibid.

CONCLUSION

As other authors have noted, Japonisme contributed to liberating European modernists from the classical academy. Artists in this period felt that art was not a mere imitation of nature but the expression of an idea, or the conceptual idea of nature. This idealism, supported by many historians, philosophers, and artists, was popularized during the second half of 19th century by its advocate John Ruskin in Europe. James Jackson Jarves and Ernest Fenollosa were notable for insisting on using Japanese methods of representation to revitalize Western Art. Fenollosa, as an American, in particular claimed that relatively subjective representation of Japanese academic painting would contribute to the development of a new American art style.

Dow, as an artist, developed Fenollosa's concepts and established his style as a fusion of Eastern technique and Western expression. Following Fenollosa's concept of pictorial composition, Dow created simple and harmonious images through the arrangement of lines, masses and colors. As a result, Dow abandoned three-dimensional illusion in favor of the flat arrangement of simple masses and shapes on the same pictorial plane. This flat style of Dow's prints was established by the influence of Japanese art; Dow Particularly developed the composition from Hiroshige's woodcuts, and tonal coloration from both *Ukiyo-e* prints and ink paintings.

Although Hiroshige was most influential in developing Dow's composition, Dow's style was also inspired by the Impressionists who previously applied the manner of Japanese *Ukiyo-e* prints to their works. It was the Impressionists who first abandoned a naturalistic illusionism in painting. Edouard Manet, for example, abandoned linear perspective and solid modeling of objects through light and color, resulting in the representation of a flat picture plane and simplified forms.²⁰⁴ Claude Monet, a leading artist among the Impressionists, was also inspired by *Ukiyo-e* prints. The impact of *Ukiyo-e* prints on Monet's works can be seen in the use of a high viewpoint, panorama-like view, asymmetrical composition with cropped figures and ambiguous treatment of space ("compressed space").²⁰⁵ These elements of Japanese influence can also be observed in Dow's woodcuts and show Dow's link with the Impressionist style.

James McNeill Whistler, one of Dow's favorite artists,²⁰⁶ also influenced Dow. Because of his tenet of "Art for Art's Sake" and the influence of Japanese art, Whistler turned away from naturalistic representation; instead, he developed a decorative form through the arrangement of space, light and color.²⁰⁷ As with Fenollosa and Dow, Whistler did not see art as a simple copy of Nature but a beautiful design depending on the artist's

²⁰⁴Klaus Berger, *Japonisme in Western Painting from Whistler to Matisse* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.21

²⁰⁵*ibid.*, p.74, p.85

²⁰⁶Johnson, 1934, p.54

²⁰⁷Berger, 1992, p.43

creativity.²⁰⁸ Whistler supported the idea that art is superior to nature. Whistler's words demonstrate this: "Nature is usually wrong: ...seldom does Nature succeed in producing a picture."²⁰⁹ Whistler's series of *Nocturnes*, painted from 1871 on, display the transformation of nature into poetic and musical expression.²¹⁰

What Dow admired in Whistler was a notion of creating paintings as a poetic and musical expression. As Whistler explored tonalism - dark tones with subtle gradations - inspired by Far Eastern ink painting, Dow adopted the gradation technique of ink painting to his color woodcuts. Understanding the effects of the gradations in ink through Whistler's works that showed "harmonies of white on white, black on black,"²¹¹ Dow experimented with creating harmonies of color, tone and value in order to increase a poetic and musical impression of nature.

Dow's prints after the mid-1890s, increasingly express the artist's impressions through simple compositions with the subtle gradations of color. These works are more subjective than his earlier prints. Whistler's adoption of a gradation technique of ink played an important role in showing Dow how to create pictures as visual music. Dow's use of this technique evidenced by prints such as *August Moon* and *Rain in May*, reflect Whistler's suggestive and elusive tonal paintings. Hence, Dow's mature style became

²⁰⁸ibid., p.38

²⁰⁹ibid., Berger's quotation from 'Mr. Whistler's "Ten O'clock"', in Whistler, The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, London 1890, p. 142-3

²¹⁰ibid., p.40

²¹¹ibid., p.41, Berger's quotation from 'Whistler,' *Kunst und Künstler*, 1904, vol. 3, p.454

increasingly abstract; the brush-like flowing lines divide the picture space into simplified masses, subtle gradations of tone provide elusive atmosphere and colors become more limited. It seems that the style was more simplified and abstract than *Ukiyo-e* prints themselves, rather moving towards that of Zen ink painting. Just as Zen painting expresses the artists' inner emotions and spirits, Dow's mature style increasingly conveys the artist's poetic feelings about nature.

Dow's poetic and musical expression was primarily developed by Japanese *Ukiyo-e* prints, ink paintings and Whistler's tonalism. The increased abstract quality in his later prints reveals Dow's contribution to the development of the modern style in America, which Fenollosa also anticipated. Dow's flat and simple style in his prints was innovative in America; however, Dow never went beyond a representational style. Dow's concept about visual art was always the union of a representational subject and harmonious form.

The contribution of Japanese *Ukiyo-e* prints as well as Japanese academic paintings gave Dow an idea of subjective representation. Hiroshige's *Ukiyo-e* prints suggested to him how to express the artist's impression of Beauty, not realistically but expressively. As a result, Dow's prints became more subjective, expressive and innovative than his paintings, because print could reflect more freely these Japanese aspects than painting. With the union of a representational subject and harmonious form, Dow developed his own style of expressive representation. Dow portrayed the beauty of the New England landscape in his own style; however, it also reflected Hiroshige's appreciation of nature. Dow's

representation of natural beauty is closer to Hiroshige's sentimental beauty of nature than any other artists who were inspired by Japanese around the turn of the century.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX



Figure 1. Dow's ink drawing shows practice of *haboku* and *notan* effect



Figure 2. Dow, *Harbor Scene*, c.1895
Color woodcut

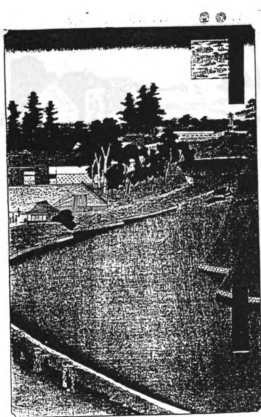


Figure 3. Hiroshige, *Benkei Moat*
from the One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo



Figure 5. Hiroshige, *Horiki: The Iris Gardens*
from a series of the One Hundred Views
of Famous places in Edo



Figure 4. Dow, *Along Ipswich River*, c.1893
Color woodcut



Figure 6. Vincent van Gogh, *Irises*, 1889
Oil on canvas



Figure 7. Dow, *Untitled print*, c.1895
Color woodcut



Figure 8. Hiroshige, *Narumi: Arimatsu shibori* from *The 53 Stations of The Tokaido*



Figure 9. Dow, *Ipswich Bridge*, c.1893-1895
Color woodcut

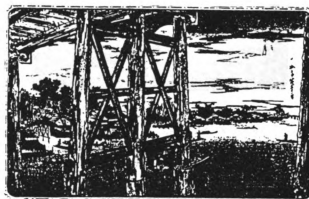


Figure 10. Hiroshige, *Ryogoku Bridge*



Figure 11. James McNeill Whistler, *Old Battersea Bridge: Nocturne in Blue and Gold*, 1872-5

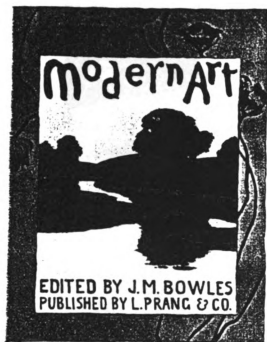


Figure 12. Dow, *Modern Art*, c.1895
Color lithograph



Figure 13. Hiroshige, *Bashi's Hermitage and Camellia Hill on the Kanda Aqueduct at Sekiguchi* from the One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo



Figure 14. Hiroshige, *Chiyadagaike Pond*
from the One Hundred Views of Famous Places in Edo

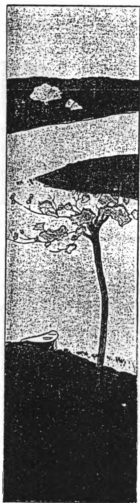


Figure 15. Dow, *Bent of a River*, c.1895
Color woodcut



Figure 17.
Dow, *Clam House in Winter*, c.1910
Color woodcut



Figure 18.
Dow, *Clam House at Night*, c.1910
Color woodcut



Figure 16. Hiroshige, *Chiryu:
Horse Fair in Early Summer*
from *The 53 Stations of The Tokaido*



Figure 19.
Hiroshige, *Kambara: Snow at night*
from *The 53 Stations of the Tokaido*



Figure 20.
Dow, *Bend of a River* (sunset), c.1898
Color woodcut

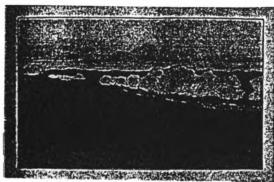


Figure 21.
Dow, *Flowering Orchard*, 1921
Color woodcut

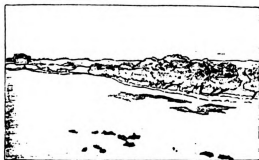


Figure 22.
Dow, *The Desert*, c.1911-12
Color woodcut, two variations

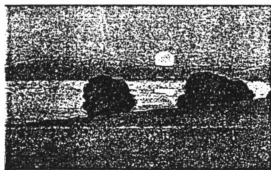


Figure 23.
Dow, *August Moon*, c.1905
Color woodcut



Willows in Bloom, n.d.
Color woodcut

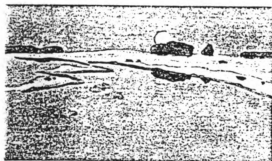


Figure 24.
Dow, *Moonrise*, c.1898-1905
Color woodcut



Figure 25.
Dow, *Marsh Creek*, c.1905
Color Woodcut



Figure 26.
Dow, *Rain in May*, c.1908

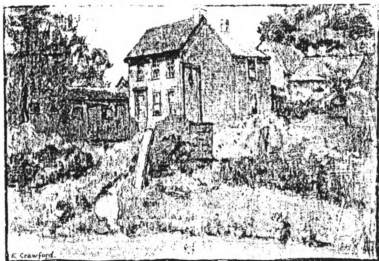


Figure 28. *Harry Mayne's House*
from Ipswich Summer School of Art



Figure 27. Hiroshige
Benten Shrine, Inokashira Pond
from the One Hundred Views of
Famous Places in Edo

BIBLIOGRAPHY

.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ando, Hiroshige. One Hundred Famous View in Edo (New York: Brooklyn Museum) 1986
- Berger, Klaus. Japonisme in Western Painting from Whistler to Matisse (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press) 1992
- Bicknell, Julian. Hiroshige in Tokyo (San Francisco: Pomegranate Artbooks) 1994
- Bosanquet, Bernard. (trans.) The Introduction of Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.) 1886
- Cate, Phillip Dennis. Color Revolution: Color Lithography in France 1890-1900 (Santa Barbara: P. Smith) 1978
- Chisolm, Lawrence W. Fenollosa: The Far East and American Culture (New Heaven: Yale University Press) 1963
- Cohen, Warren I. East Asian Art and American Culture (New York: Columbia University Press) 1992
- Dow, Arthur Wesley. Composition (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company) 1916
- . "Printing from Wood Blocks," International Studio 59, July 1916
- . "Talks on Appreciation of Art," The Delineator January 1915

- Dufwa, Jacques. Winds from the East (New Jersey: Humanities Press) 1981
- Fenollosa, Ernest. Special Exhibition of Color Prints. Designed, Engraved and Printed by Arthur W. Dow (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts) 1895
- Green, Nancy. Arthur Wesley Dow and His Influence (Ithaca, New York: Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University) 1990
- Hills, Patricia. Turn-of-the-Century America: paintings, graphics, photographs, 1890 - 1910 (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art) 1977
- Hisamastu, Shinichi. Zen and the Fine Arts (New York: Kodansha) 1971
- Hook, Dorothy. Fenollosa and Dow: the Effect of an Eastern and Western Dialogue on American Art Education (Doctor's dissertation, Pennsylvania State University) 1987
- Hosaka, Kiyoshi. Fenollosa (Japan: Kawaide shobo) 1989
- Jarves, James Jackson. A Glimpse at the Art of Japan (Vermont and Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Company) 1984
- Johnson, Arthur Warren. Arthur Wesley Dow, Historian, Artist, Teacher (Ipswich, Mass.: Ipswich Historical Society) 1934
- Kanbayashi, Tsunemiti. Nihon no Bi no Katachi (Japan: Sekai Shosya) 1991
- Kaplan, Wendy. The Art that is Life: The Art & Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company) 1987
- Keene, Donald. Anthology of Japanese Literature (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.) 1956

- Lancaster, Clay. Japanese influence in America (New York: Walton H. Rawls) 1963
- . "Synthesis: The Artistic Theory of Fenollosa and Dow", Art Journal vol. 28, Spring 1969
- Lears, Jackson T. J. No Place of Grace (New York: Pantheon Books) 1981
- Meech, Julia and Weisberg, Gabriel P. Japonime Comes to America (New York: Harryn Abrams INC.) 1990
- Mills, Sally. Japanese Influence in American Art: 1853 - 1900 (Massachusetts: McClelland Press, 1981)
- Moffatt, Frederick C. Arthur Wesley Dow (Washington D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution Press) 1977
- Murakata, Akiko. The Ernest F. Fenollosa Papers (Japan: Museum-Shuppan) Japanese Edition vol.I, II, III. 1982
- Narazaki, Muneshige. Hiroshige (Tokyo:Shimizu Shoin) 1971
- . Hiroshige The 53 Stations of The Tokaido (Tokyo: Kodansha International) 1982
- . Hokusai to Hiroshige (Japan: Kodansha) 1964
- . Studies in nature (California: Kodansha) 1970
- Okakura, Kakuzo. Book of Tea (Tokyo, Japan: Kenkyusha) 1952
- . Okakura Tenshin Zensyu (Japan: Heibonsha) 1979
- Rowland, Benjamin, JR. "The Interpaly between American and Japanese Art" Shaping of Art and Architecture in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art) 1972
- Smith, Henry D. II. Hiroshige One Hundred Famous Views of Edo, (New York: George Braziller, Inc.) 1986

- Steegmuller, Francis. The Two Lives of James Jackson Jarves (New York: Yale University Press) 1951
- Weaver, Mike. Alvin Langdon Coburn Symbolist Photographer (New York: Aperture Foundation) 1986
- Weisberg, Gabriel p. and Weisberg, Yvonne M. L. Japonisme An Annotated Bibliography (New York & London: Garland Publishing) 1990
- Whitehill, Walter Muir. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: A Centennial History (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press) 1970
- Whitford, Frank. Japanese Prints and Western Painters (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.) 1977
- Wichmann, Siegfried. Japonisme (New York: Harmony Books) 1981
- Yamada, Chisaburo. Japonisme in Art (Tokyo: Kodansha) 1980
- . Nihon to Seiyō (Japan: Kodansya) 1979
- Yamaguchi, Seich. Fenollosa vol.I, II (Japan: Sanseido) 1982
- Yashiro, Yukio. Nihonbijutsu no Tokushitu (Tokyo: Iwanami) 1965
- Yoshikawa, Itsuji. (trans. by Armins Nikovskis) Major Themes in Japanese Art (New York: Weatherhill) 1976
- The American Art Galleries. The Important Private Collection of the Late Professor Arthur Wesley Dow (New York: The American Art Association) 1923
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art. In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement (New York: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rizzoli) 1986

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293015611043