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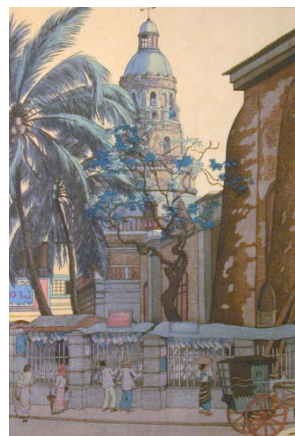
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Bertha Lum, *Tanabata*, 1912  
Pacific Asia Museum Collection  
Gift of Evelyn E. Olson  
1999.11.4



Elizabeth Keith, *Manila Cathedral*  
Pacific Asia Museum Collection  
Gift of Harry and Virginia Evans  
1986.92.15

**Pacific Asia Museum Announces *Visions of the Orient: Western Women Artists in Asia 1900 - 1940***

January 28, Pasadena, CA - Pacific Asia Museum announces a new exhibition, *Visions of the Orient: Western Women Artists in Asia 1900 – 1940*, opening March 4<sup>th</sup> and will be on view at until May 29, 2011. This exhibition is one of our featured exhibitions as we celebrate our 40th anniversary. *Visions of the Orient* explores the intersection of Euro-American art, the woodblock print movement, women, and East Asia to explore the various ways that “the orient” served as a liberating professional space for women artists and as a place of diverse creative inspiration. *Visions of the Orient* focuses on the work of four Western women artists: Helen Hyde (1868-1919), Bertha Lum (1869-1954), Elizabeth Keith (1887-1956), and Lilian Miller (1895-1942), all of whom trained initially as painters but, while living in Japan, also designed woodblock prints.

Focusing on the phenomenon of Western female artists in East Asia during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this exhibition is transformative both for the study of Western art and for trans-Pacific international studies. It presents a fuller biographical study of these four pioneer artists of the Orientalist tradition while giving a more balanced presentation of the artists, who have been associated almost exclusively with prints. The exhibition demonstrates the impressive breadth of Hyde, Lum, Miller and Keith

in creating prints (woodblock and etching), watercolor painting, and book illustration — artistic media and formats associated with women during an era when men worked in the “high art” traditions of oil painting and sculpture. Each of these artists, while born in the West, was deeply engaged with the art of Asia. With the exception of Paul Jacoulet, these Western women artists were the only Euro-American artists of either sex during the pre-WWII era who made their homes in Asia, made Asian subjects their primary thematic focus, and made the East Asian technique of woodblock printing their primary mode of production.

The exhibition features over 125 compelling works that share the theme of Asia, yet these works reveal considerable variation in their interpretation. In their paintings and prints we see Asia as a garden inhabited by women and children (Hyde), a land of mystery populated by goddesses (Lum), a living museum of peoples and customs (Keith), and a nurturing poetic landscape (Miller). The exhibition utilizes and challenges the Orientalist theses developed by academics over the past 25 years. *Visions of the Orient* also explores the Western, largely American, engagement with Japan and Asia at a time when relations shifted from paternalistic exoticism at the turn of the century to growing friction in the 1930s.

This project also looks at the international collaboration between these Western artists and their Japanese teachers and colleagues, including the artisans who produced their work as well as their Japanese publishers and dealers. The woodblock prints are the direct result of this collaboration, having been executed by Japanese artisans (block cutters and printers).

Although these images of Japan, Korea, China, and even Pacific Island cultures were intended largely for Western audiences, they also found some audience among Asians. Thus, the Asian response to the Western view of Asia constitutes a related area of focus.

The exhibition is divided into four sections by artist with an introductory section to establish the historical era and key themes and suggest the status of woodblock prints in Japan and America in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. More familiar woodblock prints are mixed with rare paintings and drawings, and approximately 55 related objects. Sketches, key block prints and proof prints with artist’s notes, as well as carving and printing tools, blocks and demonstration prints help bring the process of woodblock printing to life. Examples of the travel books they produced and their illustration work are also on display.

*Visions of the Orient* draws from the Pacific Asia Museum permanent collection, several private collections and numerous institutions including Scripps College, Claremont; Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon and the Achenbach Foundation of Graphic Art, San Francisco. The exhibition is organized by Pacific Asia Museum with the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. *Visions of the Orient* will be on view at Pacific Asia Museum from March 4 through May 29, 2011. Pacific Asia Museum is located at 46 North Los Robles Avenue in Pasadena, California. For further information, please call (626) 449-2742 or visit the museum’s website at [www.pacificasiamuseum.org](http://www.pacificasiamuseum.org).

Pacific Asia Museum is one of only four institutions in the United States dedicated exclusively to the arts and culture of Asia and the Pacific Islands. The museum's mission is to further intercultural understanding through the arts of Asia and the Pacific Islands. Since 1971, Pacific Asia Museum has served a broad audience of students, families, adults, and scholars through its education and outreach programs.

Pacific Asia Museum is located at 46 North Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, California 91101. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 am to 6 pm. Admission is \$9 general, \$7 students/seniors, and free for museum members and children under 12. Admission is free every 4th Friday of the month.

For more information visit [www.pacificasiamuseum.org](http://www.pacificasiamuseum.org) or call (626) 449-2742.

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