



Utamaro Kitagawa (1753-1806)



220 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Paper

Description

Utamaro KITAGAWA (1753-1806) "Three Beauties of Our Time" Oban tate-e woodblock print Dimensionsframe: 57.5 x 43.5 cmprint: 37.5 x 24.5 cm"Three Beauties of Our Time" is a nishiki-e print created around 1792-1793. The triangular composition depicts the busts of three famous "beauties" (bijin) of the era: the geisha Tomimoto Toyohina and the Naniwa tea house hostesses Kita and Takashima Ohisa. The three models in Three Beauties of Our Time are frequent subjects in Utamaro's portraiture. Each figure in the work is adorned with a family crest for identification. Kitagawa Utamaro (1753-1806) was a Japanese ukiyo-e artist, particularly known for his bijin-ga, or depictions of beautiful women. Ukiyo-e is the term used to describe a Japanese artistic movement of the Edo period

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(1603-1868) that can be translated as "pictures of the floating world." This genre consists primarily of Japanese woodblock prints, whose emerging techniques allowed for numerous, inexpensive reproductions on paper. This is, in fact, one of the reasons why ukiyo-e is sometimes considered a vulgar genre in Japan. The other main reason is the choice of subjects. The Edo period was a time of peace and prosperity, which led to a decline in the influence of the military aristocracy in favor of a merchant bourgeoisie. Ukiyo-e notably reflected their interests: beautiful women, daily life, erotic scenes (known as shunga), as well as kabuki actors, sumo wrestlers, and yokai. Utamaro began his career under the patronage of a publisher living on the outskirts of the Yoshiwara district, a red-light district in Edo (the former name of Tokyo). Over time, he specialized in series centered on the women of the district. Contrary to Japanese conventions, Utamaro aimed for likeness in his portraits. According to his own words, he sought to capture the personality traits of his subjects in his portraits. In reality, this was quite difficult to achieve while adhering to the conventions of the time. And yet, thanks to small details, he makes it possible to identify his favorite models! Three Beauties of Our Time is thus a depiction of three famous young women of Edo from the 1790s, each identified by a coat of arms. While the young women depicted in "bijin-ga" are often courtesans, this is not the case here. One of them is a geisha, and the other two are the daughters of two tea house owners.