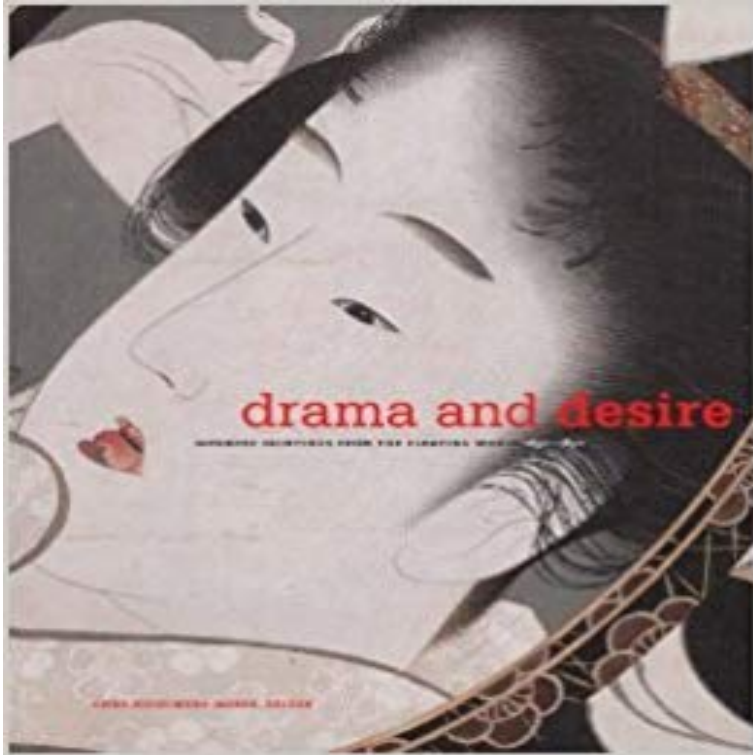


Drama and Desire: Japanese Paintings from the Floating World 1690-1850



A rare gem: Drama and Desire presents 69 masterpieces of Japanese ukiyo-e painting by such renowned masters as Hokusai, Utamaro and Harunobu, among others--all depicting aspects of the so-called floating world, the licentious demimonde of Edo (modern-day Tokyo), where actors and courtesans, rich patrons and bohemians, cavorted. While woodblock prints of the floating world have long been a favorite of art lovers, the remarkable ink-and-dye paintings of the period are far less known and much less available. This volume collects key examples by some of Japan's most important artists, each conveying a singular and very moving freedom of expression. Here, we find wistful interiors of courtesans at rest, onstage panoramas of actors in their finery, explicitly erotic scenes of lovemaking and outrageous fantasies. Essays by renowned American and Japanese scholars, including Howard Hibbett and Masato Naito, set the context with discussions of Edo society and culture, the ways in which high and low arts mixed in ukiyo-e painting, and the prominent roles played by courtesans, geishas and male prostitutes in the subculture of the period. This is a milieu of passion and mystery, color and flamboyance, boldly rendered in these uncommonly exotic masterworks. Published to accompany the first major American exhibition of ukiyo-e paintings in recent years, hosted by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

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