



# The Passionate Art of Kitagawa Utamaro (2 Volume Set)

*Shugo Asano, Timothy Clark*

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Kitagawa Utamaro (?1754-1806) is the pivotal artist of the Ukiyo-e school. His sensuous and sharp-witted portrayal of women in all walks of life both celebrate and comment on those of the "Floating World". Discovered early in his career, Utamaro was soon collaborating with the leading writers of the 1790s. The culmination was a sequence of deluxe poetry anthologies, which he illustrated in colour woodblock with figure and nature subjects and erotic scenes. In the 1790s Utamaro transformed the style of Ukiyo-e art with his prolific output of print series: often portraits in the new bust and half-length formats. High-ranked courtesans, lovers from literature and ordinary domestic scenes - all these themes are explored. Boastful of his talents, Utamaro finally came into collision with the feudal authorities, suffering house arrest that accelerated his artistic decline and led to his death. This text is published to accompany a British Museum exhibition in two parts, organized with the Chiba City Museum, Japan. The work includes rare surviving hanging scroll paintings, wood-block prints in complete series and all of Utamaro's illustrated books. The introductory essays and catalogue appear both in English and Japanese.

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