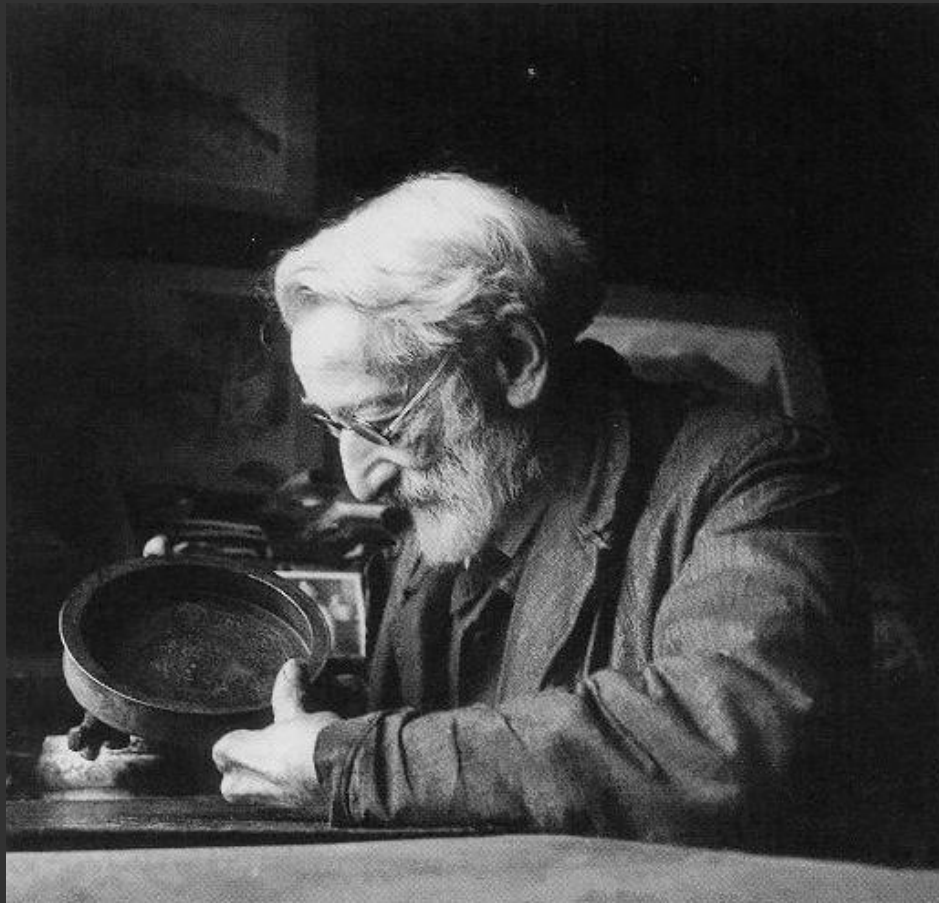




SANTA BARBARA
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ART

Katsushika Hokusai and Henri Rivière

An Inspired Connection



Photographie du peintre Henri Rivière, Xavier Sébillot

Japanese artist Hokusai and French artist Henri Rivière lived in very different places. Although they never met to talk about life, beauty, and art, they shared many connections.



Self-Portrait, Hokusai

Hokusai's artwork was an inspiration to Henri Rivière and many other European artists including Pierre Bonnard, Claude Monet, Mary Cassatt, and Vincent Van Gogh. They admired the bold designs, intense colors, and flat areas of pure color, as well as the elegant and simple lines of the Japanese prints.



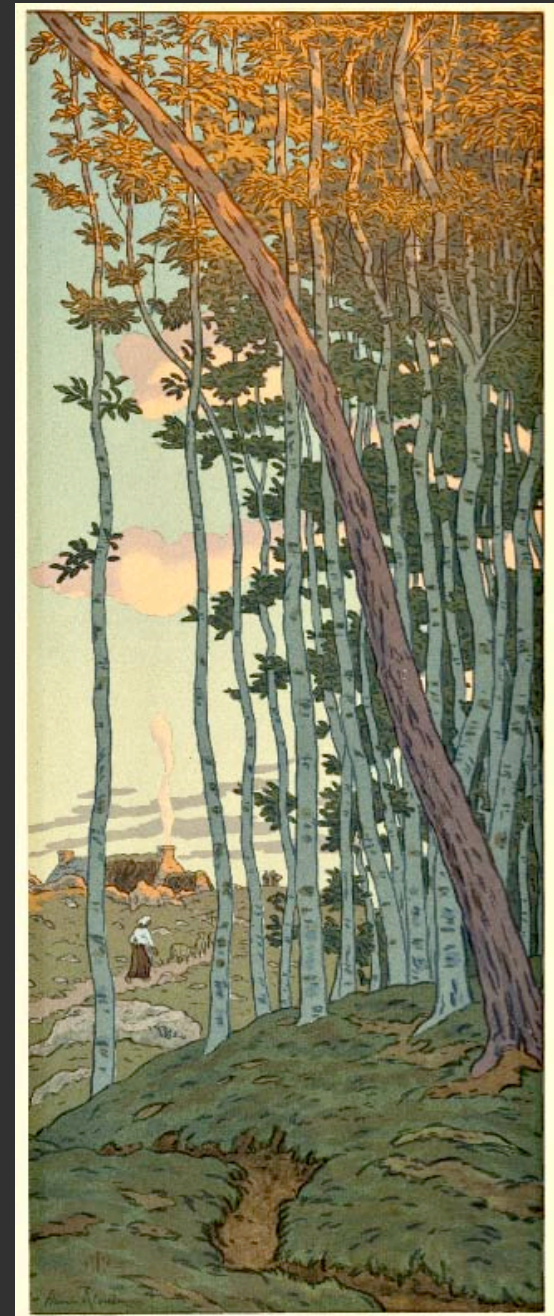
Vincent Van Gogh



Hokusai



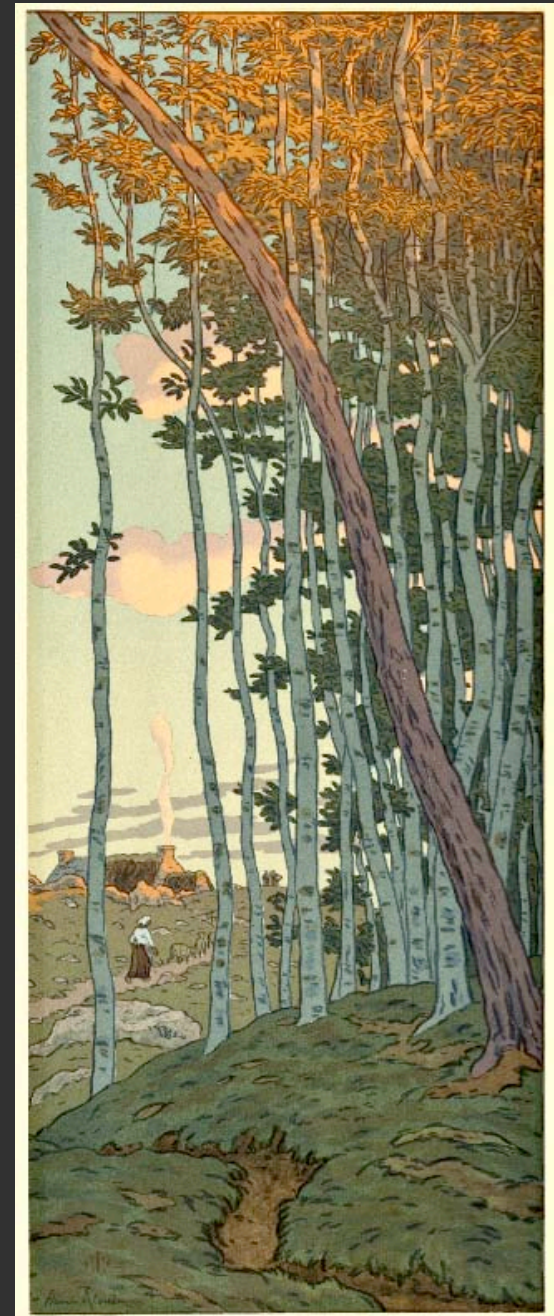
Can you find connections between the artwork of Hokusai and Henri Rivière? Look carefully at these two woodblock prints. How are they similar? What do they have in common?





Both of these artists were inspired by the beauty of the landscape and the everyday life of ordinary people.

They added interest to their woodblock prints by portraying the foreground, middle ground, and background with varying proportions, and adding depth and perspective to the scenes they created.





Bridge and the Moon, Hokusai (detail)

It is easy to see how Hokusai's artwork inspired Rivière, but the connection does not end there.

Both artists shared a passion for discovering beauty in the landscape, including elements of nature that can be observed over and over – for example, the moon.

How many times have you gone outside and looked up at the full moon, or noticed a slender crescent moon?



The First Star at Landiris, Henri Rivière (detail)



Hokusai renders a full moon

Yes, the full moon can be observed every month, but for both of these artists, each viewing was a unique experience. Was the night clear or foggy? Did clouds trail over the moon? Did it appear over a mountain, or over the tall buildings of a city? Hokusai and Rivière experimented with the idea that the very same moon can appear to be both similar and different to viewers, depending on weather conditions, location, time, and season.



Rivière captures a waning gibbous moon – can you find it in this woodblock print?

When he was in his sixties, Hokusai began to work on one of his most famous series of woodblock prints: the *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*.



South Wind, Clear Sky, Hokusai

Mount Fuji has traditionally been linked with eternal life. This belief can be traced to *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*, where a goddess deposits the elixir of life on the peak of this sacred mountain. To Hokusai and many others in Japan, Mount Fuji was the place to discover the secret of living forever.



In this image, the mountain predominates...

...and in this print, the most famous of the series, look where Hokusai positions the mountain. The focus is on the foreground, and the Great Wave threatens the men in the boats.



The Great Wave, Hokusai

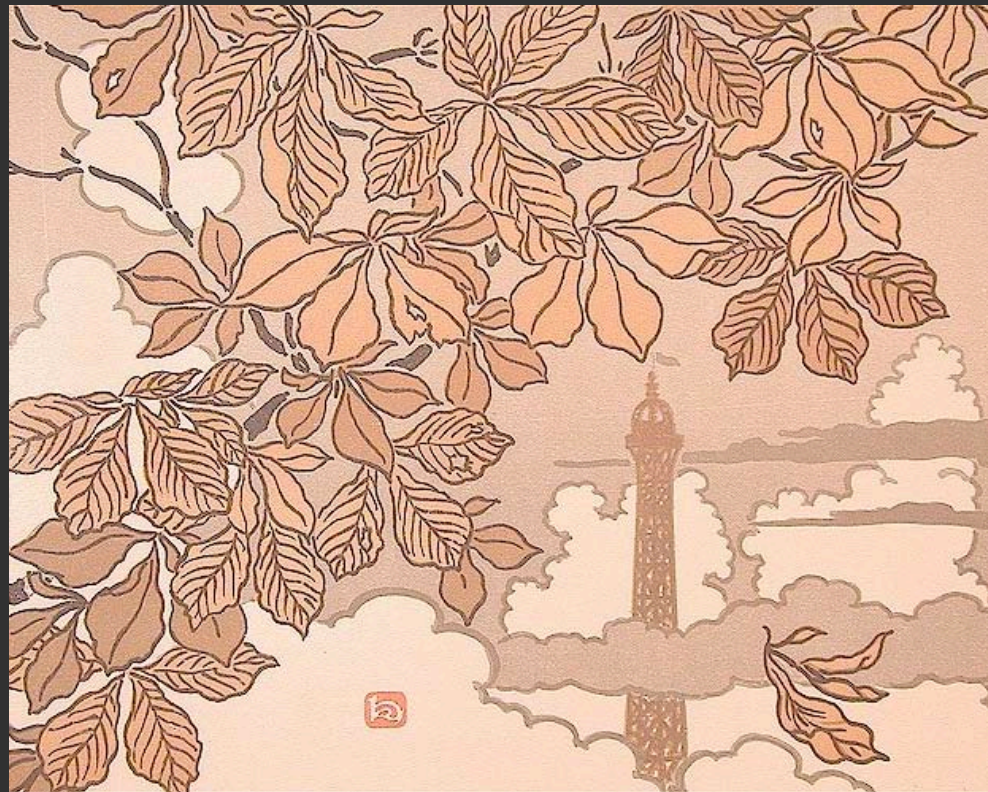


In all thirty-six prints, Hokusai captured not only the view of the mountain, but glimpses of everyday life.

Henri Rivière, who studied Hokusai's process and prints, became inspired to create something new, influenced by the Japanese master. Rivière also chose a subject that was important to the people of his country – a source of both pride and wonderment.

Instead of rendering a mountain, Rivière focused on thirty-six different views of a man-made monument that towered over the landscape and cityscape of Paris.

Do you recognize his subject?





Like Mount Fuji, the Eiffel Tower is one of the most recognizable, iconic images in the world. When they see the tower, people instantly think of PARIS!

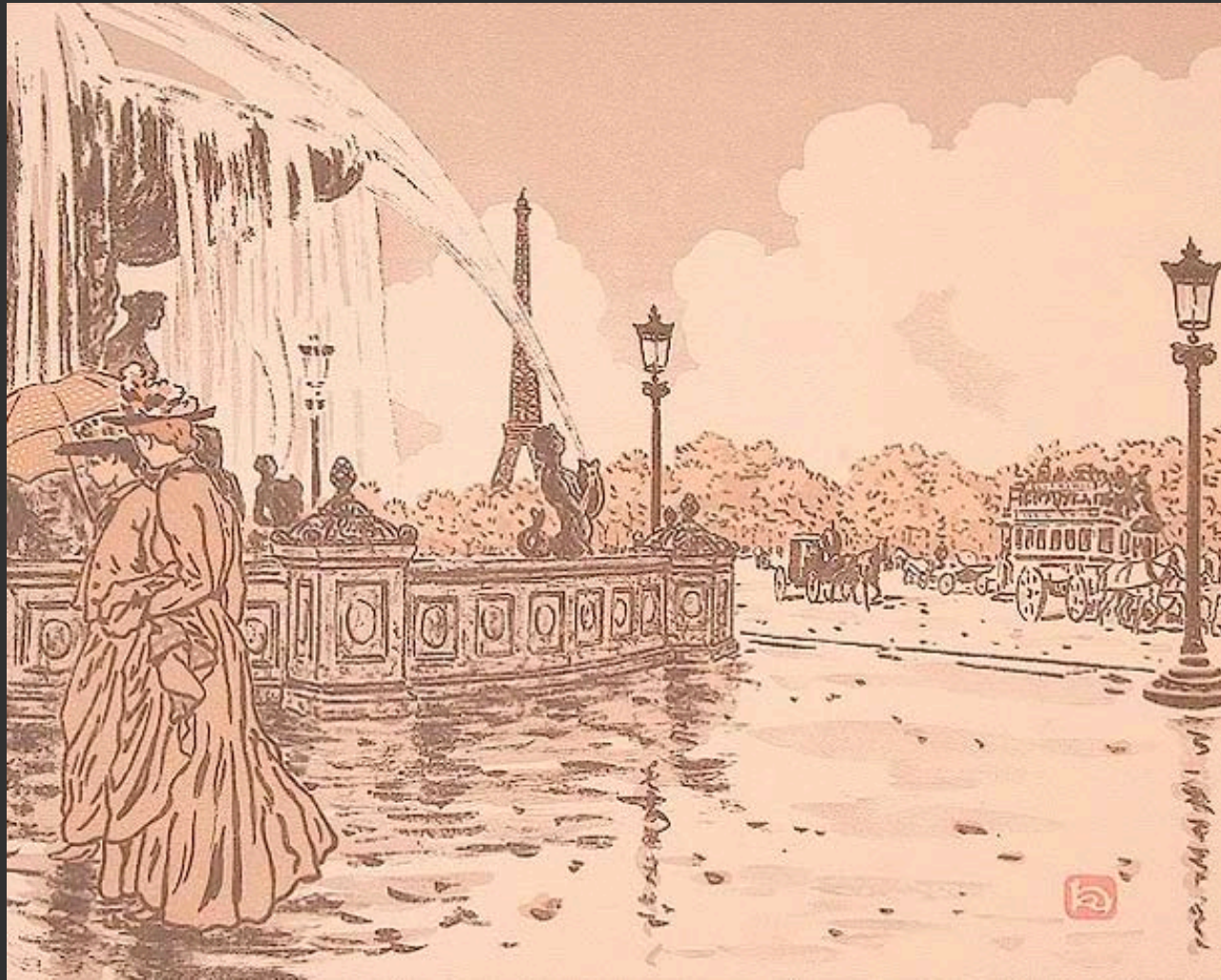
At the time this photograph was taken (1889), the Eiffel Tower was considered to be one of the greatest structures and symbols of the modern world.

How could Rivière connect the style and sensibility of Hokusai's natural landscapes with his woodblock prints of this massive iron structure?



Frontispiece, from the Thirty-six Views of the Eiffel Tower, Henri Rivière

Look again at this print. What do you notice? Is the tower in the foreground or the background? What other shapes predominate in this print? Like Hokusai, Rivière positions the main repeated element (the Eiffel Tower) in places where a Parisian citizen might look up and discover it. Perhaps through the leaves of a tree...



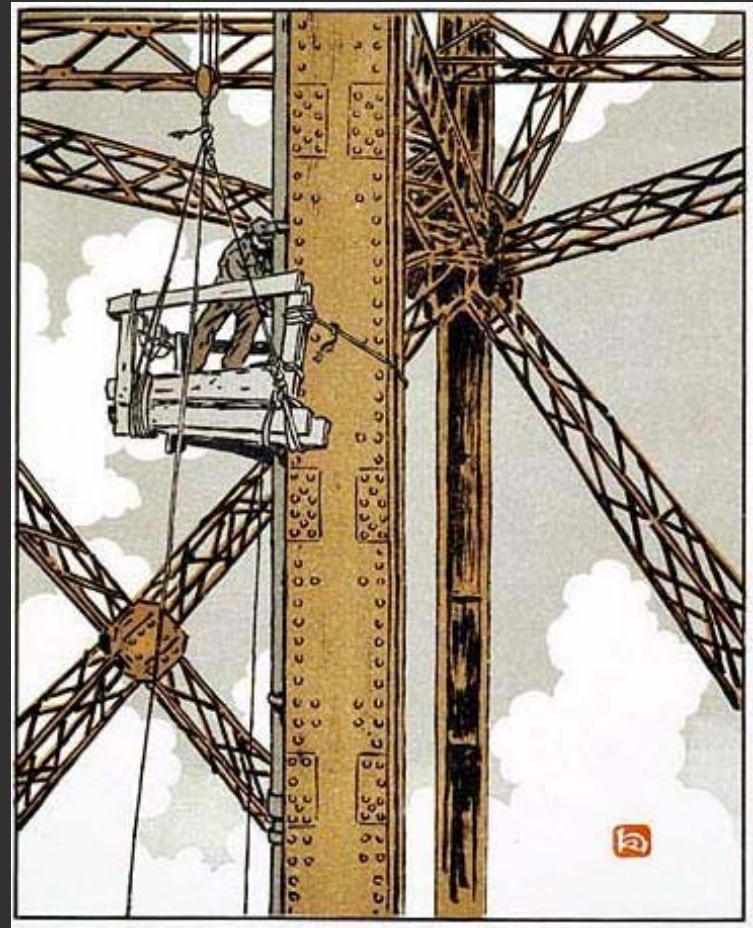
From the Place de la Concorde, Thirty-six Views of the Eiffel Tower, Henri Rivière

..or even through the spray of a water fountain. His collection of woodcuts was a homage to Hokusai, the master who inspired him.

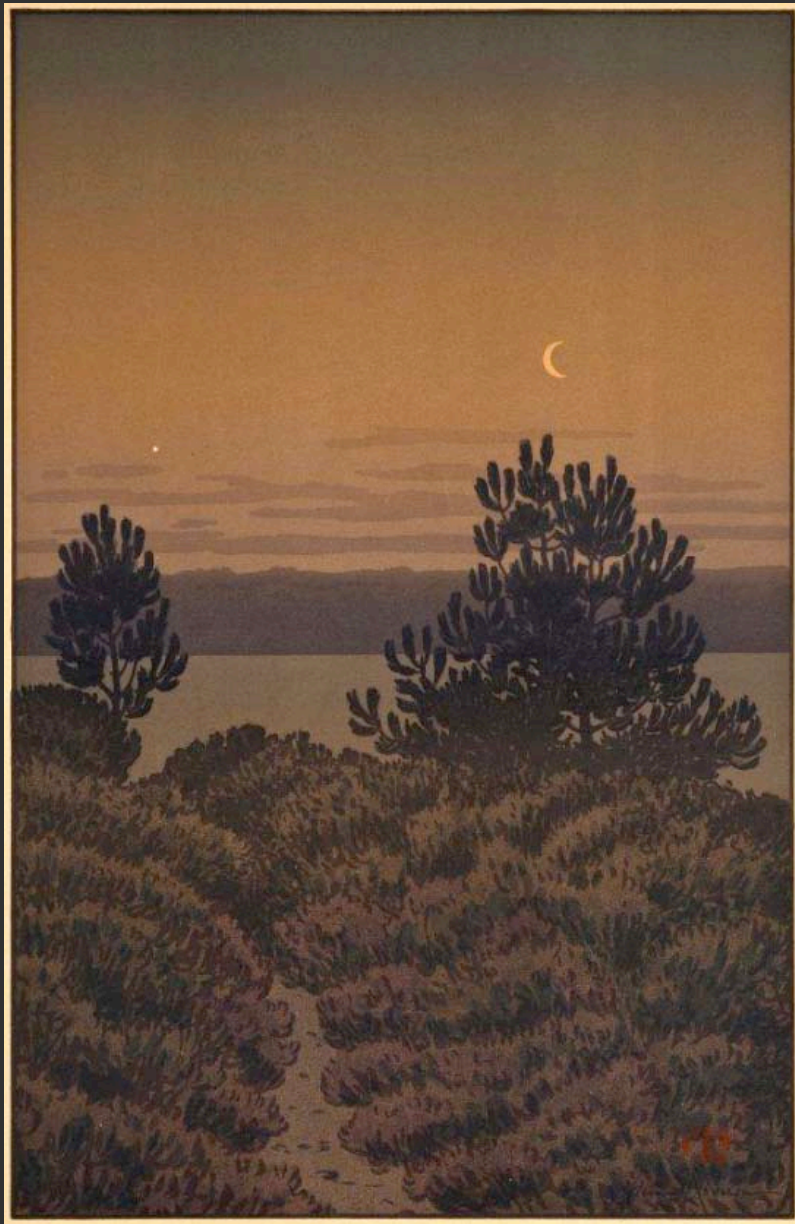


The Tower Under Construction, as seen from the Trocadero, Henri Rivière

Like Hokusai, Rivière explored his subject from many different perspectives.



A Worker in the Tower, Henri Rivière



The First Star at Landiris, Henri Rivière

Hokusai lived in ninety different houses during his long life.

Henri Rivière divided his time between Paris (in the winter months) and his beloved summer cottage in rural Brittany. The natural beauty of the sea, sky, and land inspired him to work on another series of prints, the *Breton Landscapes*.

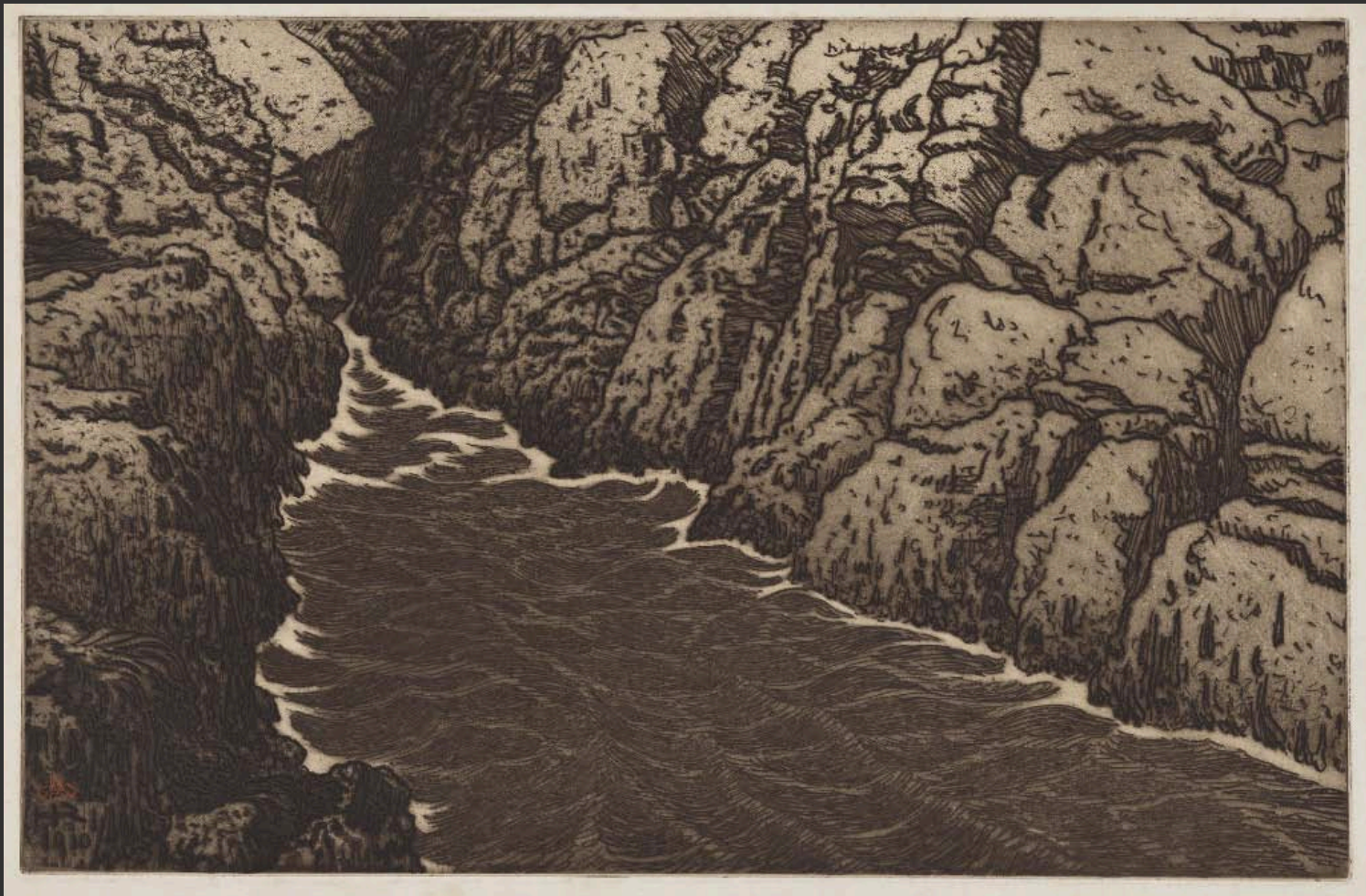


Loguivy, Evening, Henri Rivière

Rivière delighted in the rich colors, shapes, and textures of the landscape that he never tired of viewing. Each hour of the day offered a different effect for the artist to capture, enhanced by light and shadow. Clouds could be white, orange, or purple, and the sea might be turquoise or deep Prussian blue.



He found stories in the activities of his neighbors, and captured small moments in his prints.



Study of Waves: The Channel, Henri Rivière

Look at the way Rivière created textures in the solid stone cliffs, and movement in the waves below. He learned these techniques from studying Japanese woodblock prints.

Hokusai wrote:

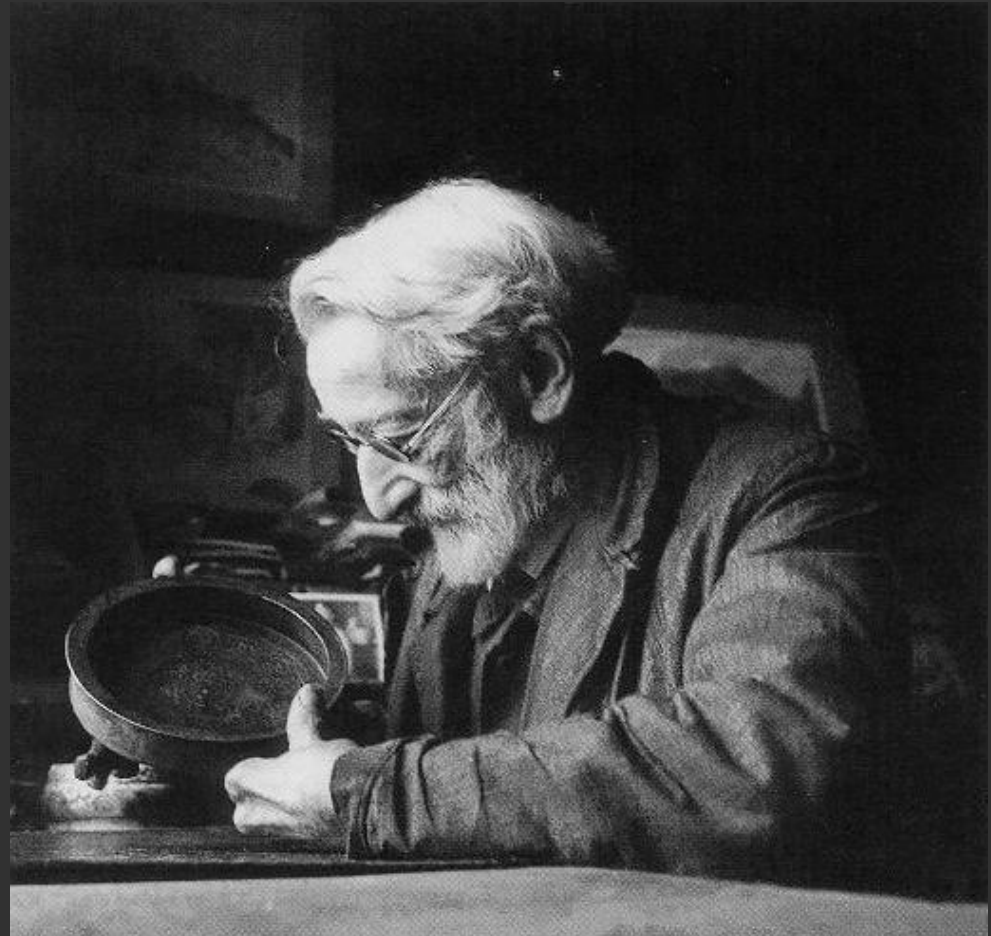
When I was 50, I had published a universe of designs. But all I have done before the the age of 70 is not worth bothering with. At 75 I'll have learned something of the pattern of nature, of animals, of plants, of trees, birds, fish and insects. When I am 80 you will see real progress. At 90 I shall have cut my way deeply into the mystery of life itself. At 100, I shall be a marvelous artist. At 110, everything I create; a dot, a line, will jump to life as never before. To all of you who are going to live as long as I do, I promise to keep my word. I am writing this in my old age. I used to call myself Hokusai, but today I sign my self 'The Old Man Mad About Drawing.'

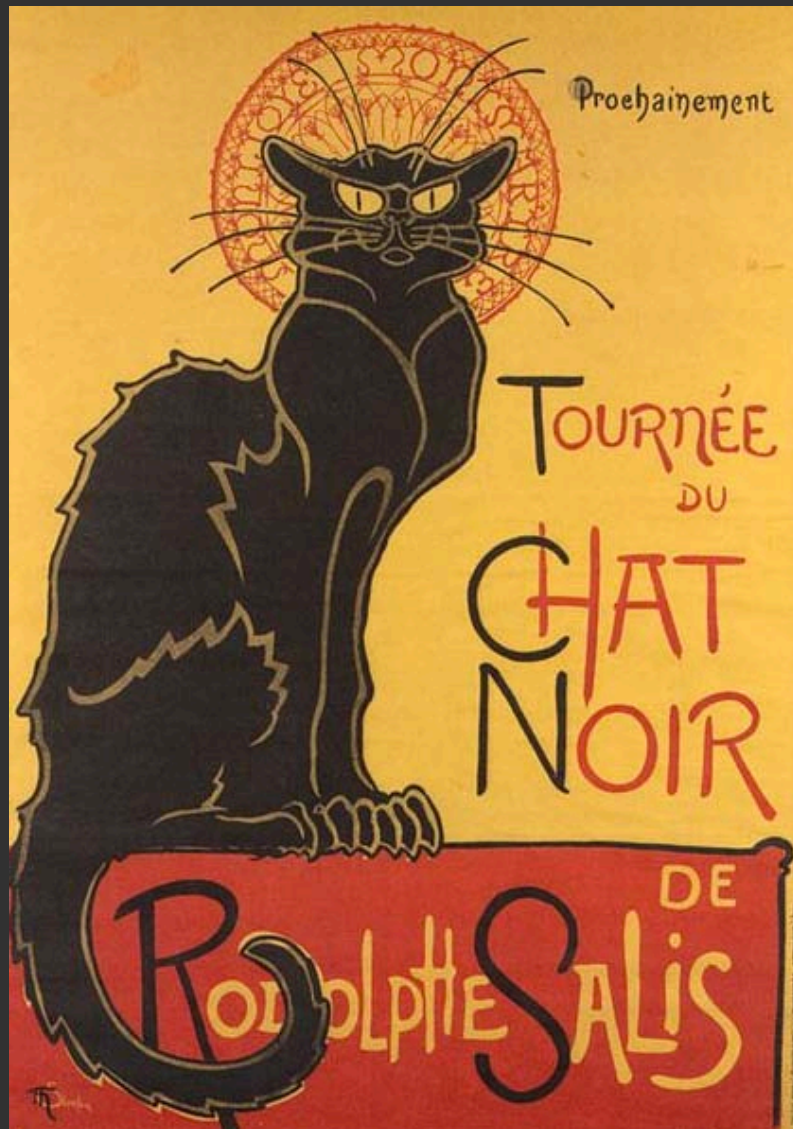
Hokusai lived to be 89 years old, and he never stopped creating art.



Self-Portrait, Hokusai

Henri Rivière lived to be 87 years old, and like Hokusai, he also continued to create art until he died. He lived the life of an artist – all of his early experiences influenced his later work.





As a young man in his early twenties, Rivière frequented a Parisian cabaret called The Black Cat Café (*Chat Noir*). In addition to working on a weekly edition of the *Chat Noir* journal, he created a form of shadow theater.



Rivière placed the silhouettes of figures, animals, and landscape elements within a wooden framework at three different distances from the screen: the closest created the darkest (black) silhouette, and the next two created gradations of black to gray.

Look at this woodblock print.

Does it remind you of the effect Rivière created in his shadow plays?



Moonlight (Clairs de lune), 1896, Henri Rivière

From youth to old age, both Hokusai and Rivière engaged in a process that began with inspiration, and included experimentation, self-expression, refinement, revision, and reflection.

Now it is your turn to participate in that same process.
We invite you to create a print of a natural landscape yourself,
inspired by the work of Hokusai and Henri Rivière.



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