

How does a balance of formal, thematic, and contextual qualities reveal layers of meaning?



Under The Great Wave Off Kanagawa, From the Series:
“Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji”

FORM How it “is”	THEME What it is about	CONTEXT Who, When, Where, Why
ACTUAL COMPOSITION: Asymmetrical, horizontal, organization ART ELEMENTS: Lines (curves, dots), textures, values, warm/cool colors DESIGN PRINCIPLES: Dominance, asymmetry, repetition, contrast, patterns, rhythm, +/- space, unity,, variety, scale 2D&3D QUALITIES: 2D, break-up of boats/waves, depth created by distant mountain –white caps on waves & mountain SIZE/SCALE: Approximately 12 x15 inches MEDIA/MATERIALS: Color wood block print PROCESSES/METHODS: Relief printing, multiple layers of color, registration, collaborative approach SKILLS: Drawing, wood engraving, design STYLE: Ukiyo-e “Pictures of the Floating World” OTHER: Part of series: “36 Views of Mt. “Fuji” (actually 46 designs). Created 15+ volumes with thousands of “random sketches,” called Manga in Japanese	BROAD SUBJECT/BIG IDEA: High Drama, Human Struggle/ Turbulence, Man’s Power vs. Nature, Earth vs. Sea SUBJECT MATTER: Seascape (landscape) “VIEWPOINT”/ PERSPECTIVE: dramatic scale: tiny humans vs. sea VISUAL SOURCES: Ocean, boats, mountains ART HISTORICAL REFERENCES: Japanese woodblock prints,, U-kiyoe, Gericault, Turner, Copley, Homer, Kandinsky, Bartlett, Sugimoto, Maya Lin LITERARY SOURCES: Bible (Noah’s Ark, Jonah), The Odyssey, Moby Dick, Old Man and the Sea... OTHER ARTS CONNECTIONS: Music: La Mer, Scheherezade, Handel’s Water Music Theater: Kabuki, Noh, Metamorphoses, The Tempest Dance: Cirque du Soleil “O” Film: 20,000 Leagues under the Sea, Poseidon Adventure, Jaws, Perfect Storm, Endless Summer, Fantasia, Inconvenient Truth, Life of Pi OTHER SUBJECTS: Math: balance Language Arts: epic stories/ legends Science: oceanography, climate change, weather patterns Social Studies: battles at sea, collaboration against odds Physical Education: endurance, physical strength, surfing Vocational Education: collaboration towards shared goals	WHEN: 1826-33 WHERE: Japan, a set of islands BY/FOR WHOM: Hokusai, painter and wood engraver who at 83 wanted to be known as ‘The Old Man Mad About Drawing” WHY IT WAS CREATED & VALUED: Intention/Purpose: Series for in-depth artistic exploration of everyday life—multiple viewpoints. Printmaking a new accessible art form, copies were quickly produced and sold cheaply. SIGNIFICANCE/RELEVANCE: • Personal: turbulence in life, passion for sustained problem solving, multiple viewpoints • Social: environmental disasters and human survival: 12/04 Tsunami, 8/06 Hurricanes Katrina & Rita, Haiti earthquake, Chilean miners rescue, 2017 hurricanes, • Cultural: Japanese authority, values and rituals reflected in its artforms • Historical: Japonism—Japanese prints imported to Paris, influence on Impressionism • Artistic: intense study/series, printmaking, contour lines, limited color, Manga--comic narratives • Educational: multicultural understanding, Manga • Political: climate change, overwhelm, facelessness=powerlessness, political crises • Spiritual: hope /stability (in the distance), letting go, dealing with reality, “facing it” • Other: Under the Wave off Kanagawa, also called The Great Wave has become one of the most famous works of art in the world—and debatably the most iconic work of Japanese art. Remains an icon in visual culture.

FTC insights, assessments, and questions: