



Woodblock Print by Kiyoshi Saito

As low as **\$750**

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SKU

LU825839468352



Details

This Japanese woodcut by Kiyoshi Saito (1907-1997) honors Japan's rich cultural heritage, specifically the Haniwa terracotta figures crafted for ritual purposes and buried alongside the deceased as funerary offerings during the Kofun period (3rd-6th centuries AD).

The artwork signed and titled "HANIWA," followed by the number in brackets (6), portrays a Haniwa figure. Japanese culture is renowned for its delicacy and minimalism, embracing simplicity while conveying profound meanings. Especially post-World War II, limited living spaces sparked a shift towards minimalism, reflecting subtlety and functional aesthetics in artistic forms. Contemporary Haniwa woodcuts echo this ethos, symbolizing cultural and historical richness amidst simplicity.

The central figure, draped in a red fabric with white stripes, stands against a dark background. The woodblock technique lends a unique quality to the piece, allowing for a nuanced portrayal of the Haniwa's features. The face and hands exhibit a pale hue, reminiscent of Japanese women or actors with fair skin untouched by the sun's rays, concealed beneath the foundation, imparting a distinct complexion. Four soft curved strokes define the expression, arranged in varying directions, evoking a smile. Even the extremities, like the hands with fingers subtly left out except the thumb up, contribute to an overall impression of remarkable finesse.

This woodblock captures a glimpse of the timeless beauty and profound symbolism inherent in Japanese art and culture.



We can even notice the influence of Zen Buddhism's principle about the presence of emptiness and the absence of excess.

Kiyoshi Saito (1907 – 1997) was a renowned Japanese printmaker known for his innovative contributions to the Sōsaku-hanga (creative print) movement. Born in Aizu-Wakamatsu, Fukushima Prefecture, Saito's artistic journey began at an early age when he developed a fascination with woodblock prints. His initial exposure to traditional Japanese art, mainly ukiyo-e prints, profoundly influenced his artistic style.

Encounters with influential figures in the Japanese art world marked Saito's formative years. He studied Western-style oil painting at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts under Kiyokata Kaburagi, a prominent artist and ukiyo-e revivalist. Exposure to traditional and modern techniques enabled Saito to develop a unique artistic vision, blending traditional Japanese aesthetics with contemporary sensibilities.

One of the significant turning points in Saito's career came in 1932 when he encountered the works of Shiko Munakata, a renowned woodblock print artist. Munakata's bold and expressive approach to printmaking profoundly impacted Saito, leading him to embrace a more individualistic and experimental style. Saito drew inspiration from Munakata's use of simplified forms and bold lines, which became defining characteristics of his artistic expression.

Saito's artistic style underwent further transformation during a visit to Europe in the 1950s. Exposed to the works of Western artists, including the German Expressionists and the Fauvists, Saito incorporated elements of Western modernism into his prints. He experimented with color and composition, moving away from the traditional Japanese woodblock print conventions and pushing the boundaries of the medium.

Saito's distinctive style combined traditional Japanese woodblock techniques with a modernist sensibility, resulting in a fusion of Eastern and Western artistic traditions.

His work can be seen at the Cincinnati Art Museum, Greater Victoria Museum, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Denver Art Museum, Art Institute of Chicago, Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art, and many others.

REFERENCE NUMBER: LU825839468352

PERIOD: Mid-20th Century

CONDITION: Excellent

MEASUREMENTS: Height: 18.5" Width: 13.85" Depth: 0.5"

COUNT: 1

MATERIAL: Paper

CREATOR: Kiyoshi Saitō (Painter)