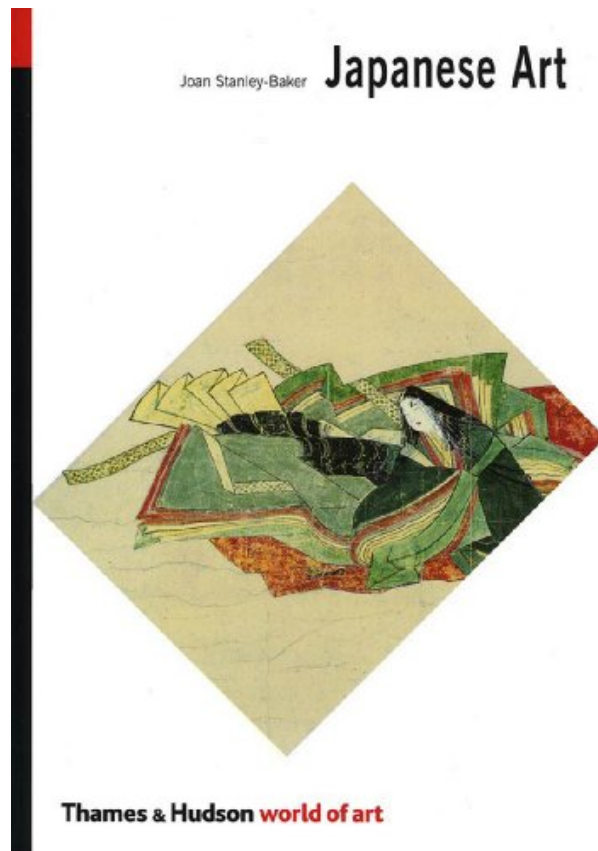


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Review

A long-needed presentation of Japanese art that concisely offers inclusive coverage from prehistoric times to the twentieth century. -- Choice

About the Author

Joan Stanley-Baker is Emeritus Professor of Art History at Tainan National University of Arts, Taiwan, and is the author of several books on Japanese and Chinese art.

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The uniqueness of Japanese culture rests on the fact that, throughout its history, Japan has continually taken, adapted, and transformed diverse influences from Korea, China, the South Seas, Europe, and the Americas into distinct traditions of its own. Extensively revised, updated, and expanded since its first publication, this authoritative survey of the arts of Japan from the prehistoric period to the present brings together the results of the most recent research on the subject. Profusely illustrated with examples from all the arts?painting, calligraphy, the decorative arts, and architecture?and with a wide-ranging bibliography, Japanese Art addresses itself equally to those who come to the subject for the first time and to the student. It is a concise overview of a fascinating and perplexing culture in which interest has never been greater than it is today.

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Most helpful customer reviews

42 of 42 people found the following review helpful.

A Thorough Introduction

By A Customer

This classic book in its new edition presents a thorough, level-headed introduction to the many varieties and periods of Japanese art. Individual chapters highlight the major works and offer both beginner and armchair expert a background to the development of each genre. Unfortunately, what is lacking -- and this is a critique of the publisher's investment in this fine work rather than of the author's efforts -- is a presentation in size and color that suits the written content. How can the stunning but subtle beauty that is typical of all Japanese art be properly displayed when the accompanying photographs are small sized and printed in black & white? This book is highly recommended as a comprehensive overview of Japanese art, but you will need to look

elsewhere to see the art as it ought to be seen.

36 of 38 people found the following review helpful.

Great beginner's book for Japanese art

By A Customer

I found this to be a great book for learning about the different periods and art forms from Japan. The cultural periods from Prehistoric to Modern are covered, with stops in the Asuka, Heian, and very important Edo periods! Over 80 color illustrations from wall paintings to temple architecture to lacquered chests are presented for your viewing pleasure. The author has taken great care in describing whether an art form is native, imported, or has been modified and adopted into the culture (i.e. japanization). You'll find hundreds of illustrations but let me warn you **THIS IS NOT A PICTURE BOOK!** If you are looking for a book just to flip through to see nice pictures and also take a crash course on 'Japanese Art' then you most likely will have to look elsewhere. By reading this book from cover to cover you will gain a great understanding of Japanese art. Not every picture makes sense unless you read the accompanying paragraphs. If you do take your time you will come to appreciate the art of Japan and will gain a greater understanding of the people as well. My art & humanities teacher, a PhD, describes this book as "excellent and splendid". For her that is like putting Tom Selleck in front of her fireplace with a bottle of champagne. After reading this book I hope you will be equally excited. :)

19 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

Japanese art observed by a Chinese art specialist

By A Customer

The author Joan Stanley-Baker earned her Ph.D. on Chinese art. Probably being aware of this, I felt that an outsider's view is rather strong in the book, as she discusses Japanese art in terms of the two axes of indigenous and imported traditions, and regards domestication as an important issue throughout. However, I found the introduction very interesting, especially her notes on the coexistence of contradictory aspects in Japanese art, such as complete mirroring of foreign elements and introspective and insular tendency. The following chapters are rather disappointing that her insights are not very well demonstrated in dealing with individual works of art. For comprehensive understanding of Japanese art, Penelope Mason's History of Japanese Art is much better.

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