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DIALOGUE LIST

IN-TIME OUT-TIME	SPEAKER	DIALOGUE
00:00:00:14 00:00:10:08	DAVID BULL	To see what humanity as a whole has come to recognize in his work, he could not have possibly ever imagined.
00:00:10:10 00:00:14:00	TATYANA SERRAINO	Curator of Japanese Art at the British Museum, Alfred Haft.
00:00:14:02 00:00:28:24	ALFRED HAFT	Hokusai was somebody who was constantly advancing and adapting to his own circumstances and to the circumstances around him. I mean, a person who is propelled forward and is able to move forward and around all kinds of obstacles.
00:00:29:01 00:00:31:21	TATYANA SERRAINO	Manga and anime expert Susan Napier.
00:00:31:23 00:00:50:06	SUSAN NAPIER	You know, he was so... he had such facility. There's a real organic quality to his pictures that I think is because he's so good at it. I mean, I wish I could have all his manga. I mean, I have some... a couple of books of reproduction, but you just kind of flip through them and they're so arresting. These... these pictures are so believable.
00:00:50:08 00:00:52:14	TATYANA SERRAINO	And Lego Art Creative Lead Fiorella Groves.
00:00:52:16 00:01:06:05	IORELLA GROVES	Well, we have these very set LEGO color palettes, and that color palette is what makes LEGO LEGO, right? We don't deviate from it very much. And as luck would have it, when we went to see the piece in the British Museum, it was almost an exact match.
00:01:06:07 00:01:16:09	IORELLA GROVES	I kid you not. It was really... You know, we were high fiving... in the area. I'm sure people around us were wondering, "What on earth are they doing?"
00:01:16:11	TATYANA SERRAINO	My name is Tatyana Serraino. Welcome to LEGO Art.

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00:01:27:14 00:01:32:08	TATYANA SERRAINO	Let's get to know our guests, and we will be starting in Tokyo with David Bull. Welcome.
00:01:32:10 00:01:35:01	DAVID BULL	Thank you very much for having me. It should be fun, I think.
00:01:35:03 00:01:40:16	TATYANA SERRAINO	Absolutely. Now, you're Canadian, but you've lived for more than half your life in Japan, is that right?
00:01:40:18 00:01:58:05	DAVID BULL	Yes. In fact, it's almost exactly half. I am now 70 years old. And I came here just when I was about to become 36. So, yes, you're correct. It's half and half. That means either I should think about getting out of here, or, conversely, think about taking citizenship, maybe. Who knows? I guess I'm planted here now, so.
00:01:58:07 00:02:02:07	TATYANA SERRAINO	How did you end up making woodblock printing in Japan?
00:02:02:09 00:02:23:23	DAVID BULL	Partway along, while I was still in Canada, I had a chance encounter with Japanese woodblock prints. I saw them on the wall one day in a gallery and the physical object caught my interest. How is this thing made? Look at that. The way the light shines on the paper. This is a really curious object.
00:02:24:00 00:02:41:12	DAVID BULL	And over a period of the next few years, I came back to it and came back to it and thought, you know, could I actually try making something like what I had seen that day on the gallery wall? Here I am now, you know, 40 years later, actually making the things, you know, to that level.
00:02:41:14 00:02:50:03	TATYANA SERRAINO	That's fascinating. I can't wait to hear more about the process a bit later. Our next guest is also in Japan. Naoko Mikami, can you also tell me a bit about yourself?
00:02:50:05 00:03:38:04	NAOKO MIKAMI	Okay, thank you, Tatyana. My name is Naoko Mikami. I used to lead a project called Art Curator Japan. Basically, it was some kind of an initiative to promote Japanese

		young artists in Taiwan, because I was living in Taiwan at the time and I stayed there a couple of years. And then I came back to Tokyo, and the pandemic hit. So I was forced to put Art Curator Japan on standby. And nowadays I am starting a new project called Seahub Japan, which will act as a platform that connects Japanese artists and crafts to foreign companies.
00:03:38:06 00:03:41:11	TATYANA SERRAINO	Interesting. So you definitely know a lot about Japanese art.
00:03:41:13 00:03:42:05	NAOKO MIKAMI	Yes.
00:03:42:07 00:03:47:03	TATYANA SERRAINO	Alfred Haft from the British Museum is also an expert on that field. Welcome, Alfred.
00:03:47:05 00:04:03:08	ALFRED HAFT	Thank you, Tatyana. Great to be speaking with you today. I'm a curator of Japanese art in the Department of Asia at the British Museum. My responsibilities include researching, interpreting, sharing and developing the British Museum's collection of Japanese prints.
00:04:03:10 00:04:10:12	TATYANA SERRAINO	Thank you. And then we head across the Atlantic to talk with manga and anime expert Susan Napier. Welcome, Susan.
00:04:10:14 00:04:45:13	SUSAN NAPIER	Thank you, Tatyana. I am a professor of rhetoric and Japanese at the Tufts University in the Boston, Massachusetts area. I specialize in Japanese literature and popular culture and animation, but I have wider interest in fantasy and visual media as well. I should mention my mother was an art historian, and she introduced me to Japanese art by taking me to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, where I saw these incredible works that the Museum of Fine Arts has in their East Asian collection. So that kind of inspired me.
00:04:45:15 00:05:10:21	SUSAN NAPIER	I've written five books and I'm working on my sixth, and the books have been generally on literature and popular culture. The one that is probably most relevant to our talk today is called "From Impressionism to Anime," and it is an attempt to kind of

		look at the fascination with Japanese culture and what that meant in terms of the interconnection between Japan and the West.
00:05:10:23 00:05:18:18	TATYANA SERRAINO	So let's jump to Denmark and bring in LEGO Art creative lead Fiorella Groves. Welcome, Fiorella. Can you also briefly introduce yourself?
00:05:18:20 00:05:27:15	IORELLA GROVES	Hi, everyone. Hi, Tatyana. Thanks for having me here. I really love your work. And yes, my name is Fiorella Groves and I am the Creative Lead for LEGO Art.
00:05:27:17 00:05:31:01	TATYANA SERRAINO	Well, welcome. We're really excited to have you here today, Fiorella.
00:05:31:03 00:06:01:18	TATYANA SERRAINO	Let me also take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Tatyana Kalaydjian Serraino. I'm an art historian with a B.A. in art history from St John's College at the University of Cambridge and an M.A. in art history from the University of John Cabot in Rome, where I'm currently based, and where I'm about to embark upon a Master's in arts and culture management at Rome Business School. I run a YouTube and TikTok channel called About Art that features fast-paced content on works of art from all over the world, with the aim of making art and art history accessible, fast and fresh.
00:06:01:20 00:06:09:03	TATYANA SERRAINO	Today, I have the unrivalled pleasure of talking with our outstanding guests about Japanese art. Let's dive right in.
00:06:12:03 00:06:31:00	TATYANA SERRAINO	We're here to talk about the amazing woodblock print "The Great Wave of Kanagawa" by Hokusai that was part of the series "36 Views of Mount Fuji." It's arguably the most reproduced artwork in history. I'd like to hear why you think this print has resonated with so many people around the world. Let's start with you, Alfred.
00:06:31:02 00:06:40:06	ALFRED HAFT	Well, briefly, in this design, Hokusai seems to have achieved an elemental presentation of universal themes.
00:06:40:08	TATYANA SERRAINO	Naoko, what do you think?

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00:06:42:20 00:07:03:15	NAOKO MIKAMI	Well, probably it comes from the way it was first introduced to the West. If you think about Europe or France in the 19th century, the Academy controlled everything and young artists were looking for modern ways to paint.
00:07:04:20 00:07:36:01	NAOKO MIKAMI	Hokusai's wave was introduced during those days. I guess it was so different from what the Academy was promoting at the time, and it probably had a huge impact on young artists. "The Great Wave." The composition is very powerful and seems free from unnecessary rules at the same time. So it was very, very different from anything made in Europe at that time, I guess.
00:07:36:03 00:07:41:03	TATYANA SERRAINO	It certainly was. Susan, why do you think it made such an impact around the world?
00:07:41:05 00:08:17:00	SUSAN NAPIER	So many reasons. I feel like it is, first of all, just an amazing print. Just artistically, it grabs you. It's kind of exciting. It's different from your traditional, you know, Japanese print or even a traditional, you know, landscape picture. I mean, obviously, Hokusai was doing something that was also just graphically very exciting, very powerful, with this vision of the wave and then this tiny mountain, which is Mount Fuji, in the background. Supposedly it's a view of Mount Fuji, but we're seeing it from a very unusual perspective.
00:08:17:02 00:08:44:10	SUSAN NAPIER	We're seeing the wave itself is almost animistic. It has these kind of claws are coming out in the whitecaps of the wave. And it's almost like a beast or something that's trying to grab, perhaps, these fisherman as they're climbing up the wave. And so we have an animistic aspect to the wave, and also just a sheer graphic joy in this just fascinating, almost abstract print.
00:08:44:12 00:09:06:15	SUSAN NAPIER	I mean, it has so many different layers that you can look at. Also the color, this incredible kind of symphony of blue and white, to again, create a... really, a work that is both almost abstract, but also instantly understandable as waves and boat and mountain. So it's really quite a unique, distinctive work of art.

00:09:06:17 00:09:10:24	TATYANA SERRAINO	Absolutely. Naoko, what do you think the main takeaway for the viewer is?
00:09:11:19 00:09:22:08	NAOKO MIKAMI	I'm not sure. Obviously, the perspective between the tiny Mount Fuji and the giant wave makes the composition very strong.
00:09:22:10 00:09:31:05	TATYANA SERRAINO	Absolutely. Especially considering that Mount Fuji in the background is the highest point in Japan. And here it's completely dwarfed by the huge cresting wave.
00:09:31:07 00:09:32:09	NAOKO MIKAMI	Yeah, exactly.
00:09:32:11 00:09:42:19	SUSAN NAPIER	Exactly. Actually, I think there's also a quotation from someone named Susan Stewart on giantism and how the Giant is really something. It really captures our eye.
00:09:42:21 00:09:43:19	TATYANA SERRAINO	Exactly.
00:09:43:21 00:09:44:19	NAOKO MIKAMI	Yes.
00:09:44:21 00:09:49:15	SUSAN NAPIER	You know, it's kind of like... It's really different. It's also a little bit almost sublime because it's so not us.
00:09:49:17 00:09:52:10	TATYANA SERRAINO	Mm. Fiorella, what are your thoughts?
00:09:52:22 00:10:17:03	FIGRELLA GROVES	Well, I think this piece is so interesting because it has such an open-ended story. You know, you don't quite know how much peril these fishermen are in. And did they make it back to shore? Why are they out there? And it visualizes a really human experience, I feel. Like, the wave is this really massive, dominating force that's crushing the boat and yet they're still going out to sea.
00:10:17:05 00:10:35:07	FIGRELLA GROVES	You know, you kind of have to ask yourself, is the wave the helping hand that's going to deliver them back to land, or is it actually going to be something that's going to

		demolish them? So it creates this kind of dialogue that you have with the piece that's really, really fascinating. I think that's why it's captivated so many people.
00:10:35:09 00:10:40:08	TATYANA SERRAINO	I love that. I agree with you. I think it's the human aspect of the narrative that really makes it so universal.
00:10:40:10 00:10:41:02	FIORELLA GROVES	Definitely.
00:10:41:04 00:10:42:16	TATYANA SERRAINO	David, what do you think?
00:10:42:18 00:10:46:12	DAVID BULL	Okay. Now you're sort of moving out of my pay grade here.
00:10:46:14 00:11:07:05	DAVID BULL	I know that's an iconic picture. Of course, it strikes me just as well as it strikes anybody else. But I'm not the... the man to look at this and analyze for you and say, "Oh, yes, he's used the... the triangle twice, Mount Fuji and the wave and it echoes and all this stuff. And it comes from the left, not from the right, blah, blah, blah." Those people talk about this.
00:11:07:07 00:11:23:23	DAVID BULL	I really don't know. And honestly speaking, I don't think about it too much. It doesn't bother me. My job is to make the best physical product, the best manifestation of Hokusai's idea to honor that tradition, and if possible, even maybe to...
00:11:24:10 00:11:31:15	DAVID BULL	This might sound a bit pretentious, if possible, to even make a better version of "The Great Wave" than the original.
00:11:31:17 00:11:34:23	TATYANA SERRAINO	And what do you think the main takeaway of the print is for a viewer? Alfred?
00:11:36:15 00:11:49:04	ALFRED HAFT	I think there may be two main takeaways. One, a forceful recognition of the power of nature. And two, perseverance through the challenges of daily life.
00:11:49:06	TATYANA SERRAINO	Perseverance through the challenges of daily life. I love that. Fiorella?

00:11:54:06		
00:11:54:08 00:12:18:08	IORELLA GROVES	I think for the viewer that it's a really formidable reminder of how fragile humanity is when we're met up against the forces of nature. And here, Hokusai is, you know, casting nature as this beautiful force, you know, an active protagonist, if you will, you know, rather than a mere backdrop or some sort of victim in many cases.
00:12:18:10 00:12:29:01	IORELLA GROVES	But here it's... it's the sole sort of, like, character in there that's really taking the main stage. That's something... that's something that you can't forget, walking away from this piece.
00:12:29:03 00:12:34:23	TATYANA SERRAINO	Absolutely. And it's both so beautiful and so terrifying at the same time.
00:12:35:00 00:12:37:24	IORELLA GROVES	It is. I would not want to be on that boat, that's for sure.
00:12:38:01 00:12:41:04	TATYANA SERRAINO	Me neither. For sure. Yeah. Susan?
00:12:41:06 00:13:13:03	SUSAN NAPIER	This sounds facile, but it depends on the viewer, of course. It's pretty obvious that this is a very, very popular print. I mean, I believe it is the most, single most reproduced work of art. So clearly it's speaking to a lot of people. I would say it is partly just kind of maybe beauty and wildness, maybe, would be my feeling. As I say, it's just aesthetically very, very pleasing. It works well. You can, you can make it small, you can make it big. The basic design remains intact.
00:13:13:05 00:13:41:21	SUSAN NAPIER	So it's... You can put it on your cell phone as a background or you can, you know, for all I know, you could... you can make a tattoo of it, or just put it on, you know, a sneaker or something. So it has that kind of quality of, of iconicity, that it's reproducible, that it's powerful, and that it fits across many, many dimensions of... of art, but also popular culture, that I think is very important.
00:13:41:23 00:14:07:01	SUSAN NAPIER	But to go back to the wildness, this is not just a pretty little picture of a garden, you know, and flowers and things like that. There is this force in the way that is... that is

		compelling and it does come across, no matter how small it is. I mean, that... that's really something. I could see it as... as a tiny little, you know, medallion or a pendant. And you would still have that, that curve, that sense of, "Wow, what's going to happen next?"
00:14:21:11 00:14:30:15	TATYANA SERRAINO	Absolutely. I think it's the inevitability of that wave crashing down that will translate no matter how big or small the print is, which is... it's so timeless, as you said.
00:14:30:17 00:14:31:10	SUSAN NAPIER	Exactly.
00:14:31:12 00:14:36:15	TATYANA SERRAINO	So what does the print mean to you personally, Fiorella? What do you think about when you see it?
00:14:36:17 00:14:58:00	FIGRELLA GROVES	I mean, after working with this piece for quite some time, you know, we've had lots of discussions in the team about what it means to us. And I think, personally, for me, it speaks to me in the sense that, you know, that there's no... there's no bounds for humanity's capacity for courage.
00:14:58:02 00:15:20:22	FIGRELLA GROVES	You know, we can almost liken Hokusai's fishermen heading out to fish to NASA sending astronauts into space. You know? It's... it's like, "It's so dangerous out there. Why are you going out there?" But it's an important reminder, really, that sometimes it's a worthwhile endeavor to venture further. And, you know, whether we overcome the journey or succumb to the treachery it brings, I think we still progress, right?
00:15:20:24 00:15:29:00	TATYANA SERRAINO	Absolutely. Yes. And I think that's what the... the mountain as well somehow symbolizes. The fact that it's still so stable in the background is that reminder that...
00:15:29:02 00:15:29:20	FIGRELLA GROVES	Absolutely.
00:15:29:22 00:15:33:17	TATYANA SERRAINO	...despite the drama, things will hopefully turn out okay.

00:15:33:19 00:15:34:16	IORELLA GROVES	Exactly.
00:15:34:18 00:15:37:09	TATYANA SERRAINO	Susan, what does it mean to you personally?
00:15:37:11 00:15:55:03	SUSAN NAPIER	Hmm. Well, I've always loved Hokusai personally. I wish I could collect him. I don't have that kind of money, alas. And I look at those fishermen and they're going to get through. In Japanese, there's a term, ganbaru, which means, you know, enduring, persevering, just, you know, keep going.
00:15:55:05 00:16:07:02	SUSAN NAPIER	And they're persevering against this wave, which is beautiful and amazing, but really very alien. And I like the fact that they're still ganbaru, they're still getting their boat and still going on.
00:16:07:04 00:16:30:11	SUSAN NAPIER	And I also... I do love Mount Fuji. It's so beautiful. And it does make me think of Fuji, which I've seen so often over the years, and the sense that it may be small, but it's still there. You know, this feeling that, yes, there is a wave, but there's also Fuji and there are human beings who are still trying to ganbaru, still trying to persevere throughout this complex, wild and crazy world.
00:16:30:13 00:16:36:22	TATYANA SERRAINO	I love that. It leads back to how this print became so timeless and important for viewers all over the world.
00:16:36:24 00:16:38:10	SUSAN NAPIER	Exactly.
00:16:40:24 00:16:52:10	TATYANA SERRAINO	When I looked at the print for the first time, I felt that the color seemed to create an initial sense of serenity. But the subject matter itself definitely changes that first impression. Naoko, what do you think of that?
00:16:52:22 00:16:58:05	NAOKO MIKAMI	Well, I am not sure there's a serenity here.
00:16:59:05	NAOKO MIKAMI	Maybe this is a... Western point of view. Well, for Japanese people, and especially at

00:17:23:06		the time, using all that blue might have created a lot of excitement and strong sense of energy, I think. So, because such shades of blue were completely new at the time.
00:17:23:08 00:17:27:11	TATYANA SERRAINO	Alfred, tell us a little bit about what we are actually looking at in the print.
00:17:27:23 00:17:37:09	ALFRED HAFT	The print is popularly called "The Great Wave," but it actually has a designated title which can be translated "Under the Wave of Kanagawa."
00:17:37:11 00:18:08:20	ALFRED HAFT	Kanagawa was a famous fishing ground and the location relates specifically to the print. Here, returning from a delivery in heavy seas, three fish-transport boats encounter a giant cresting storm wave that appears ready to crash down upon them and even over Mount Fuji. In the distance, Hokusai brings us right into the middle of the action and presents a great cliffhanger. Will the boats make it safely home?
00:18:08:22 00:18:18:02	TATYANA SERRAINO	Absolutely. "The Great Wave" is what was known as an ukiyo-e in Japan. David, can you tell us a little bit more about what ukiyo-e prints actually were?
00:18:18:04 00:18:35:11	DAVID BULL	Okay. Ukiyo without the e, ukiyo. The floating world, as it's generally translated, is a philosophy of a sort of a way to live. Just live for today. Don't think about tomorrow too seriously, you know, just float through the world and you'll see what will come.
00:18:35:13 00:18:51:04	DAVID BULL	The e is the word for picture. It got tacked on to this once publishers and designers started making book illustrations that depicted this kind of... of floating world. And that's what ukiyo-e in its technical meaning actually means.
00:18:51:06 00:19:00:20	DAVID BULL	So there's the technical academic answer. The word now has, in general usage, come to have a wider meaning of just Japanese pictures.
00:19:00:22 00:19:08:11	TATYANA SERRAINO	Right. Now, "The Great Wave" is part of the series "36 Views of Mount Fuji." Alfred, can you tell us some more about this series?

00:19:08:13 00:19:28:08	ALFRED HAFT	The series depicts Mount Fuji, Japan's most famous mountain, from a quite dazzling variety of locations and perspectives. From cities and highways, land and sea, across rivers, lakes and forests, from the tops of buildings and bridges, from the base of a valleys high and low, near and far.
00:19:28:10 00:19:57:00	ALFRED HAFT	The title suggests a series of 36 prints, but these were apparently so well received that the publisher, Nishimuria, commissioned another ten designs. In an advertisement for the series, Nishimuria promised a series in monochrome blue. But at some point, the approach changed and other colors were steadily added. Hokusai scholar Roger Kees has likened the progression to the sun rising and gradually restoring color to the world.
00:19:57:02 00:20:03:11	TATYANA SERRAINO	Hmm. Naoko Mikami, as a Japanese art curator, what can you say about this series?
00:20:04:04 00:20:16:11	NAOKO MIKAMI	I find some of them are outstanding, like "The Great Wave," but I also think that some of them in the series are rather ordinary works.
00:20:17:19 00:20:46:00	NAOKO MIKAMI	You need to consider the fact that the artists were not exactly acting solo on the market. They responded to what was called hanmoto. Hanmoto means publisher or producer. So even if there was a dialogue between the artist and the hanmoto, the publisher had final decision for the contents of the series.
00:20:46:12 00:21:21:15	NAOKO MIKAMI	So, of course, money is the center of the thing. Hanmoto always wanted to create a new popular series that would sell a lot. In this series of Mount Fuji they used the new color, Prussian blue. And this would definitely be popular among buyers. Furthermore, the publisher made the artist draw images of Mount Fuji from various famous places.
00:21:22:02 00:21:25:11	NAOKO MIKAMI	This is obviously another commercial trick.
00:21:25:13 00:21:32:12	TATYANA SERRAINO	Sure. And we'll get back to the whole commercial aspect a bit later. But can you tell us how the other prints in the series differ to "The Great Wave?"

00:21:32:14 00:21:45:21	NAOKO MIKAMI	Some of them are very... not that complex, too plain for me, compared to "The Great Wave." Yeah. Some of them you cannot compare to other.
00:21:46:08 00:21:58:21	TATYANA SERRAINO	I think I have to agree with you. The dynamism that comes through this print is... I think it differs greatly to the rest. There's a lot more... a sense of energy coming through which is unrivaled, I think, compared to the others.
00:21:58:23 00:21:59:17	NAOKO MIKAMI	Mm-hmm.
00:21:59:19 00:22:00:20	TATYANA SERRAINO	Alfred?
00:22:00:22 00:22:28:10	ALFRED HAFT	The prints are not numbered, so it is difficult to know the original order of publication or the sequence, if any was intended. The prints likely to be earliest are known in monochrome blue, followed by others with blue outlines and a combination of colors. The last ten originally had black outlines and a variety of colors. "Under the Wave of Kanagawa" seems to stand out for its powerful narrative quality.
00:22:28:12 00:22:34:12	TATYANA SERRAINO	But it was the sea view in "The Great Wave" that would create international interest in Japanese art. Is that correct?
00:22:34:14 00:22:58:03	ALFRED HAFT	Mm. Hokusai's published drawing manuals seemed to have promoted initial interest in the artist and contributed to a growing interest in Japanese art, and this interest was spurred further as colored prints became better known. Hokusai's skill in drawing water seems to have won special admiration from European and American collectors and art connoisseurs.
00:22:58:05 00:23:06:20	TATYANA SERRAINO	Absolutely. Let's talk a bit about the technique. David, how did Japanese woodblock prints compare to oil on canvas paintings? Because it is different, isn't it?
00:23:06:22	DAVID BULL	Oh, my God. It's... It's night and day. We're not... We're not even talking about the

00:23:22:04		same thing at all. Remember, the culture these prints were created in didn't have anything like oil paintings. They didn't exist over there. Oh, no, this was a completely different, separate genre.
00:23:22:06 00:23:42:20	DAVID BULL	These are different cultures, different techniques, different concepts, different motivations, different results. And oil painting was, as far as I understand it, created as a thing that we would call art, A-R-T. It was done by an artist. And the purpose of communicating some kind of image or some kind of image-emotion to somebody else who was going to look at this thing.
00:23:42:22 00:23:56:23	DAVID BULL	It was perhaps going to hang on a wall where many people could see it. It was an object of art. Now, "The Great Wave" and the other prints that were made back in this society in that time, they were not art.
00:23:57:10 00:24:10:14	DAVID BULL	They didn't exist as art objects. Woodblock prints back then were not, in any way, shape or form, and I mean zero, they were not any kind of an object that we in the West think of as being art.
00:24:10:16 00:24:29:20	DAVID BULL	And this is a huge paradox. That print, the woodblock print of that wave, was just one of a group of another group of another group of prints that were just published to grab some money and get it. "Let's go on and make the next one." And here now, the entire planet looks on that thing and says, "This is one of the greatest art objects created by the hand of man."
00:24:30:18 00:24:33:23	DAVID BULL	If Hokusai could hear you say that, he would just say, like...
00:24:35:04 00:24:37:16	DAVID BULL	"What are you smoking? But let me have some."
00:24:40:01 00:25:14:16	DAVID BULL	It's a concept I cannot emphasize enough. The whole Western world back in the 1800s, when Japanese culture first started to become open to the West, you know, the era of... after Perry opened the country and Japonism and stuff like this. The

		Western world went nuts for Japanese culture, and still to a large extent is nuts about Japanese culture. But they see those woodblock prints as being some of the greatest art ever created by the hand of man, which I actually agree with. But the people who made them would say, "What?" Because they were just making printed stuff.
00:25:18:01 00:25:19:01	TATYANA SERRAINO	Mm.
00:25:22:15 00:25:30:23	TATYANA SERRAINO	With every work of art, context can really help us better understand the subject matter and style. Naoko, can you tell me about what was happening in Japan at the time?
00:25:32:01 00:25:52:11	NAOKO MIKAMI	At the time, Japan had been enjoying about 200 years of peace and tremendous economic and cultural boom. So the population in those days was very optimistic about the future and their situation in life, I would say.
00:25:53:11 00:26:15:05	NAOKO MIKAMI	Tokyo, which was then called Edo, had a population of over one million people. And... was thus, I think, the largest city in the world at that time. The city infrastructure was quite advanced with very high hygiene condition.
00:26:15:17 00:26:34:08	NAOKO MIKAMI	The literacy level of people was also very high and the cultural life was vibrant there, and there was no political tension yet, although the situation will slowly degrade during the next decades.
00:26:34:10 00:26:39:13	TATYANA SERRAINO	Fantastic. And so "The Great Wave" was made just on the precipice of change, if you will.
00:26:39:15 00:26:39:21	NAOKO MIKAMI	Yes.
00:26:39:23 00:26:44:10	TATYANA SERRAINO	Or there's a feeling that imminent change is about to occur, perhaps coming through the print itself.

00:26:44:12 00:26:45:21	NAOKO MIKAMI	Yes, absolutely.
00:26:45:23 00:26:53:12	TATYANA SERRAINO	Did the fact that Japan was closed and isolated from the outside world have an impact on the way Japanese art evolved at this time?
00:26:53:24 00:27:24:03	NAOKO MIKAMI	Of course. During the sakoku period... Sakoku means closed country, which lasted a bit more than 200 years. Japan did not completely stop the influx of falling culture. There was still, in Japan, what was called rangaku or Dutch studies, which studied art technologies and philosophies that were coming from Europe.
00:27:24:05 00:27:44:08	NAOKO MIKAMI	Also, the culture of mainland China was still finding its way to Japan. So Japan was not completely closed. However, the isolation policy played reducing the influx of foreign cultures to the minimum.
00:27:44:10 00:28:00:12	NAOKO MIKAMI	And because of that, there was more and more for the... for distinctive stand-alone Japanese culture to evolve and mature, borrowing less and less on ideas imported from China.
00:28:00:14 00:28:11:15	TATYANA SERRAINO	So I think that one of the reasons why "The Great Wave" is so special is because it offers us such a privileged insight into the lifestyle, the culture and the mentality of Japan at the time. Would you agree on that?
00:28:11:17 00:28:24:13	NAOKO MIKAMI	I agree that the whole series of the "36 Views of Mount Fuji" gives us an amazing insight about what Japanese life looked back then.
00:28:25:08 00:28:33:03	NAOKO MIKAMI	But if you really want to know the insight, you should check Hokusai manga.
00:28:34:08 00:28:42:17	TATYANA SERRAINO	Susan, as a manga and anime expert, now we're moving into your area of expertise. First of all, can you just explain the difference between manga and anime?
00:28:42:19	SUSAN NAPIER	Manga are basically print and anime was moving... moving pictures. And so, I mean,

00:28:57:03		that's... that's a very, very important difference that you have on film, something that's moving and... and transforming.
00:28:57:05 00:29:23:16	SUSAN NAPIER	Having said that, manga can be pretty powerful too. And, but with anime you have the sound also, and the movement, and of course, you know, more and more, really, from certainly the 1970s on, you know, very sophisticated techniques of animation, really beautiful. I mean, most manga artists are artists who have had artistic training. They're coming in, they really know how to create beautiful images.
00:29:23:18 00:29:35:07	SUSAN NAPIER	And then the anime directors, the anime... the animators are also, you know, well versed in art history and... and the way to create beautiful images. And you kind of keep wanting to watch it.
00:29:35:09 00:29:39:18	TATYANA SERRAINO	Can you tell us a little bit more about how did Hokusai sort of introduce manga?
00:29:39:20 00:30:04:09	SUSAN NAPIER	Well, the... the story is that he had been pretty successful and he ended up, you know, being very, very well known. But at this point in the... I think it's that the first manga is published, and I believe it was his publisher that sort of said, "Well, you know, why don't we publish a book?" And Hokusai was definitely known. I mean, he was born in 1760, so by the time he's doing manga, he has an established reputation.
00:30:04:11 00:30:11:13	SUSAN NAPIER	He's in his fifties. He has a good publisher. He wasn't, apparently, necessarily all that excited himself, but money is money.
00:30:11:15 00:30:18:00	SUSAN NAPIER	So, you know, he'd been doing sketches. I mean, he's an artist. He sketches just all different kinds of things.
00:30:18:02 00:30:27:01	SUSAN NAPIER	And they put it together in a book and it did very well. And so, great. Suddenly he becomes much more interested in publishing this kind of thing.

00:30:27:03 00:30:43:15	SUSAN NAPIER	And there are at least 12 that were published during his lifetime. And it was lucrative and it was probably, you know, rather fun. I mean, here's a brilliant artist who's just enjoying himself, doing his sketches and making money. I mean, what... what could be better?
00:30:44:02 00:30:49:13	TATYANA SERRAINO	And speaking of their success, these images, think initially they were just meant for students.
00:30:49:15 00:31:19:02	SUSAN NAPIER	Yes. Yeah, they were originally. Thank you for putting that. Yeah, they were originally to, you know, learn to draw, how to learn to draw, you know. And we still... it's so sweet because we still have these manga books now. I'm sure you're aware of them, you know, very, very available, very ubiquitous for... People see manga and anime and they think, "Cool, you know, I'd like to do that." And so it's very nice that a hundred and... Well, almost 200 years later, people are still learning to draw manga and still doing sketches and... and having fun with this.
00:31:19:04 00:31:28:13	TATYANA SERRAINO	So, as well as being accessible and entertaining, as you said, these images, they also give us a peek into the Japanese people and what their life in Japan was like at the time.
00:31:28:15 00:31:39:05	SUSAN NAPIER	Oh, absolutely. And again, that was one of the revolutionary aspects about them, because up until that point, even in Japan, there wasn't that much fascination with kind of regular people.
00:31:39:07 00:31:48:01	SUSAN NAPIER	And so you're able... he's able to draw very distinctive-looking people who look like real human beings, engaged in all kinds of activities.
00:31:48:03 00:32:08:13	SUSAN NAPIER	And I think, again, to sort of go back to this idea of movement, there is a lot of sense of lightness and... and movement across the pages, if you look at the manga. And people are doing their fishing or their dancing, or they're playing games, or card games, or just jumping around, or doing silly things, you know, celebrating something.

<p>00:32:08:15 00:32:37:16</p>	<p>SUSAN NAPIER</p>	<p>And not just people, but you have animals and you have very strange, grotesque animals. So it's not just the ordinary people of Japan, but Hokusai's manga are everything. They're a world of everything. He's doing occupations, you know, a barrel maker, a sake maker, but also it's a wider world of the supernatural, which in a way is something that would have been considered part of the world, definitely, the real world in the 1830s.</p>
<p>00:32:37:18 00:32:43:13</p>	<p>SUSAN NAPIER</p>	<p>I mean, there's a definite sense of... of animistic forces as part of Japanese culture that was accepted.</p>
<p>00:32:43:15 00:32:45:21</p>	<p>TATYANA SERRAINO</p>	<p>Were there any humorous drawings among them?</p>
<p>00:32:45:23 00:32:58:10</p>	<p>SUSAN NAPIER</p>	<p>Yeah. I mean, they're often very humorous, but they're not necessarily slapstick. It's not like people slipping on banana peels per se. It's not quite that kind of, you know, comic humor that we might see in the West.</p>
<p>00:32:58:12 00:33:21:13</p>	<p>SUSAN NAPIER</p>	<p>It's more just... I would call it light-hearted, maybe a little bit frivolous, although working, you know... I mean, the idea says people... are enjoying their life. And that's the impression I've always gotten from this period, that it was a very, really unusual period in world history. And for any country, they were cut off from the rest of the world for 260 years, pretty much.</p>
<p>00:33:21:15 00:33:56:00</p>	<p>SUSAN NAPIER</p>	<p>And they developed this very interesting culture, which I say is very urban, very mercantile, and at least for the people who are part of it, it clearly was... there was a sense of joy, kind of, in transience. And so to me, again, to go back to the question of humor, it's more a large humor, a kind of broad humor, a sense of, you know, aren't people amazing? Aren't they, you know, sort of fun and silly and, you know, isn't this world an amazing place? And, you know, we should kind of appreciate it while it continues, while it floats by.</p>

00:33:56:02 00:34:06:01	TATYANA SERRAINO	And I suppose also the way they kind of appear, the way you're describing the nature of these manga, this world that encapsulated everything, you know, the humor, the banality, the... Yeah.
00:34:06:03 00:34:10:13	SUSAN NAPIER	That's good. Banality is good too, because it's often just regular stuff.
00:34:10:15 00:34:11:10	TATYANA SERRAINO	Absolutely.
00:34:11:12 00:34:21:21	SUSAN NAPIER	Just regular stuff that somehow becomes special. And they're so arresting, these... these pictures are so believable, you know these people. But... but beautifully encapsulated.
00:34:21:23 00:34:26:06	TATYANA SERRAINO	And what else can you tell us about these drawings? Is there anything else that comes to mind?
00:34:26:18 00:34:58:07	SUSAN NAPIER	I guess I would. I mean, you know, I work on fantasy, so I can't help but, you know, be so impressed by the fantastic images. I mean, I love his dragons. Dragons are great just generally. And, you know, if you go to Kyoto, you'll see that often a temple will have a dragon on its roof, on a ceiling. And the reason is that in the West, we have fire-breathing dragons. But in East Asia, the dragon is a water spirit and you have a dragon on your ceiling, in a temple, in order to help prevent fire.
00:34:58:09 00:35:13:07	SUSAN NAPIER	And of course, they're an incredibly delightful thing to draw. And we certainly have them in the West with Saint George and the Dragon. But, you know, the... the Japanese artists really kind of go to town on them and they're so lively in Hokusai's sketches.
00:35:13:09 00:35:29:17	SUSAN NAPIER	You can just imagine them flapping their tails or, you know, flying or something. And just generally, yes, his ability to do the grotesque and the supernatural, which I do think is... is very important in modern manga as well, that I would say that's a definite connection there. Really worth looking at.

00:35:29:24 00:35:33:14	TATYANA SERRAINO	Thank you, Susan. He really sounds like a playful character.
00:35:37:17 00:35:46:05	TATYANA SERRAINO	Now I'd like to hear more about how the actual woodblock prints are made. And, David, I believe that you have made about 2,000 prints of "The Great Wave." Is that right?
00:35:46:07 00:35:51:21	DAVID BULL	Well, okay, when you say me, we've got to qualify this right away. It's never one person's job.
00:35:51:23 00:36:01:05	DAVID BULL	Designers designed, carvers carved, printers printed, and it was all sewn together, wrapped together by a producer. You know, the man who was the publisher.
00:36:01:07 00:36:10:12	DAVID BULL	It may have been more. Four jobs, the publisher, the carving team, the printing team and the designer. Those four people together were responsible for it.
00:36:10:14 00:36:31:14	DAVID BULL	So to answer your question, have I made X-thousand copies of "The Great Wave?" I have cut the blocks for the version that our workshop is publishing . I have not printed a single one of the ones that we have sold. I did some of the test printing, but once we got it organized, I passed it over to our professional team and over you go, guys, get busy.
00:36:31:16 00:36:43:07	TATYANA SERRAINO	Can you take us through the process of making a print from the artist having done the drawing? So let's say Hokusai has just made the drawing of "The Great Wave." How many people then get involved and what do they each do?
00:36:44:10 00:36:53:15	DAVID BULL	Most projects started with a publisher coming up with the idea for something he wanted to produce and sell. Most projects started with the publisher.
00:36:53:17 00:37:03:01	DAVID BULL	"Okay, I see the guy down the street. He's selling those new designs by Hiroshige, those landscapes of the Tokaido. They're selling so well. Maybe we should make some

		kind of a similar project."
00:37:03:03 00:37:14:17	DAVID BULL	And he might say, "What could we do? I know. I saw some landscapes by that Hokusai guy. Let's see if we can call him up, and see if he's free and he can do some landscapes for us. Let's chat with him."
00:37:14:19 00:37:29:14	DAVID BULL	So he gets a hold of Hokusai, calls him in. He would never go to visit Hokusai. He'd call him in. One of his henchmen would go out there and say, "Mr. Publisher wants to chat with you if you've got some free time." Hokusai might say, "Yeah, okay, I'll go and talk to him. Let's see what we can do."
00:37:29:16 00:37:33:03	DAVID BULL	And the publisher would outline to Hokusai the concept that he had in mind.
00:37:33:03 00:37:36:16	DAVID BULL	"Let's do some big landscapes, the ones that match what Hiroshige is doing right now. But
00:37:36:16 00:37:40:04	DAVID BULL	instead of Tokaido, let's do a theme, let's show all of Mount Fuji because it's really hot
00:37:40:04 00:37:43:15	DAVID BULL	in the market, people love pictures of Mount Fuji. Maybe we can five or six, or maybe ten
00:37:43:15 00:37:47:03	DAVID BULL	of them in a set or something like this." He would... He would, you know, brainstorm this,
00:37:47:03 00:37:48:20	DAVID BULL	or just, you know, put an idea on the table.
00:37:52:06 00:38:01:16	DAVID BULL	And Hokusai might say, "Well, okay, but I'm busy with a commission right now for a couple of screens, but I'll be free in maybe two weeks. You know, can we talk about it?" The guy will say, "Yeah, bring me some sketches when you're ready."
00:38:01:18	DAVID BULL	I'm making this all up, but this is the way that it worked. We know the system, how it

00:38:06:16		worked.
00:38:06:18 00:38:23:06	DAVID BULL	So, okay, so some time goes by and Hokusai brings in a few sketches for the guy. It was a guy. There was no women in any of these projects. I'm sorry. It's all going to be men involved in this whole thing here, because these were working people. Women were at home doing female things and men had jobs. So it's always going to be guys here.
00:38:23:08 00:38:46:08	DAVID BULL	The publisher says, "Okay, yeah, that looks good. That's what I had in mind. Yeah. Tell you what, though, these have a bit too many people. I know most of your work involves really close-ups of people. I know, I know, I know. But the thing I have in mind here, I want to really think about the wide landscape. I know you want to do the people, but I want to do the wide landscapes. So take these things, go back and let's, you know, can you, like, fix them?"
00:38:46:20 00:38:55:13	DAVID BULL	So Hokusai grumbles, but he's broke, maybe. What if he does need work? You know, he's got to make a living. He's already spent the money that he got for that screen painting we talked about, you know, two, two weeks ago, whatever.
00:38:55:15 00:39:20:14	DAVID BULL	So he goes back, he does some more sketches, brings them in. The publisher says, "This is what I want. Yes. Good, good, good. This is... I want the landscape, the big wide open spaces, the big sky. I want that mountain. Good, good, good. So I've been thinking about this some more, and I knew you could do it. We're going to expand it. We're going to do 12 in the series. And how about this? If we paid you, it would be..." And he'd name a number and Hokusai would say, "Is that all?" And the guy would say, "Well..." You know, they have the negotiation, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.
00:39:20:16 00:39:37:21	DAVID BULL	They'd come to their deal about doing this. So Hokusai goes back to his workroom and he sketches some more, draws some more, sketches some more. Now, we don't have any idea how much back and forth there was. The publisher sends him home again. He brings him again, sends him home again. We don't know.

00:39:37:23 00:40:03:23	DAVID BULL	But at some point, it could be early in the process. It could be late, there's a deck of sketches there. And the publisher says, "My God, look at this. This is really kind of cool. We can use this. Okay, let's do it. Let's call this series '36 Views of Fuji', because look at this. You add ten more and we'll do this." And he gets excited and says, "We're going to do this." He calls his men over and says, "Look at this, we're going to have a real good series here." And they make their deal and away they go.
00:40:04:00 00:40:10:24	DAVID BULL	Now production starts, but Hokusai at this point is actually almost already finished.
00:40:11:01 00:40:23:19	DAVID BULL	He's presented sketches that show the mountain and a couple of guys in front of it with a horse and whatever. And the publisher's team now takes over and they can now put this into a square format.
00:40:23:21 00:40:33:16	DAVID BULL	They will draw border lines. They will put in the cartouche. The publishers decided the name. It's going to say Sanju Rock, 36. The publisher's team does this.
00:40:33:18 00:40:44:09	DAVID BULL	Now, they might go back to Hokusai and say, "Look, the sketch of this horse is a bit rough. Can you clean it up?" And Hokusai will clean up a horse and give it to them and they paste that in to the picture.
00:40:44:11 00:40:56:21	DAVID BULL	And bit by bit by bit, the "36 Views" come together like this and probably the first few start carving while they were still already starting to make the next ones in the batch.
00:40:56:23 00:41:17:05	DAVID BULL	Maybe they haven't even got the designs for the last bunch ready yet, but they're already carving the first ones because the publisher knows what he wants and he wants to get going on this. And it's the team then takes over. The carver, he knows what to do. He's seen Hokusai's work before. He's got a copy of the manga in his workshop.
00:41:17:07	DAVID BULL	Hokusai by this point is a very, very, very experienced person. His work is all over

00:41:28:17		town. The carvers have all done some of his stuff before. The printers have all done some of his stuff before.
00:41:28:19 00:41:39:24	DAVID BULL	They know what colors are in fashion right now. They know what a current woodblock print is supposed to look like. They know the mood that's happening right now in town.
00:41:40:01 00:41:50:03	DAVID BULL	They get busy cutting and printing, and Hokusai isn't really actually needed much anymore.
00:41:51:02 00:42:08:20	DAVID BULL	And that's kind of a shocking thing to many people. They assume that Hokusai is hovering over every step of every stage of every one of these prints, and almost certainly that's not the case. He's busy with his next job.
00:42:09:23 00:42:20:24	TATYANA SERRAINO	So when it comes to the designer, who in this case was Hokusai, I think what I understand is that he actually has very little say in the actual design and is not needed for most of the process.
00:42:21:01 00:42:30:22	DAVID BULL	The prints we're looking at here, "The Great Wave" and that series, sketches, yes, from Hokusai. Touch up sketches, more clearly defined lines from Hokusai. Yes.
00:42:31:09 00:43:05:22	DAVID BULL	Later on, what colors we should use. Perhaps there was some input. Most of the prints that I've studied in that series, I think, do not really demand input from Hokusai anymore. And I suspect that his later involvement in the project was perhaps not so extensive. But there are people out there who would really vigorously argue this point with me and say, "No, the fact that that "Great Wave" has become such an iconic thing is proof in itself that the master himself had a hand in this and called for every dot and line to be just as they are."
00:43:05:24 00:43:55:14	DAVID BULL	I don't have any proof. There's no journals or letters or documentation from the era back there. But I do have one technical point hidden inside that "Great Wave" that

		tells me that the design we now see, the wave at the left, the boats at the front, the iconic mountain in the background, the dark sky gradation behind Mount Fuji, that was not Hokusai's idea. When he handed it in and when the group first made it, it didn't have that gradation behind the mountain because that gradation was put later on, on one of the other blocks. And it causes an ink stain on one of the other blocks that we can see in original versions of this print.
00:43:55:16 00:44:15:11	DAVID BULL	The gradation at the back was not originally there, and somewhere along the line, the publisher of one of his printers said, "Geez, that mountain, it's kind of bare. Tell you what, let's put a gradation and try it." They tried it. "Oh, my God. That's it. Let's do this. Let's roll." But that wasn't Hokusai's idea.
00:44:15:13 00:44:22:15	TATYANA SERRAINO	So can you take us through the different stages of actually carving the work of art, which I suppose is your field of expertise?
00:44:22:17 00:44:30:00	DAVID BULL	Well, the reproduction we made, yes, I carved every stroke of it, and... heavily documented this on YouTube as well.
00:44:30:02 00:44:54:11	DAVID BULL	There's one important thing to distinguish between back in the old days and what I do now, and the other people living now. What we do when we're making reproductions. And it's a hugely important point, which most people would never think of. The original carver, the carver of the original version, and David here, the carver of his reproduction, had completely different jobs.
00:44:54:13 00:45:04:09	DAVID BULL	Think about this. The original version carver, he was carving Hokusai's lines as either Hokusai drew them or as one of the publisher's minions cleaned them up and sketched them.
00:45:04:11 00:45:20:07	DAVID BULL	So a pen drawing, a Japanese brush drawing on thin paper, was pasted down onto the wood and the carvers said, "Okay, I can take this from here. Let me go." So the carver is now carving humanly-created brushstrokes.

00:45:21:00 00:45:45:11	DAVID BULL	Dave here, and all the other carvers who are working here these days, we don't have Hokusai's original brushstrokes. They were destroyed at the moment that that original version was carved because that sketch and the drawing was pasted on the wood. What we are doing is we are carving a reproduction of the woodblock print that was made that month.
00:45:46:02 00:45:59:13	DAVID BULL	In other words, we're reproducing carved lines. So we have no decisions to make. Our job is to copy what we see with no interpretation, because we're cutting a line that's already been cut.
00:45:59:15 00:46:15:08	DAVID BULL	The original carver, the original cutter was looking at that and saying, "Oh, look at that. I can clean that up." And he cleaned it up and he turned the brushed, sometimes very messy, sometimes very ragged brushstrokes, he turned them into clean, crisp, carved lines.
00:46:15:10 00:46:15:22	TATYANA SERRAINO	Yeah.
00:46:15:24 00:46:36:11	DAVID BULL	And my job now is to look at the best of the old carving and to try as well as I can to replicate it. But I don't have the chance to do what the old carver did and cut Hokusai's original lines because they are lost and gone forever.
00:46:36:13 00:46:46:09	TATYANA SERRAINO	Hmm. Interesting. Okay. Then the woodblock is made and the printing begins. But there's another interesting fact. The first prints might look different than the later prints. Tell me why that is.
00:46:46:11 00:46:56:08	DAVID BULL	There's the woodblock. You've got this thing. The carver has done a good job. Let's say he's done a really nice job at reproducing Hokusai's lines, at creating new, new carved lines for Hokusai. The block is done. There it goes.
00:46:56:10	DAVID BULL	Now, from a fresh, clean block, if we print it carefully, we get good, clean, sharp, nice

00:47:25:09		lines. Take another copy. Hmm. Still good, clean, sharp lines. Take 5,000 copies. Rubbing this with ink and rubbing this with ink and doing this, and the block splits, the block gets older. Obviously, this block now starts to degrade the more copies you pull from it. And there's a huge, huge paradox involved here that is wonderfully interesting.
00:47:25:21 00:47:35:09	DAVID BULL	The publisher, as I mentioned before, he's trying to sell a ton of copies of this. Okay. He gets the blocks all finished for this print, puts it in his shop, and let's see what happens.
00:47:35:11 00:47:54:03	DAVID BULL	And oh, my God, it starts to sell well. Now, they had maybe run off 100 copies or 200 copies in the room upstairs. No idea. If he was optimistic it was going to sell, he might run up a lot of copies. If he wasn't sure about this one, he wouldn't waste money. He'd run off 20 copies and let's do a trial run and see if it sells well. We have no idea.
00:47:54:05 00:48:03:11	DAVID BULL	He probably knew this was going to be a good seller because he could see it was a good design. So let's say 200. They make their 200 copies, put them in the shop. Bang, bang, bang, bang. They start to sell.
00:48:03:13 00:48:14:12	DAVID BULL	"Oh, my God, We've got a home run. Oh, my God. Oh, my God." The publisher calls upstairs to their printers. "We got a good one. Get those blocks out. 200 more copies right now. As fast as you can."
00:48:14:14 00:48:24:08	DAVID BULL	And the printer yells downstairs, "Boss, the blocks are still wet. If I start right now and start a new batch, they're going to really start to get worn out. They need to be dried out properly."
00:48:24:10 00:48:31:17	DAVID BULL	And the publisher says, "I don't care about that. This is hot. People want it right now. We're going to be sold out of this thing in 15 minutes."
00:48:31:19	DAVID BULL	"Okay, boss, they're your blocks. They're going to wear out."

00:48:34:13		
00:48:34:15 00:48:49:21	DAVID BULL	And so the paradox here is the best-selling woodblock prints of the day, the ones we are most likely to have copies left over these days, were the ones that were made quickly in multiple quantities, fast, again and again and again from blocks that didn't have a chance to dry out, didn't have a chance to wait, and the blocks were abused because "we've got to get going on this."
00:48:58:14 00:49:11:21	DAVID BULL	And the prints that didn't sell well in the shop, these are the ones almost always in perfect, beautiful condition because they only made 50 copies and didn't make any more. The blocks that went into the stove because nobody was going to use them again.
00:49:12:08 00:49:26:07	DAVID BULL	So the prints we have the most copies left are the ones almost always we see in the worst possible condition. It's a terrible paradox, but it's just the nature of the commerce that was involved back in the day.
00:49:26:09 00:49:36:11	TATYANA SERRAINO	Yeah, what a paradox. I've never thought about that. Now, David, as far as I understand, you have an exciting project coming up with the British Museum. Please tell me a little bit about that.
00:49:36:13 00:50:13:12	DAVID BULL	Partway along through this talk today, we talked about the fact that all of us carvers, me and the other carvers working in this, we never get a chance to do the thing that the first editions of carvers did, to carve real Hokusai's lines and to... not to step in and do our own interpretation of them, but to just do our job, take our turn into trying to do a good job, take this master guy's lines and do as well as we can at making them dance and sing on the page as well as we can. You know, we have to sometimes simplify it because he just put a gray blob where the hair was. We have to carve the hairlines because he didn't show us one by one by one.
00:50:13:14 00:50:55:09	DAVID BULL	So we have to interpret this master's work. But next year I am going to have a chance to do exactly this thing that I'm describing, because in some museums here and there

		around the world, there are collections of Hokusai drafts and quite well-developed sketches which, for commercial reasons, didn't get turned into finished projects. In other words, he did his part, may or may not have been paid for it, and the publisher maybe took the thing and said, "Okay. We'll get to this next." Didn't get to it next. And those sketches ended up being preserved in modern institutions.
00:50:55:11 00:51:11:24	DAVID BULL	Next year, I am going to do exactly the thing that I have described to you in this talk. I am going to get a chance to take Hokusai's original sketches, which were taken right to the stage of being given to the carver.
00:51:12:11 00:51:26:18	DAVID BULL	Now, we don't have the exact paper. We're not going to destroy the paper that's in a museum. But these days we have photocopy machines, we photocopy that thing, prepare it on thin paper, and I am going to take those scraps of paper, paste them on a woodblock, and I am going to be faced with the same challenge...
00:51:26:20 00:51:27:07	TATYANA SERRAINO	Wow.
00:51:27:09 00:51:50:00	DAVID BULL	...that Egawa Tomekichi, Hokusai's favorite carver, I am going to be faced with the same challenge that he had back in 1820, 1825, 1830. I'm going to sharpen my knife and dig into a Hokusai sketch and try and create a woodblock print that that guy would say, "Yeah, this kid knows what he's doing."
00:51:50:02 00:51:53:01	TATYANA SERRAINO	Is there anything you'd like to add about the process?
00:51:53:03 00:52:04:05	DAVID BULL	Part of the thing that we're trying to present to people here is to honor the craftsmen, the publisher and the craftsmen. They're the people whose names are gone. All we know now is the name Hokusai.
00:52:04:07 00:52:25:22	DAVID BULL	So my sort of take on this, and it may be too much one-sided, I'm sorry. I want to try and bring forward, the carver did a glorious job, the printer. Oh, my God, they were so good at this. The publisher's idea. So I tend to toss aside Hokusai. He doesn't need my

		help because his name is world famous. But of course, at heart, he's the reason we are doing this today.
00:52:25:24 00:53:09:07	DAVID BULL	That publisher did lots of projects which we are not talking about. Those carvers and printers, they were busy with lots of stuff that we are not looking at. Why are we here today? Because that man was an incredible, glorious genius whose name will, I hope, live as long as human beings have any interest in looking at this sort of thing. He is the one we should be looking up to and saying, "Oh, my God, that conception was glorious." And I just regret that he didn't live long enough to see what humanity as a whole has come to recognize in his work. He could not have possibly ever imagined. Completely impossible.
00:53:15:07 00:53:22:09	TATYANA SERRAINO	Now let's turn to the sky. Alfred Haft, why do you think that Hokusai and his team used the composition of the sky that they did?
00:53:22:11 00:53:30:18	ALFRED HAFT	Well, that's very interesting, because the sky is not very often identified as a point of interest in this print. Most of the time it's the boats and the waves.
00:53:31:05 00:53:40:22	ALFRED HAFT	But for me, the treatment of the clouds animates the area above the main action of the print and perhaps contributes to the sense of turbulence.
00:53:40:24 00:53:43:05	TATYANA SERRAINO	Naoko, what do you think?
00:53:43:11 00:53:51:12	NAOKO MIKAMI	Ah, the sky thing. This sky looks very different from version to version, edition to edition.
00:53:51:14 00:54:02:07	TATYANA SERRAINO	Hmm. Speaking of the sky and European influence, Hokusai has painted a low horizon in these prints, and that was not so common in Japanese art at the time. Is that right?
00:54:02:09 00:54:24:22	NAOKO MIKAMI	Mm. You can find low horizons in other ukiyo-e art. So I would not say it's uncommon, but it's true that it's not the most used perspective either. Anyway, I think it's just

		another trick by Hokusai to put even more pressure on the people on the boats.
00:54:24:24 00:54:31:24	TATYANA SERRAINO	Right. So in this case, you're saying that the low horizon is used to kind of magnify the power of the wave and make it feel even more threatening?
00:54:32:01 00:54:33:00	NAOKO MIKAMI	Yeah. Exactly.
00:54:33:02 00:54:41:18	TATYANA SERRAINO	Yes, I agree with you, for sure. I think another powerful aspect of this woodblock is Hokusai's use of scale. Alfred, what can you tell me about that?
00:54:42:05 00:54:53:16	ALFRED HAFT	As he did occasionally in other prints in the series, Hokusai here depicts Mount Fuji, the tallest mountain in Japan, as though it might be swamped and erased by a sea wave.
00:54:53:18 00:55:21:09	ALFRED HAFT	The inversion of scale is one of the most surprising aspects of the design. But even so, the mountain seems to anchor the composition as though, no matter how small and distanced, it will remain an immovable feature of the landscape and a cultural lodestar. The inversion heightens the narrative tension of the scene, but also implies further associations and resonances regarding the sacredness of the mountain.
00:55:21:11 00:55:30:10	NAOKO MIKAMI	Mm-hmm. Yes. Yes, totally. Mount Fuji is basically the tallest and biggest thing you can find in Japan.
00:55:30:12 00:55:42:13	NAOKO MIKAMI	On the contrary, "The Wave of Kanagawa" is supposed to depict a place somewhere around Tokyo Bay. And Tokyo Bay is a place where waves are normally small.
00:55:43:11 00:56:16:04	NAOKO MIKAMI	So what Hokusai actually does here is taking the tallest and the smallest thing you can find in Japan and then reversing their importance. Here, the wave completely dwarfs the mountain. That shows the power of the sea and power of nature. And the poor people on the boat, the... they're caught between the two elements with nowhere to escape.

00:56:16:22 00:56:20:00	TATYANA SERRAINO	So what does Mount Fuji symbolize?
00:56:20:02 00:56:38:10	NAOKO MIKAMI	Well, Mount Fuji has been considered as a sacred mountain in Shinto since at least the seventh century, and there are many temples and shrines around it. And climbing this mountain has long been a religious act.
00:56:38:22 00:56:50:00	NAOKO MIKAMI	The name Fuji itself can be read as a pun and can mean something like "the most unique" or "immortal."
00:56:51:05 00:57:10:04	NAOKO MIKAMI	I'm not a religious person, but for some reason I always feel happy when I see Mount Fuji in the distance on a clear winter morning. I don't know why, but maybe it's coded inside Japanese people's DNA, I guess.
00:57:10:06 00:57:16:18	TATYANA SERRAINO	And is it fair to say that for Hokusai himself, Mount Fuji was almost kind of a personal, spiritual obsession?
00:57:16:20 00:57:40:16	NAOKO MIKAMI	I think so, because he... he was living in the Edo period. There is a religion called Edokko, and they really wanted to go to Fuji and climb there. People very... worship the mountain, the Mount Fuji. So I think so, Hokusai did.
00:57:47:07 00:58:20:16	TATYANA SERRAINO	As Susan mentioned earlier, Hokusai's "The Great Wave" is perhaps the most reproduced artwork in history. Not only have there been many prints made, but today you can see it as wall posters in bars, restaurants and homes around the world. You can get it as a stick-on skin for PlayStation game controllers. It can be seen as huge murals on walls, on laptop cases, sneakers and T-shirts. The wave has also become a popular tattoo, especially among surfers, and it's even been turned into an official emoji on the iPhone. Try typing the word "wave" and just see what happens.
00:58:20:18 00:58:29:16	TATYANA SERRAINO	And now you can build it with LEGO Art. So let's bring back LEGO Art Creative Lead Fiorella Groves to hear more about how that happened. Welcome back, Fiorella.

00:58:29:18 00:58:30:10	FIGRELLA GROVES	Hi, Tatyana.
00:58:30:12 00:58:39:15	TATYANA SERRAINO	So, first of all, I'd like to get to know you a little better, Fiorella. How did you end up working at the LEGO Group, what many LEGO fans around the world would consider a dream job?
00:58:39:17 00:59:00:13	FIGRELLA GROVES	Well, my story about how I got designing LEGO sets is a little bit different from other LEGO designers in that I'm not a LEGO builder to begin with, and neither did I grow up playing with LEGO. But I do have over 18 years' experience in a design industry rooted in graphic design, art direction, and an insatiable desire to learn, of course.
00:59:00:15 00:59:36:07	FIGRELLA GROVES	And I actually started my LEGO career in 2016, working way behind the scenes of LEGO sets, actually, primarily focusing on how we stimulate creativity in the design organization. And then one day I was in the area, and in 2019, an opportunity came up to join the LEGO Art team. So I seized the opportunity because not only is art a personal passion, but I was also really excited to apply my design experience and see how we could push the limits of what a LEGO brick can do as an artistic medium on this product. And the rest, as they say, is history.
00:59:36:09 00:59:41:13	TATYANA SERRAINO	So your title is Creative Lead. What is your role on a project like this?
00:59:41:15 01:00:02:18	FIGRELLA GROVES	Well, my role as a Creative Lead is to create a brief and set a vision that the designers can design to. And it's definitely teamwork. It's a really close and collaborative process that requires a lot of back and forth and rich dialogue between myself and the designers in order to create a really awesome LEGO set.
01:00:02:20 01:00:29:06	FIGRELLA GROVES	So in this set, it means I get to work of a host of incredibly talented creatives. I'm very, very lucky. So from the LEGO Model designers, and shoutout to Milan and Nico and Anna-Mette, those are the designers who worked on this set. And a really big shout out to Diego. We have a graphic designer who worked on this set, too. And then we

		have Peter, our building construction specialist, and then we also have Pia, our beloved model coach.
01:00:29:08 01:00:45:09	FIORELLA GROVES	And so the process for this is slightly different in the sense that Milan and Nico's involvement was that they made... They actually made a really cool concept in their own spare time, and then they left it hanging in the LEGO Art area without explanation.
01:00:45:11 01:01:22:18	FIORELLA GROVES	So it was one of those moments where I was like, "What is this? What is this?" And we were just in the process of really trying to look for ways to evolve the LEGO Art line and find ways to exemplify how we can use the brick as a really, really key artistic medium. And here was this piece. It was quite rough at the time, but it really stood out. So they left it there without explanation. And then our third designer, Anne-Mette, knocked it out of the park by taking their concept to the next level and made it buildable.
01:01:23:05 01:01:38:24	FIORELLA GROVES	Because I think a lot of times when LEGO designers build, they build for themselves in the sense that they just want to get the visuals out really quickly and then we figure out afterwards, you know, in the process, how to make it buildable in a step-by-step process and make it enjoyable for the consumers to build as well.
01:01:39:01 01:01:56:16	FIORELLA GROVES	And then I can go on. There's our graphic designers, of course, there's our building experience specialists, there's our model coaches, and then there's everyone else that's part of the chain where... It's from designing box covers, graphics on the building instructions, and then, of course, supply chain.
01:01:56:18 01:02:12:13	FIORELLA GROVES	It goes on and on, so can easily pass through hundreds of hands. So my job is to make sure that the creative direction is clear, that we're working in sync to the same vision, and that we've really pushed the creative boundaries to make every LEGO Art set an extraordinary creative experience.

01:02:12:15 01:02:22:04	TATYANA SERRAINO	Fantastic. So you're almost, in a way, like Hokusai's publisher or producer that gets a great team and then oversees that everything is perfect, right?
01:02:22:06 01:02:28:22	IORELLA GROVES	Yeah. Well, if you'd like to put it that way. I love the sound of that. Can I... can I have that as my job title, Hokusai's producer?
01:02:28:24 01:02:39:18	TATYANA SERRAINO	That sounds fantastic. So there's still a lot of interest for Japanese art in general. And of course, most of all for the one that we're talking about today, Hokusai's "The Great Wave."
01:02:39:20 01:02:44:21	TATYANA SERRAINO	What is it about this print that makes it so unique that it deserves its own LEGO Art piece?
01:02:45:08 01:03:01:16	IORELLA GROVES	Oh, wow. It's a really great question because when we look at the... this masterpiece, you know, we look at all those layers of color, the graphical shapes and textures, and they immediately spoke to us as something that could translate really nicely into LEGO bricks.
01:03:01:18 01:03:19:03	IORELLA GROVES	And Hokusai has captured this beautifully rough and turbulent ocean. It's an extremely emotional piece, but as a design challenge, we had to ask ourselves, how could the shapes and textures of LEGO pieces be used to accentuate those ideas and capture that expression and that emotion?
01:03:19:05 01:03:28:10	IORELLA GROVES	And that made for a really interesting design experience for the team. You know, the layering of the LEGO plates in order to create the shapes by necessity becomes three-dimensional.
01:03:28:12 01:03:33:07	IORELLA GROVES	So we needed to imagine what Hokusai's vision might have looked like in three dimensions.
01:03:33:09	IORELLA GROVES	And so we have this really funny situation here where we're creating something that's

01:03:46:12		three-dimensional from a two-dimensional piece, and the original artist had created something two-dimensional from a three-dimensional vision.
01:03:47:05 01:03:52:22	TATYANA SERRAINO	What a fantastic paradox. Am I right in saying that you also visited the British Museum to talk with Alfred himself?
01:03:52:24 01:03:55:16	FIORELLA GROVES	Yes, we did. And it was such a pleasure.
01:03:55:18 01:04:08:18	FIORELLA GROVES	We went to visit the British Museum when they had "The Great Wave" on exhibition, and it was an amazing show. We took the opportunity to have a conversation with Alfred.
01:04:08:20 01:04:43:13	FIORELLA GROVES	We had the full design team online to ask him all the questions because we were just in that point in the design development where we were really kind of struggling with some elements. How do we... You know, do we include the cloud? Do we not? And of course, having those conversations with Alfred just cleared everything up for us. Of course we needed to include the cloud. Of course we needed to make sure that the claws of the waves were defined and the original concept model had little frogs on the sea foam instead of birds, as we have now.
01:04:43:15 01:04:43:18	TATYANA SERRAINO	Oh.
01:04:43:20 01:04:50:17	FIORELLA GROVES	Yeah. And it's because we understood that, you know, Hokusai had an appreciation, a deep appreciation for nature.
01:04:50:19 01:05:06:03	FIORELLA GROVES	So we wanted to make sure that we had some organic shapes and utilize the full spectrum of the LEGO elements we have to recreate that dimensionality of the sea foam and that, you know, we have these kind of slightly spiky sort of textures coming out from the piece.
01:05:06:05	FIORELLA GROVES	And after speaking with Alfred, we realized that frogs were not the way to go. It was

01:05:36:02		actually birds. And he was able to show us a drawing that Hokusai had made where there was a wave, almost like "The Great Wave" in itself, and in the background, there was this spread of birds in the distance that almost looks like sea spray. And it is that sort of beautiful sort of dialogue that he has with nature to depict how it works and how it forms in his mind.
01:05:36:04 01:06:01:05	TATYANA SERRAINO	Oh, fantastic. What an amazing experience that must have been. And speaking of the... the foam of the wave, which you were just mentioning, I've noticed, looking at the LEGO design, that a bit of spray from the wave actually extends beyond the confines of the work and spills into the frame. It's such a wonderful detail that I think really captures the dynamism of the wave. Can you tell us a bit about that little detail and how you chose to kind of incorporate that?
01:06:01:07 01:06:42:02	FIORELLA GROVES	Of course. When we worked on the piece, you know, Anne-Mette and I had a lot of conversation about how we can make this really come to life. My big push was for us to really make this different from a printed piece. Why it would make sense to have a LEGO Hokusai piece as opposed to a printed one. And one of the things that we really wanted to capture was to really make his wave come to life a bit more. And Anne-Mette then added these subtle touches of, like, you know, turning the leaves a little bit more so it broke the lines of the frame a little bit, was just a really, really nice, elegant touch to really accentuate that, to show that this is a piece that's coming out at you.
01:06:42:04 01:06:54:06	TATYANA SERRAINO	Absolutely. Yeah. So for the first LEGO Art sets, you were only using small round one by one bricks. And this one, however, you are using many other kinds. Can you tell me a little bit about why you decided to do that?
01:06:54:08 01:07:05:16	FIORELLA GROVES	Yes, of course. Well, you know, as I mentioned earlier on, you know, we really wanted to evolve the LEGO Art product line and find a way to exemplify the use of the LEGO brick as an artistic medium.

01:07:05:18 01:07:11:20	FIORELLA GROVES	Mosaics are one way to do so. But just like in art, there are just so many other ways to create expression.
01:07:11:22 01:07:18:12	FIORELLA GROVES	And so we started exploring how different LEGO elements can capture emotions and details of an artwork.
01:07:18:14 01:07:32:24	FIORELLA GROVES	Just a side note as well is that we haven't completely abandoned the mosaics, because in fact here in the background we've used it to great effect. The original concept sketch that we had from Milan and Nico didn't actually have the mosaic in there.
01:07:33:01 01:08:11:19	FIORELLA GROVES	And it didn't actually feature the cloud. But after our conversations with Alfred, we realized that we really needed to feature that in there. But with normal LEGO plates on there, it started to compete with the wave. And so we were really struggling to kind of find the right distinction between the wave and the cloud that's mimicking its shape. And that's when Anne-Mette came up with this brilliant solution to solve this by having the mosaic in the background, which in contrast to the defined graphical shapes that the waves created, just casted this very elegant feeling of distance that the mosaic can create.
01:08:11:21 01:08:18:10	FIORELLA GROVES	So you almost have to squint a little bit at it, and it's slightly blurry. It creates a really, really beautiful visual effect.
01:08:18:22 01:08:24:20	TATYANA SERRAINO	So the first sets were 2D, but this is a little bit different. Tell me a bit more about it being 3D.
01:08:24:22 01:08:55:07	FIORELLA GROVES	That aside from the challenge of differentiating the shape of the wave with the cloud in background, I think another thing that is really interesting to talk about here is that we actually considered how the shapes of these pieces related to the woodblock printing process. So you have all these different layers here and we really, really did explore how we could layer the piece. So it's almost as if you would use it like block

		prints in itself.
01:08:55:09 01:09:19:16	FIGRELLA GROVES	We did explore it, but we had to prioritize the visual results because we couldn't actually get it to work eventually. But it would be amazing to see how this set would look, right, if it was done as if you could woodblock it, and could we see what this would look like, David? I'm going to throw this challenge out to you. Like, could that happen? That would be amazing. I would so love to see that.
01:09:24:04 01:09:27:20	TATYANA SERRAINO	What other challenges did you face when making the LEGO Art set?
01:09:28:22 01:09:50:13	FIGRELLA GROVES	I think other challenges that we faced, I think it's... You know, when we're trying to recreate a masterpiece, something that's so beloved, it's always going to be a bit of a challenge, you know. To really faithfully recreate the likeness with LEGO elements is always going to be hard, and especially with organic shapes.
01:09:50:15 01:10:09:23	FIGRELLA GROVES	But I believe, and I hope you agree, that our designers have really knocked it out of the park with this one. You know, at this size, everything from recreating the sea foam to the graphical depiction of the fisherman's faces had to be simplified to quite a pure form, but not so much that you can no longer recognize what it is.
01:10:10:00 01:10:36:11	FIGRELLA GROVES	So, you know, I have to say, from working with this piece for quite some time now, we've hung it up in our area and every time people walk past it, it's a real sort of... It's got this kind of non-LEGO LEGO aesthetic to it that people don't realize it's made out of LEGO until they walk up close and go, "Oh my gosh, you've made this piece out of, like, leaves. You've got this made out of, like, little birds."
01:10:36:13 01:10:40:02	FIGRELLA GROVES	So it's really... it's a joy to get that impression from people.
01:10:40:04 01:10:45:05	TATYANA SERRAINO	Oh, that's amazing. So, speaking of the size, is what you created the same size as the original print?

01:10:45:07 01:10:51:24	IORELLA GROVES	Yeah. I mean, actually, the original size of the piece is... was remarkably kind to the LEGO building system.
01:10:52:01 01:11:15:21	IORELLA GROVES	I think Milan and Niko had done their research relatively well and they kind of mapped it all out and found out that with this size, it worked pretty well to the LEGO system that we have. And so the elements that we have just kind of lended itself rather well to the shapes that we needed to create. So that in itself wasn't too much of a challenge, I believe.
01:11:15:23 01:11:23:17	TATYANA SERRAINO	Mm-hmm. Fantastic. Was there any difficulty in having to capture and recreate all the very minuscule details that we see in the original print?
01:11:23:19 01:11:55:01	IORELLA GROVES	Yeah, I think there were some aspects where we had to give way to the LEGO system. And I think that there is also some charm in that as well, is that it is using a medium that's very distinctive. And even with the graphic design, you know, the faces on the fisherman's faces were worthy of some discussion, actually, for some time with Diego, because it's like, how realistic do we go? And then when we went really realistic and very sort of one-to-one to the original piece, it started to lose the LEGO aesthetic.
01:11:55:03 01:12:01:01	IORELLA GROVES	So we had to kind of, you know, he came up with a great solution on how we can strike the balance.
01:12:01:03 01:12:12:12	IORELLA GROVES	But yeah, there were lots of details in there that, you know, we had to kind of forgo and actually give way to the LEGO system because it still needed to have that tactility as well.
01:12:12:14 01:12:20:16	TATYANA SERRAINO	Yeah, it is such a beloved print that means so much to so many people and it must have been monumental pressure to get it just right.
01:12:21:03 01:12:27:11	IORELLA GROVES	Yes. Yes, it was a pressure on me, even more pressure on the designers.

01:12:27:23 01:13:05:01	IORELLA GROVES	And, you know, I think we'd all be lying if we didn't feel the pressure. I mean, again, this is such a beautiful piece. We really, really wanted to make sure we did it justice, that we were faithful to his vision as best we can. And after our conversation with Alfred, we also realized that Hokusai was actually quite a character. He had quite a great sense of humor as well. So that was really, really wonderful to know. So we knew that he would appreciate some of the fun details in there of having the birds and the leaves and all these funny little quirks in the build that I hope he would appreciate.
01:13:05:03 01:13:19:12	TATYANA SERRAINO	I think he really would have. He was such a playful and fun character. He had all these sort of quirky mannerisms. I wish I could have met him in real life, and I wish he could have seen what you created. I think, as you said, he would have loved these little added details, for sure.
01:13:19:14 01:13:21:01	IORELLA GROVES	Absolutely.
01:13:26:11 01:13:38:16	TATYANA SERRAINO	The most eye-catching feature of the print is, of course, the great wave itself, which is about to engulf the three boats of terrified fishermen with its ominous claws. It's both incredibly beautiful and incredibly terrifying.
01:13:38:18 01:13:42:23	TATYANA SERRAINO	Naoko, what can you tell us about the wave itself? What does it symbolize?
01:13:43:00 01:14:02:21	NAOKO MIKAMI	The wave is a symbol of power. Interestingly, many samurai used a wave as their emblem on their kamon. Kamon is a family crest. So every samurai has different kamon, actually.
01:14:02:23 01:14:08:18	NAOKO MIKAMI	And they liked to use the wave as their emblem because it's so powerful, I guess.
01:14:08:20 01:14:13:11	TATYANA SERRAINO	Wow, that's great. I had no idea. Alfred, what can you add to this?
01:14:13:23	ALFRED HAFT	Waves are a powerful natural force that have a place across Japanese design. The

01:14:28:22		large wave here seems to suggest... the only way I can phrase it is to suggest something unleashed and just to leave it in a general sense like that.
01:14:28:24 01:14:43:23	TATYANA SERRAINO	So speaking of the actual great wave in itself, I've always wondered why the fishermen in the small boats would go out fishing on a day like that. It's obviously very dangerous. Is that something that you've thought about? Do you think that it's realistic? David?
01:14:44:00 01:15:24:17	DAVID BULL	Well, I myself don't think about it because again, I am just the woodcarver. I didn't think about these, but I have of course seen the different conversations because there's endless discussion about this. Of course, why were these people out there? And there are people who have analyzed this in terms of we are looking from the east. You know, Edo, Tokyo Bay, we now call it, would be on the right-hand side of this picture. We are looking from the east towards Mount Fuji. These boats are going out into the open ocean on a day when obviously boats would not normally go out there. What are these guys doing? There's also more people in the boats than there would normally be. We can see a group of rowers in each boat and there are also passengers in each boat.
01:15:24:19 01:15:54:12	DAVID BULL	Now, this could be just Hokusai just drawing stuff without thinking about it. Or it could be that there's a real meaning and there's two interpretations. One is these passengers have really got to get to a destination where they're going. Maybe it's Ashtami or Shizuoka, or maybe... Well, they wouldn't go to Osaka in a small boat like that. Maybe it's Oshima. These passengers really want to get where they're going quickly. So they have paid these guys. "Look, let's go." The rowers say, "Not in this weather." "Here, let me pay you, let's go." "Okay. If it's worth it to you. Out we go."
01:15:54:14 01:16:17:13	DAVID BULL	Theory B is that these are actually small-scale fishing boats, and those passengers are just crew. They're going to rotate. Sometimes they're going to row, sometimes you're going to throw nets out. We've got the group of rowers and the group of workers and what they are, they are people going out early in the season, earlier than you would

		normally go. And they are going to try and get the fish we know as bonito.
01:16:17:15 01:16:18:05	TATYANA SERRAINO	Okay.
01:16:18:07 01:16:50:10	DAVID BULL	And the first boats that get back to Edo, to the fish market, with the first catch of the season, these are the boats that get the big bucks. And we see this still happening now with fishing fleets all over the world. Each fish has a different type of season and the first guys who can land their catch, they're the ones that really can sell this for the biggest money. So this team has decided, "Look, it's kind of too early to do this because it's still pretty bad weather, but the fish are out there now. We know they're running. Let's go and get them."
01:16:50:12 01:16:59:04	DAVID BULL	Now, you tell me, is this a true story or not? Of course, I don't know. But the researchers really have glommed on to this and said that's probably the most likely story that's involved here.
01:16:59:06 01:17:10:11	DAVID BULL	These guys are chasing the big... the big bucks by being the first people to land a catch back at the dock, if they survive.
01:17:15:01 01:17:24:08	TATYANA SERRAINO	Hokusai also used a special dark blue colour known as Prussian blue. Alfred, please tell me about that and why it was so novel and unique in Japan at the time.
01:17:24:20 01:17:50:23	ALFRED HAFT	Today, we call the blue in these prints Prussian blue. But in Hokusai's time, it was often just known as blue, as found on the advertisement for the series. It is a synthetic pigment that can be used to achieve a great variety of tones, but blue pigments made from indigo or dayflower blue, the other main source of blue at the time, unlike them, it is a robust pigment that does not fade.
01:17:51:00 01:18:07:12	ALFRED HAFT	It reached Japan from China as an expensive novelty in the middle 1700s. But around 1827, China began manufacturing the pigment in bulk, lowering the cost to a point where it became cost-effective to use in commercial prints.

01:18:07:14 01:18:25:12	ALFRED HAFT	The luminous quality of the pigment had tremendous visual appeal and also had an exotic quality as it recalled the kind of blue found on imported Chinese blue and white porcelain. Rich blue waters and skies would have been a novelty in commercial printing at the time.
01:18:25:14 01:18:36:06	NAOKO MIKAMI	Yeah. Traditionally, blue colors used in Japanese art were delicate and could fade rapidly under sunlight.
01:18:36:18 01:18:52:06	NAOKO MIKAMI	So many painters started to use it because it was stronger against fading and you could make deep colors and beautiful gradations easily. So I'm sure it's a lifesaver for printers.
01:18:52:08 01:19:01:09	TATYANA SERRAINO	And when it was introduced to Japan, am I correct in saying that Hokusai's publisher sort of jumped at the opportunity and commissioned this in order to use the color and take advantage of it?
01:19:01:11 01:19:01:24	NAOKO MIKAMI	Yeah.
01:19:02:01 01:19:10:10	ALFRED HAFT	Yes. As a publisher, he was very aware of popular trends and would have been keen to take advantage of the interest in Prussian blue.
01:19:10:12 01:19:11:07	NAOKO MIKAMI	To sell a lot.
01:19:11:09 01:19:13:03	TATYANA SERRAINO	To sell a lot. There we go. Yes.
01:19:13:05 01:19:14:04	ALFRED HAFT	Yeah.
01:19:14:06 01:19:17:19	TATYANA SERRAINO	Fiorella, what was it like trying to emulate that very particular color?
01:19:17:21	IORELLA GROVES	Well, we have this very set LEGO color palette, and that color palette is what makes

01:19:31:06		LEGO LEGO, right? So we don't deviate from it very much. And as luck would have it, when we went to see the piece in the British Museum, it was almost an exact match.
01:19:31:08 01:19:32:02	TATYANA SERRAINO	Wow. Wow.
01:19:32:04 01:19:43:13	IORELLA GROVES	I kid you not. It was really... you know, we were high fiving... in the area. I'm sure people around us were wondering, "What on earth are they doing?"
01:19:43:15 01:19:57:05	IORELLA GROVES	But it was really, really delightful to discover that. And when we were there, we also looked at a depiction of "The Great Wave" made by the British Museum. It's a recreation of what the colors would look like if it was made fresh.
01:19:57:07 01:19:57:17	TATYANA SERRAINO	Wow.
01:19:57:19 01:20:17:09	IORELLA GROVES	And that was really interesting to see because all the versions that we've seen, you know, across the internet and, you know, in a lot of other exhibitions, have been the really faded versions. And we can see the Prussian blue. It's still such an incredible pigment that it still holds to this day. But the rest of the colors less so, right?
01:20:17:11 01:20:17:24	TATYANA SERRAINO	Yeah.
01:20:18:01 01:20:31:14	IORELLA GROVES	So when we saw the recreation again, that was another moment of like, "Wow, we have to do this." And so the version, the LEGO version you see, is a recreation of the recreation.
01:20:32:06 01:20:32:12	TATYANA SERRAINO	Okay.
01:20:32:14 01:20:43:04	IORELLA GROVES	So it should be what we imagine the fresh version of Hokusai's "Great Wave" would look like with this beautiful peach in the background and the sky.
01:20:43:06	IORELLA GROVES	And yeah, so it was a delight.

01:20:47:01		
01:20:47:03 01:20:54:24	TATYANA SERRAINO	So let's talk about the frame in the LEGO Art version of "The Great Wave." Fiorella, why did you choose to have a frame and why this type of frame?
01:20:55:01 01:21:17:12	FIORELLA GROVES	Yeah, so I'll start with the color. Actually, we chose a fairly light-colored frame, you know, with a decent amount of spacing, because this, we felt, was faithful to the version we saw at the British Museum, and recreated it in LEGO. We felt it was also necessary to let the picture sing and have a more subtle frame to give it as much air to the piece as possible.
01:21:17:14 01:21:17:18	TATYANA SERRAINO	Yeah.
01:21:17:20 01:21:25:23	FIORELLA GROVES	So we also tried a version where the frame was black, so it had a black edge as well with some versions.
01:21:26:00 01:21:37:08	FIORELLA GROVES	But, you know, every time we looked at it, it still felt more appropriate actually to have this lighter frame because it just really kind of brought the center stage to life.
01:21:37:10 01:22:00:00	FIORELLA GROVES	And I want to talk a bit about the frame itself and its build, because when you build this, and for those who are listening right now, maybe you're building it right now, you realize that the frame isn't done at the end, like with other LEGO Art pieces. In fact, the piece should end with you clicking your LEGO masterpiece, the center stage, into place at the very end.
01:22:00:02 01:22:10:24	FIORELLA GROVES	So it offers a really, really satisfactory ending to your experience. And it's such a lovely detail that the team has come up with that we're really hoping you'll enjoy.
01:22:16:14 01:22:28:06	TATYANA SERRAINO	That's all we have time for. But if you want to hear more, we have a bonus episode where we dive a little bit deeper into Hokusai as an artist. Hear about how he was influenced and inspired by Dutch landscape paintings.

01:22:28:08 01:22:37:15	ALFRED HAFT	Hokusai is aware of Dutch shading and he is applying his understanding of it to views of Japan in a way that is very, very interesting.
01:22:37:17 01:22:39:23	TATYANA SERRAINO	About how he influenced European artists.
01:22:40:00 01:22:51:08	SUSAN NAPIER	I'm actually sometimes surprised how... how big he is. I think "The Wave" is part of it. I mean, I think also the fact that he did do manga, that he did do sketches of people, I think was also something that appealed to Europeans.
01:22:51:10 01:22:54:16	TATYANA SERRAINO	How prints back in the day weren't framed like we normally see.
01:22:54:18 01:23:02:06	DAVID BULL	Some people did keep these things, but it just wasn't anything that we would expect, and they were disposable objects.
01:23:02:08 01:23:04:16	TATYANA SERRAINO	And about the signature in the upper left corner.
01:23:04:18 01:23:19:02	NAOKO MIKAMI	The title of this work is written in the Rectangle. "36 Views of Mount Fuji, The Great Wave of Kanagawa." On the left is Hokusai's signature, but it's a bit funny.
01:23:19:04 01:23:24:05	TATYANA SERRAINO	If you want to hear why it's funny and what it says, you have to listen to the bonus episode.
01:23:24:07 01:23:28:07	TATYANA SERRAINO	Go to LEGO.com/thegreatwave and have a listen to that.
01:23:28:09 01:23:33:05	TATYANA SERRAINO	If you're listening on the YouTube channel, simply click on the link that's on your screen right now.
01:23:33:07 01:23:43:01	TATYANA SERRAINO	How is your piece of art coming along? Have you clicked your LEGO masterpiece into place and getting ready to hang it on the wall? If not, you can do that while you listen to the bonus episode.

01:23:43:03 01:23:58:18	TATYANA SERRAINO	Thank you to our guests, Japanese art curator Naoko Mikami, manga and anime expert Susan Napier, curator of Japanese art at the British Museum Alfred Haft, woodblock printmaker David Bull, and LEGO Art Creative Lead Fiorella Groves.
01:23:58:20 01:24:06:22	TATYANA SERRAINO	My name is Tatyana Serraino and this has been an original soundtrack from LEGO Art. Thanks for listening. See you in the bonus episode.