

BY ERIN SZETO CHAN

eclectic collector

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## Building Blocks

The topic of Japanese art most often conjures up images of painted screens and stoneware ceramics, but Japanese artists of the 17th through 20th centuries also excelled in *ukiyo-e* wood-block prints. These works were created using a technique that involved making an ink drawing, tracing it and gluing the tracing face down onto a block of wood. The unmarked areas on the paper were cut away and the remaining drawing was inked. *Ukiyo-e* means “pictures of the floating world,” and the prints depict urban culture in Edo (present-day Tokyo), from geisha to warriors. *Ukiyo-e* artists also produced landscapes, including Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858). A prodigious young painter, he earned an apprenticeship with a master artist at the age of 15 and gained recognition for the realism and striking colors in such works as “Returning Sails at Yabase” (left, 1857, 14 in. x 9.5 in.). » Joan B. Mirviss, Ltd., 39 E. 78th St., 4th fl., 799-4021

## On the Move

Artist Joseph La Piana is not one for sitting still. The Brooklyn native (right) creates his “movement paintings” by pouring inks, dyes and acrylics directly onto a surface, which he rotates vertically, horizontally and cyclically to form patterns. For “kinetic blow paintings” such as “Untitled Primary, 2007” (right, on wall, 5.6 ft. x 8.6 ft.), he uses his breath to spread paint across the canvas. “I try to capture the magic of kinetic energy in my work,” he says. “It’s amazing to see how the abstract shapes seem to come to life and collide in motion.” La Piana is also not interested in limits. He paints on unstretched canvases laid out on the floor—“A set space would inhibit me,” he notes—and broadens his scope by also working with photography, drawings, sculpture, mobiles and installations. In every medium, he focuses on abstract forms. “I love that they’re not defined and can be anything, depending on who the viewer may be.” » Robert Miller Gallery, 524 W. 26th St., 366-4774



PHOTO: JOSEPH LA PIANA, TOM ACKERMAN