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## “Obata’s Yosemite” Fact Sheet

### Exhibition

“Obata’s Yosemite”

Feb. 22 – June 1

### Location

Smithsonian American Art Museum, Eighth and F streets N.W.

### Description

Chiura Obata (1885–1975), born in Okayama-ken, Japan, was one of the earliest Japanese artists to live and work in the United States. He moved to San Francisco in 1903, supporting himself as an illustrator for Japanese language newspapers and magazines, while painting in the “moro-tai” style of contemporary Japanese art. In 1927, he visited Yosemite National Park and the Sierra Nevada, where he made approximately 100 drawings in pencil, watercolor and sumi ink. He recalled his visit to Yosemite as “the greatest harvest for my whole life and future in painting.” The following year, he returned to Japan for a visit and brought 35 of the drawings to be translated into color woodcuts. Between 1928 and 1930, while Obata was in Tokyo, he transformed these California landscape watercolors and sketches into a limited-edition portfolio titled “World Landscape Series.” The final intricate woodblock prints—some required more than 150 separate working proofs—resemble Obata’s watercolors, with lines like brush strokes and areas of delicately layered color. They are characterized by a distinctive merging of Japanese and Western printmaking styles and techniques.

In 2000, the Smithsonian American Art Museum acquired 26 of the full set of 35 prints from the artist’s family. This display is the first time the artist’s prints have been publicly exhibited on the East Coast. “Obata’s Yosemite” features 27 prints and watercolors and a series of 20 progressive proofs. Joann Moser, senior curator for graphic arts, is the curator of the exhibition. A listing of related public programs is available on the museum’s Web site.

### Tour

The exhibition will travel to the Wichita Falls Museum of Art in Texas (June 27 – Aug. 23).

### Credit

“Obata’s Yosemite” is organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The exhibition’s tour is supported in part by the C.F. Foundation, Atlanta and the William R. Kenan Jr. Endowment Fund.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum is located above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station. It is open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Web sites: [americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu) and [reynoldscenter.org](http://reynoldscenter.org). Recorded museum information: (202) 633-7970.

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