




اللوفا ر أبو ظبى
LOUVRE ABU DHABI



**JAPANESE
CONNECTIONS:
THE BIRTH OF
MODERN DÉCOR**
ACTIVITY BOOKLET

EXHIBITION ROOMS

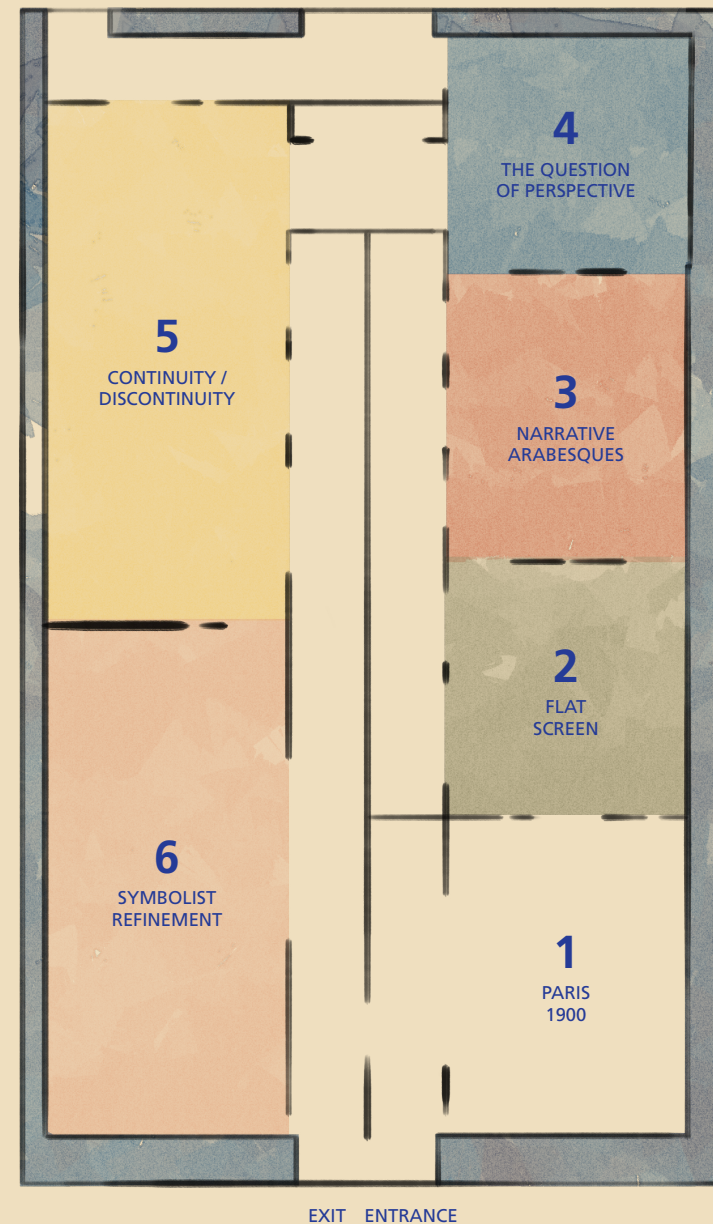
You are about to discover Louvre Abu Dhabi's new exhibition, **Japanese Connections: The Birth of Modern Décor.**

This exhibition presents a selection of decorative paintings produced by a group of French artists who called themselves "the Nabis" at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th.

Several Japanese prints and folding screens are on display, demonstrating the influence of Japanese art on European painters.

This booklet helps you discover artworks in the exhibition. It also contains several activities that you can enjoy in the museum or at home.

Enjoy your visit!



THE FLAT SCREEN

ROOM 2

This print of a landscape was made by the Japanese artist Utagawa Hiroshige.

As in almost all of his landscapes, there are people in the composition. Here we see figures walking along a winding, tree-lined road. The turns in the path give the impression of movement and progress.

Hiroshige often used bright colours, like the green and blue, which led to the nickname "Hiroshige The Blue".

DID YOU KNOW?

- **Hiroshige was one of the great masters of Japanese prints.**
- **This print comes from a series called *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō*.**
- **In this series, Hiroshige illustrates the different stages of the road between Edo (today Tokyo) and Kyoto.**



Utagawa Hiroshige
(1797–1858)

Twilight at Numazu (12th station),
from the series *Fifty-Three Stations*
of the *Tōkaidō*, 1833–34

Print

Paris, Musée National des Arts
Asiatiques – Guimet

© RMN-Grand Palais (MNAAG, Paris) / Harry Bréjat

ACTIVITY

Japanese prints have a unique way of presenting landscapes. The artists created this special perspective by adding layers of different colors of ink.

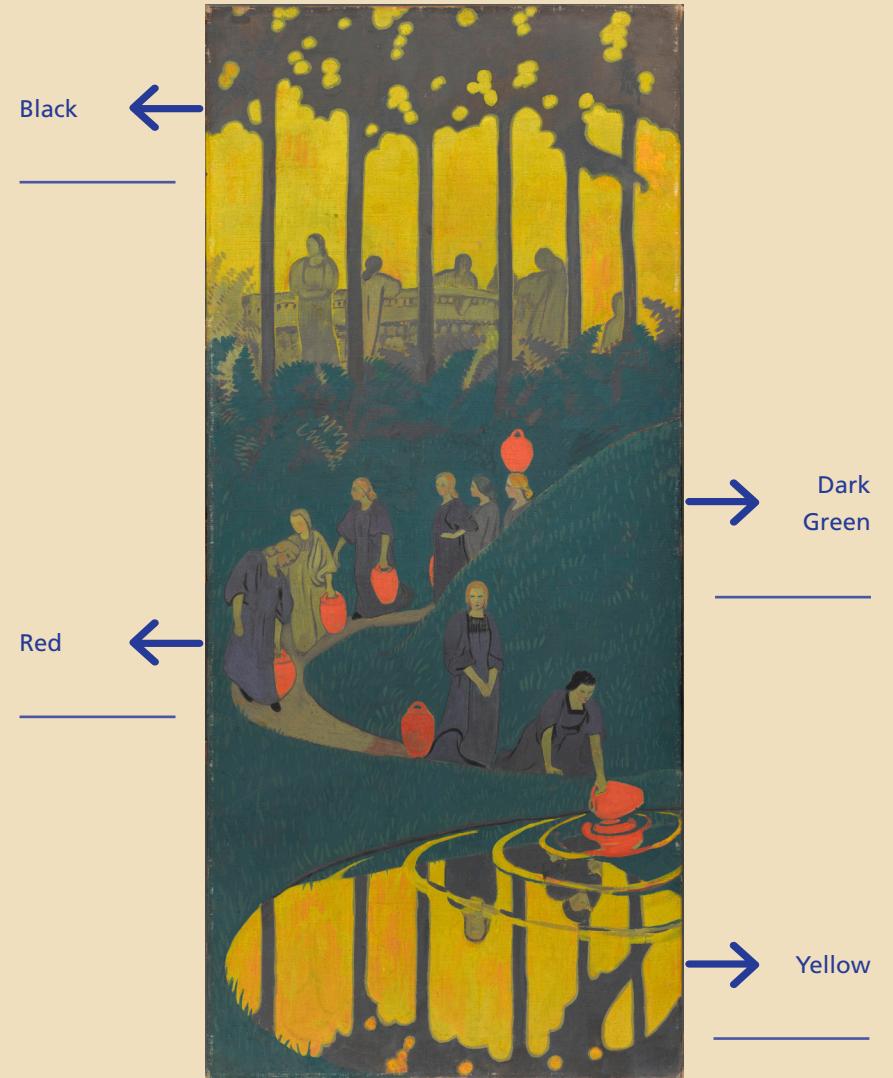
Look at the following Japanese print and notice the layers that create this scene.



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Now, try to use the colors to determine the layers. Place the following items in the right blanks:

Lake, Water containers, Grass, Trees



© Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Patrice Schmidt

PRESENTATION AND NARRATION

ROOM 3

Maurice Denis painted these two panels in 1891. They are part of a decorative collection that illustrates the seasons in Europe.

The artist shows women in an outdoor setting, using light colours and warm browns with golden highlights to create a feeling of delicacy and serenity.

The Japanese influence is clear in the winding lines of the bark of the chestnut trees and the height of the horizon line that divides the sky and the earth.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In these panels, Maurice Denis uses the seasons to symbolise the stages of marriage.
- The month of September represents the period of the engagement and October shows the young girl's preparation for her life as a wife.
- He excludes winter from his scenes to represent a relationship of eternal happiness reflected in the warm, sunny seasons.

1.



© RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski

2.



© Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Patrice Schmidt

1.

**Maurice
Denis**

(1870 – 1943)

*October, also
known as October*

Evening, 1891

Oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

2.

**Maurice
Denis**

(1870 – 1943)

*September, also known as
September Evening or Women
Sitting on the Terrace, 1891*

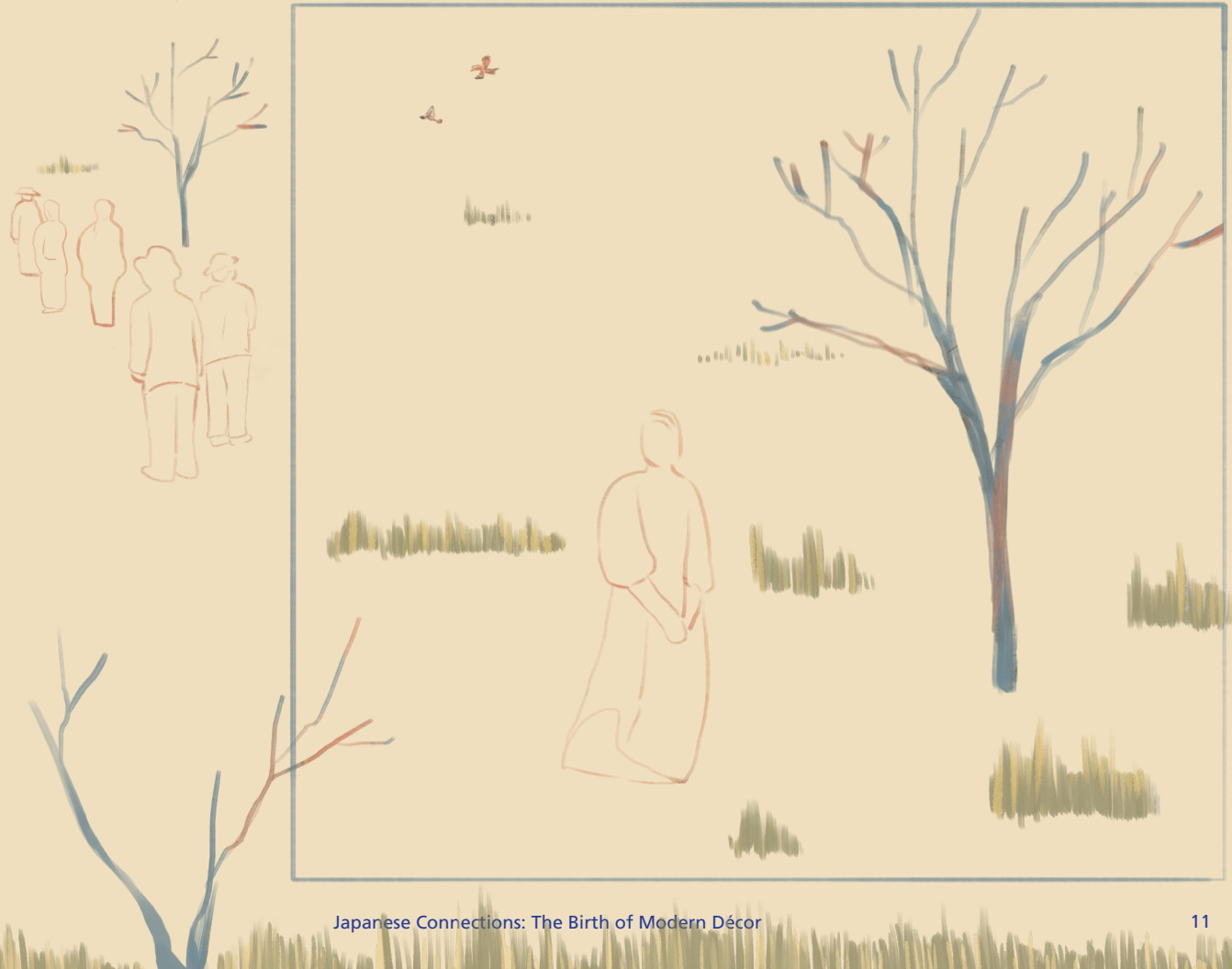
Oil on canvas

*Paris, Musée d'Orsay, gift of
Comtesse Vitali, in memory of
her brother, Vicomte Guy de
Cholet, 1923*

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ACTIVITY

1. Look at the two paintings.
2. Compare the two scenes: What similarities and differences do you notice?
3. Look at how the colours are used: What season do you think each painting represents?
4. Notice how the human figures in the paintings represent the seasons with their colours.
5. Now you can represent a season, a month or moment of the day like Maurice Denis!
6. Use the template below to draw a character with the attributes that match the time you want.
7. You can also draw your character in a seasonal landscape.



CONTINUITY & DISCONTINUITY

ROOM 5

In the centre of this screen, the artist Pierre Bonnard shows a mother with her two children playing with hoops and dogs.

In the middle ground we see nannies, and at the top a frieze (a decorative band) of carriages.

The scene takes place in The Concorde Palace in Paris. He chose cream as the colour for the background as it reminded him of the dust there.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **Bonnard collected Japanese prints and he chose to paint on a folding screen because he wanted to work on a typical Japanese material.**
- **The folding screen had become fashionable in France due to the fascination for all things Japanese.**



Pierre Bonnard
(1867–1947)

Nannies' Promenade, Frieze of Carriages, 1897

Screen composed of a series of four lithographic prints in five colours: bistre, yellow, pale blue, red, and black; edition of 110

Paris, Musée d'Orsay; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Prints and Photographs Department

ACTIVITY

Take a closer look: the elements in the background of the scene on the screen are smaller than those in the centre. **What does this tell us?**

The representation on different levels allowed the artist to narrate a story. **Can you tell a story using a screen?**



© RMN-Grand Palais (musée d'Orsay) / Michèle Bellot

1. Use the rectangles below to draw elements that are linked with one another or separated.
2. The lines that mark the different edges of the panels will help you draw a separate part of your story.
3. Look at the screens around you to form ideas!
4. Also try linking the panels using motifs and designs in a frieze, like the carriages on Bonnard's screen.

CONTINUITY & DISCONTINUITY

ROOM 5

The composition of this *Fusuma* is special because of the simplicity of its motifs and their regular spacing across the panels.

The scene is set against a gold background with the landscape spread across all four panels.

The artist shows three natural elements in these panels: air (clouds), earth (rocks) and plants.

The bamboo trees are symbols of long life and good luck in East Asia.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ***Fusuma* are a characteristic feature of traditional Japanese architecture.**
- **They are sliding partitions lined with paper that are usually decorated with a painted scene.**



Set of Four Fusuma

Japan, 18th century
Ink, colours, and gold on paper
Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi

© Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi / APF

ACTIVITY

The panels in Vuillard's painting of *Public Gardens* are in the wrong order! **Help us to reorder them.**

Clue: the scene contains two sets of panels. The landscape in the background will help you find the continuity between them.

1



2



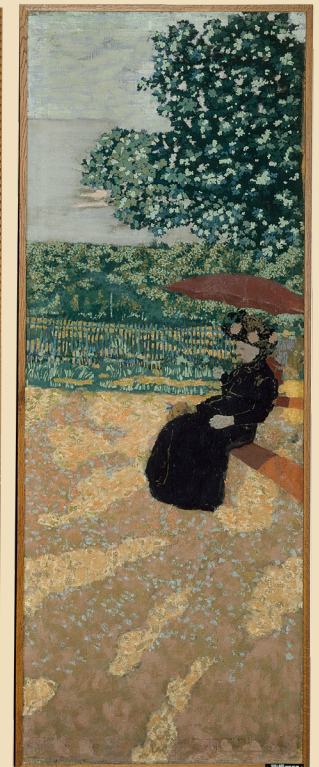
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4



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© RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Jean Schormans

SYMBOLIST DRAWINGS

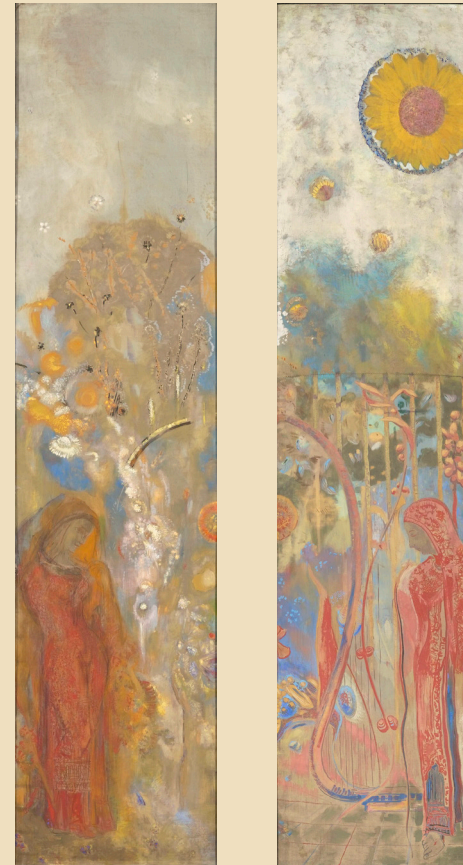
ROOM 6

For one of his most important collectors, Odilon Redon created the decoration for the dining room of his castle: fifteen panels were custom painted!

This composition is an example of the dreamlike and mysterious world that Redon created. He painted stylised plant motifs scattered against shapeless backgrounds using red and yellow.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The two red figures in the paintings above refer to people in foreign costumes, Hindu priests or figures of the Buddha.
- These mysterious and sacred figures are a mixture of cultural and religious elements in Europe and the Far East.



© RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski



© RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski

Odilon Redon (1840–1916)

Decoration for the dining room of Baron Robert de Domecy, 1901
Figure, Figure (Yellow Flower)
Oil, distemper, and pastel on canvas,
Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Odilon Redon (1840–1916)

Decoration for the dining room of Baron Robert de Domecy, 1901
Daisies
Oil, distemper, and pastel on canvas,
Paris, Musée d'Orsay

ACTIVITY

Do you remember landscapes you have seen in your dreams?

Some people dream in black and white, and some dream in colour.



What kind of dreams do you see?

- Draw the subject of one of your dreams here.
- It can include a landscape, a scene from daily life, animals, etc.

A large, empty rectangular frame with a thin grey border, intended for drawing the subject of a dream.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Educational activities are offered in
Arabic, English and French.
Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday
and Thursday, starting at 9:30am.

Museum is **closed on Mondays.**

Guided Tours: 60 minutes.

Workshops: 90 minutes.

CONTACT US!

To plan your visit:

<https://www.louvreabudhabi.ae/en/visit/plan-your-visit>

Contact the Call Centre: 600565566

QUESTIONS?

Contact Louvre Abu Dhabi

Education Department:

education@louvreabudhabi.ae