



“Crustaceans”

In a single image, Hokusai painted more than one hundred crabs and other crustaceans. The animals are shown in a variety of techniques that heighten the sense of realism. Each animal has a pair of bright black eyes that seem alive as they stare out of the picture. The thin colors of the sea plants suggest that this is an underwater scene, yet the tops of the animals are visible, as if viewed from above. The painting combines an illusion of realism with imaginative design and virtuosic brushwork, all of which are characteristic of Hokusai's paintings of natural subjects. This remarkable work was shown in the Hokusai exhibition organized in 1900 in Tokyo by Ernest Fenollosa. It was purchased two years later by Charles Lang Freer.

Yonemura, Ann. “Crustaceans.” In *Hokusai*, 145. Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Smithsonian Institution, 2006.



Katsushika Hokusai, *Crustaceans* (detail), 1825–1830, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 18 3/4 × 23 1/2 in (47.8 × 60.2 cm). National Museum of Asian Art, Freer Gallery of Art Collection, Gift of Charles Lang Freer (F1902.254).