



手塚治虫展

**TEZUKA**

**THE MARVEL OF MANGA**

In association with Tezuka Productions

Education Kit

[www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/education](http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/education)

Art Gallery of New South Wales 23 February – 29 April 2007

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## EDUCATION KIT OUTLINE

This education kit highlights key works, ideas and themes from the exhibition *TEZUKA: The Marvel of Manga* shown 23 February to 29 April 2007 at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.

It aims to provide a context for using the art works and exhibition as a resource for Years 9–12 (Stages 4–6) education audiences. It may be used in conjunction with a visit to the exhibition or as pre- or post-visit resource material.

The kit has been written with specific reference to the New South Wales Stage 4–6 Visual Arts Syllabus along with consideration of the Stage 4–6 Photographic, Video and Digital Imaging and Stage 5–6 Visual Design Syllabuses.

While the kit specifically targets teacher and student audiences, it may also be of interest to a wider general audience.

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Curatorial statement and The exhibition: overview from  
*Philip Brophy website* [www.philipbrophy.com/projects/tezmanga/overview.html](http://www.philipbrophy.com/projects/tezmanga/overview.html) © Philip Brophy.  
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Cover: TEZUKA Osamu, Japanese 1928–89  
*Astro Boy* title page for *Mystery Man of the Blast Furnace*  
1961 (detail), *Shonen*, published by Kobunsha  
gouache, 34.3 x 23.0 cm © Tezuka Productions

*TEZUKA: The Marvel of Manga* exhibition supported by  
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 National Gallery of Victoria

A National Gallery of Victoria Touring Exhibition

# 1 TEZUKA Osamu (1928–89)

Despite a half-century of denial by Japanese cultural officialdom, manga (comics) and anime (animation) are among the most recognised signs of Japan to the West. Twenty years ago, many would offer bonsai, kimonos and tea ceremonies as emblems of Japan. Now it's garage kits, character costumes and fan conventions.

Philip Brophy Website and published in the Lonely Planet Tokyo 2006

## INTRODUCTION

TEZUKA Osamu is Japan's leading, and historically most important, *manga* artist. He is revered as a figurehead of the *manga* and *anime* (animation) industries – important traditions in contemporary Japanese culture. In Japan, Tezuka's *manga* are acclaimed for their complexity, originality and diversity. In the West, Tezuka is best known for his cartoons, *Astro Boy* and *Kimba the White Lion*, serialised for television in the 1960s.

This exhibition surveys Tezuka's *manga* across the full span of his career, from the late 1940s to the last years of his life in the 1980s. It introduces Western audiences to two key streams within his work: the *manga* (comic pictures) intended primarily for children's entertainment; and the *gekiga* (drama pictures) presented for an adult audience, which stress realistic effect and emotional impact.

*TEZUKA: The Marvel of Manga* is a tribute to the importance and depth of Tezuka's creativity. The exhibition features over 200 original works from the late 1940s to the late 1980s including black and white ink drawings as well as colourful designs for covers and posters. Tezuka drew over 150,000 pages of *manga* and created over 700 *manga* titles during his lifetime. His work is acclaimed for its complexity and originality and his drawings showcase an extraordinary calligraphic dynamism.

*Manga* is a powerful combination of image and text, which as with books and newspapers in Japan, is read from right to left. This exhibition has been designed in a similar manner. As you move through the exhibition read each page from right to left, top to bottom. Each sheet within the frame should be read in the same way.

Curated by Philip Brophy, artist, lecturer and Australia's leading authority on Japanese *manga* and animation, the exhibition has been organised by the National Gallery of Victoria in association with Tezuka Productions in Tokyo.



## CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Brophy says Tezuka was a man of his time.

‘People often forget this is work produced in the post-war period by a nation that ... had a lot of issues to deal with. People look at this stuff and think it’s wacky and crazy and all over the place; it’s actually very complex.’

Philip Brophy *The Australian* Nov 18th 2006

Perhaps the most accessible route to the fantastic world of Japan’s greatest *manga* artist and animator Tezuka Osamu is through the angelic face of his pre-pubescent robot creation, *Astro Boy*. First aired in Japan in 1963 and redubbed in America in 1964, *Astro Boy* has since become not only a major postwar icon for Japan but also a strangely attractive post-baby-boomer figure in non-Oriental countries. The fact that many westerners presume *Astro Boy* to be American is an indication of how undervalued and ignored *anime* (Japanese animation) is within film history, as well as a sign of how readily an American dialogue-track can cast any production in the shadow of its accent.

The *manga* upon which *Astro Boy* is based – *Tetsuwan Atomu (Mighty Atom)* – is one of Tezuka’s most well-known works, serialized in phases from 1951 to 1968. It is a fascinating tale set in the 21st century, where superminiaturization of electronic components and advances in plastic applications for artificial skin have facilitated the design of extremely human-like robots. And where better to render similarities between robotics and genetics than in the highly-coded hieroglyphics of the *manga* page? Just as the *manga* form well suited such futuristic fantasy, so too did the idea appear molded by postwar Japan (the Showa 20s: 1945–54) when Japan was rebuilding itself psychologically and preparing itself for the electronics explosion of the 60s. *Astro Boy* in some measure can be viewed as a contemplative embodiment of this postwar period – a period of intense reflection that affected much world cinema.

In the original *Astro Boy manga*, Professor Temma aspires to create a new wonder robot with the aid of extensive R&D by the Science Ministry. He names the robot after his recently deceased son, Tobio. But Professor Temma becomes disillusioned with the almost-perfect nature of the ageless boy-robot and in a rage sells him to a circus. There he is rescued by Professor Ochanomizu who educates Tobio and renames him Tetsuwan Atomu. With new social skills, advanced robotics and a memory bank of human-affected experiences, Tetsuwan Atomu commits himself to serving humans – but forever ponders his relationship with them. This is Pinocchio retold through Asimov, but with a molecular explosion of themes and dichotomies to do with the essence of soul, the imagination of children, the gender of plastic and the morality of cuteness. And despite the TV-reduced plots (Tezuka said they tended to be ‘patternized’) and an American woman’s voice-over, the context, culture and form of the animated *Astro Boy* resonates with a peculiarly Japanese configuration of trans-gender postwar neo-human traits not usually explored by traditional social-conscience photo-cinema.

Tezuka happens to have been remarkably articulate about his *manga* and *anime* creations, particularly in terms of his themes and the ways in which they were

acutely expressed through the formalism of his story-imaging and what he later termed a 'semiotics of *manga*': a signage system which could convey ascribed universals tied to a dramatic flow. His published texts include historical overviews (the *Postwar History* series of *Gag*, *Sci-Fi* and *Girls comics*); instructional manuals (*How to draw comics: From portraits to comic stories*) and autobiographical ruminations (*I am a cartoonist*). Reinforcing his ideas, of course, are the actual works. The afore-mentioned themes of *Astro Boy*, for example, are criss-crossed like delicate webbing through the allegorical pasts and speculative futures of hundreds of *manga* he published, and in *anime* based on his *manga* and devised as original projects.

Tezuka seriously drew *manga* from 1941, but such entertainment in wartime Japan was frowned on, so it was not until 1946 that he first received a publishing deal. By the mid-50s, Tezuka led the first *manga* boom in the children and young adult markets, inspiring many other artists and publishers to expand the field. Tezuka by then was recognized for shifting the blockage of *manga* visual formulae toward cinematic effects, and infusing his narratives with a range of emotions and tonalities which redefined notions of children's entertainment. Come 1977, Kodansha commenced publication of *The Complete Manga Works of Osamu Tezuka* which has grown to 400 hardbound volumes containing over 150,000 drawn pages. Prolific, imaginative and driven, Tezuka also wrote, directed and produced animations from 1962 up to his death in 1989: a total of 14 TV series; 36 shorts and TV specials; and 23 feature-length titles. Regarded in Japan as an artistic *sensei* (master) and a figurehead for the *manga* and *anime* industries, his legacy is kept alive by the Osamu Tezuka Manga Museum in Takarazuka, and by the continual trickling of his work into the west.

Taking into account (a) cultural gaps between Australia and Japan; (b) the problematic way the cultured-West generally views comics and cartoons; (c) the paucity of translated *manga* and *anime* from the world's largest producer of comics and cartoons; and (d) the imposing bulk of material Tezuka produced – *TEZUKA: The Marvel of Manga* is but a slight nudge to entice gallery and film patrons in Australia to consider the trans-global issues raised by the powerful post-nuclear sentiments and ideas contained in Tezuka's seemingly-cute animations. Familiar yet strange; European yet Asian; kitsch yet elegant; iconic yet distinctive – Tezuka's *manga* and *anime* affords the interested viewer an insight into the perplexing formal mutations and weird narrative contortions which typify postwar Japanese culture and define Tezuka's own fantastic world.

**Philip Brophy** curator

## THE EXHIBITION: OVERVIEW

The exhibition is concentrated on 2 distinct bodies of work:

### 1

*Manga* from which Tezuka (mainly through his companies Mushi Productions and Tezuka Productions) produced shorts, TV series and feature animations.

These include:

- Metropolis (Metoroporusu)
- Astro Boy (Tetsuwan Atomu)
- Jungle Emperor aka Kimba The White Lion (Jangeru taitei)
- Princess Knight (Ribon no kishi)
- Wonder 3 aka The Amazing Three (W3 aka Wanda 3)
- Marvellous Melmo (Fushigi na Merumo aka Mama chan)
- Black Jack (Burakku Jakku)

### 2

The *gekiga* work of Tezuka produced between the late 60s and the late 80s.

*Gekiga* is a more seriously-toned adult-oriented narrative form of manga which stresses realistic effect and emotional impact as opposed to the visual symbolism and hi-keyed archetypes displayed in early postwar *manga*. While *manga* – ‘comic pictures’ – is the umbrella term for all Japanese comics, *gekiga* – ‘drama pictures’ – can be viewed as a branch within *manga*.

These include:

- Crime & Punishment (Tsumi to batsu)
- Ludwig B (Rudovihi B)
- Bomba! (Bonba!)
- MW (Mu aka MW)
- Eulogy for Kirihito (Kirihito sanku)
- Human Metamorphosis (Ningen konchu ki)
- Song of Apollo (Apporo no uta)
- Buddha (Buddha)
- Phoenix (Hi no tori)

## BIOGRAPHY

Tezuka Osamu was born and grew up in Takarazuka, a suburb of Osaka and known for its 'girls only' revue company established in 1914, as a respectable family entertainment. It has produced many 'romance' stories set in the West, with male roles played by women dressed as men. Tezuka grew up visiting the theatre as well as seeing films, both Western and Japanese. He had a deep appreciation for many art forms, including Russian animation as well as the early work of Walt Disney.

There was a lot of nature in Takarazuka when he grew up. He thus developed a strong sense of human relationship with nature, and deep anger at those who destroy nature for monetary gains. His fascination with insect behaviours and metamorphosis can be observed in many of his stories – like the heroine in *Human Metamorphosis* who is completely amoral and whose behaviour is purely motivated in survival instinct. Another example is a story in which the hero, a medical doctor, contracts a disease that turns people into dog-like appearances.

He was a teenager during the war. Military training and voluntary work in factories (and later air raids) were part of life. He could not stop drawing cartoons, but such activity was increasingly frowned upon as 'unpatriotic'. His experience of the postwar food/goods shortage, bodies of people starved to death in the street, arrogant occupation personnel left a lasting impression for Tezuka that led him to produce anti-war stories and explore human nature at deep levels.

He studied medicine, but while studying and then working at the hospital as intern, he continued to draw cartoons and began earning from them. It was during this time (1952) when he began *Jungle Emperor (Kimba the White Lion)*. He passed the National Medical

Examination in 1952 and obtained the licence. At the time, Tezuka was already producing eight serialised *manga*, and editors from different magazines competed against one another to obtain the work for their monthly magazines. This would continue till Tezuka's death.

Tezuka's works are known for their humanism. In both *Astro Boy* and *Kimba the White Lion*, the robot and the lion tries to understand humans but are always excluded from them.

In 1965 Tezuka received a letter from Stanley Kubrick inviting him to spend a year in London to produce a new SF film. He had begun Japan's first weekly animation series *Astro Boy* two years earlier, so he declined. The SF film was later released as *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Animation had been a passion for Tezuka. From the beginning, his cartoons are known for their 'film-like' visual effects – panning, close-ups, and the like. He produced a number of feature and experimental works in animation.

His lifework was the *Phoenix* series, in which he explores the mystery of life as energy and its transformation, from the prehistoric times to future and beyond.

## GLOSSARY

**androgynous** a term used to describe the identification of a person as having both male and female characteristics. This term also refers to the mixing of male and female genders. Androgyne is derived from the Greek words *andras* meaning man and *gyne* meaning woman.

**anime** derived from ‘animation’ and phonetically pronounced ‘ah-nee-meh’; originally a blanket term for all animation produced within Japan, but now used in the West to also designate the particular approach to style and content adopted in Japan.

**anthropomorphism** a term used to describe how human characteristics, motivations or other qualities are attributed to animals or non-human things.

**archetypal** a concept used to define a generic or idealized model of a person or concept from which similar instances can be derived, copied, patterned or emulated.

**cell animation** the process of painting directly onto multiple layers of clear film sheets (‘cells’) for photographing in sequence to generate animation. Block colours are painted on the reverse, bold outlines on the front.

**dichotomies** to split a whole into exactly two non-overlapping parts; in other words, it is a mutually exclusive bipartition. Nothing can belong simultaneously to both parts, and everything must belong to one part or the other. They are often contrasting and spoken of as ‘opposites.’

**gekiga** literally, ‘drama pictures’; this movement toward more serious and often darker world-views occurred in Japan across the 1960s and is represented by writers and artists wishing to directly address social and psychological issues of the time.

**humanism** a general term for many different lines of thought which focus on common solutions to common human issues.

**hyper-reality** a concept in postmodern culture that indicates the way the consciousness interacts with ‘reality’. This term is used to describe when a consciousness loses its ability to distinguish reality from fantasy, and begins to engage with the latter. It is also characterised as ‘enhancement’ of reality.

**kabuki** developed in Japan in the 17th century and still popular today; a modern, populist form of theatre known for its lack of naturalistic presentation, heightened ritualistic display of performance by a predominantly male cast.

**kawaii** nominally signifying ‘cute’, but more representative of strangely endearing characteristics in simplified iconic figures and images. Such cuteness in Japanese culture is applied to a wide range of situations and is not necessarily limited to childlike images.

**manga** originally meaning irresponsible or irreverent pictures of a sardonic nature; used in 18th century Japan to describe risqué prints and hanging scrolls and further applied to Western-style comics with frame sequencing and speech balloons. The term now specifically relates to the 20th century art form and industry of Japanese comics. It is sometimes confusingly applied in the West as *anime*.

**metamorphosis** a term used to indicate the process of changing from one form to another by magic or natural development.



**noh** a sparse, traditional form of Japanese theatre developed in the 14th century; centred on a slow delivery of narrative chants and noted for its mannered refusal of overt emotional expression through the use of fixed masks worn by the main characters.

**shojo** manga comics designed for a young girls' (shojo) market; originating in the mid 1950s in Japan. First drawn by men, but more recently drawn by women.

**sutori manga** novelistic or story-oriented comics; a critical term that indicates the postwar shift away from simplistic gags or adventure tales to serious narratives bearing emotional complexity. This major shift constitutes Japanese *manga's* point of departure from the development of Western comics which, in comparison, have retained their childlike character.

**Walt Disney** Walter Elias 'Walt' Disney (1901–66) was an American film producer, director, screenwriter, voice actor, and animator. Disney was also the cartoon artist of comic books and newspaper comic strips. The Walt Disney Company, originally a small animation studio, was founded in 1923 by brothers Walt and Roy Disney and today is one of the largest media and entertainment corporations in the world. In 1928, Walt Disney created Mickey Mouse. The mouse has evolved from being simply a character in animated cartoons and comic strips to become one of the most recognizable symbols in the world.

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| <i>National Gallery of Victoria</i><br>TEZUKA: The Marvel of Manga<br>3 November 06 – 28 January 07<br>Podcasts with curator Philip Brophy              | <a href="http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/tezuka/">http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/tezuka/</a>                   |
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