



Hokusai
in the
Rocks

Brooks Jensen

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Hokusai (1760-1849) was perhaps Japan's greatest *ukiyo-e* artist. His woodblock prints are breathtaking and an inspiration to us even today — a century and a half after his death, and across the cultural divisions far outside his beloved Japan. I never tire of spending time with his art.

Perhaps this is why I found myself wandering the dry and dusty canyons of southern Utah, thinking about Hokusai and his famous print, *The Great Wave*. There it was, up on the canyon wall, that massive wave captured in ancient stone — or so it seemed to my eidetic vision. The more I stared at those ancient rock walls, the more Hokusai images I found — strange to see when one has entered the canyons to make decidedly American landscape photographs of the Desert Southwest. But, that is the power of Hokusai. We are not a 19th century Japanese audience, yet his creative vision still speaks to us — here, now.

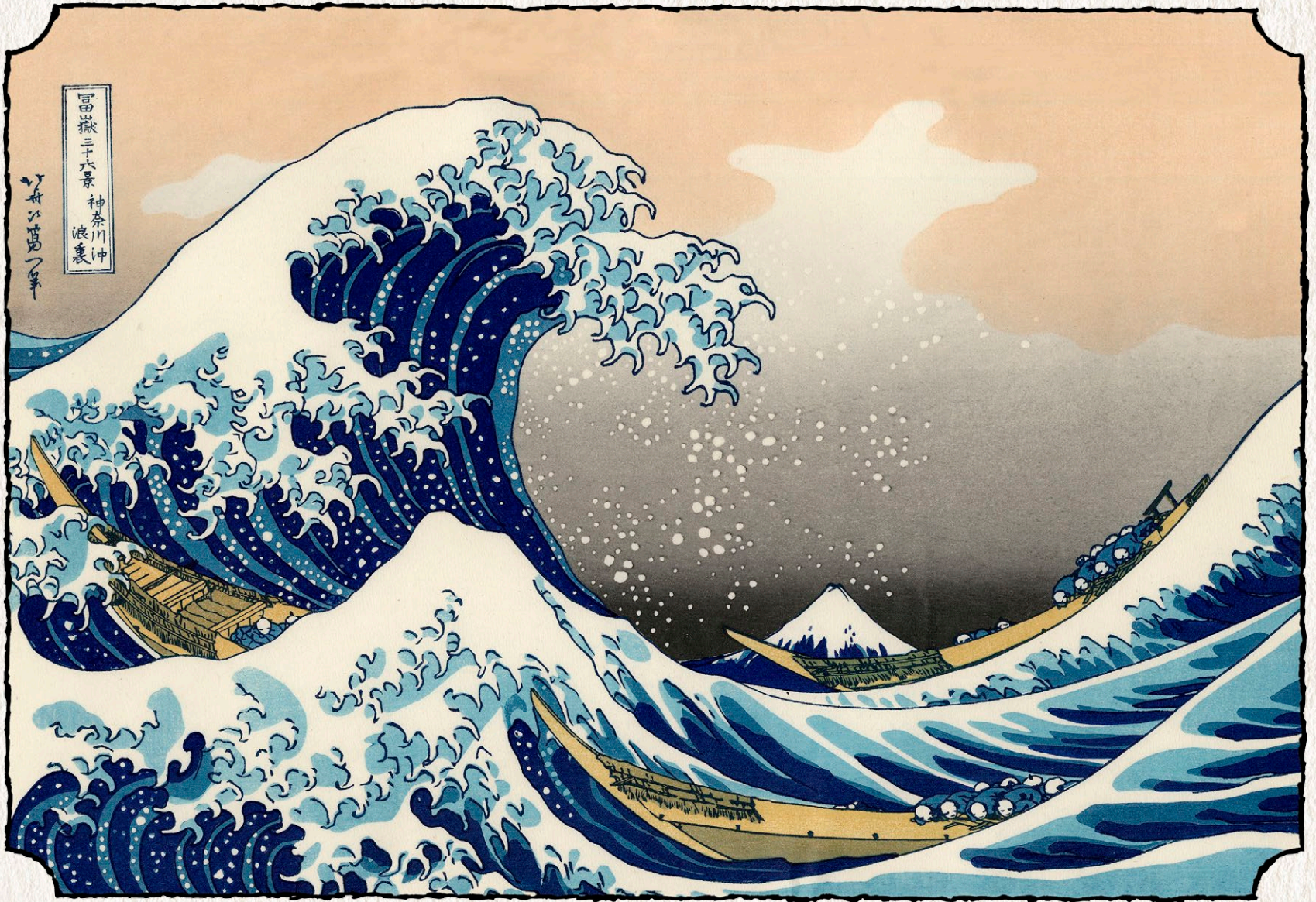
It is said that art allows the artist to speak beyond their own mortality. It may have only been a whisper, or perhaps just the desert wind, but I am convinced that I could hear Hokusai speaking to me in the rocks of Capitol Reef. How could I not listen and respond?

Brooks Jensen

May 2014

富嶽三十六景 神奈川沖
波裏

舟の喧嘩



*Hokusai
in the
Rocks*

The Great Wave



Hokusai
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Rocks

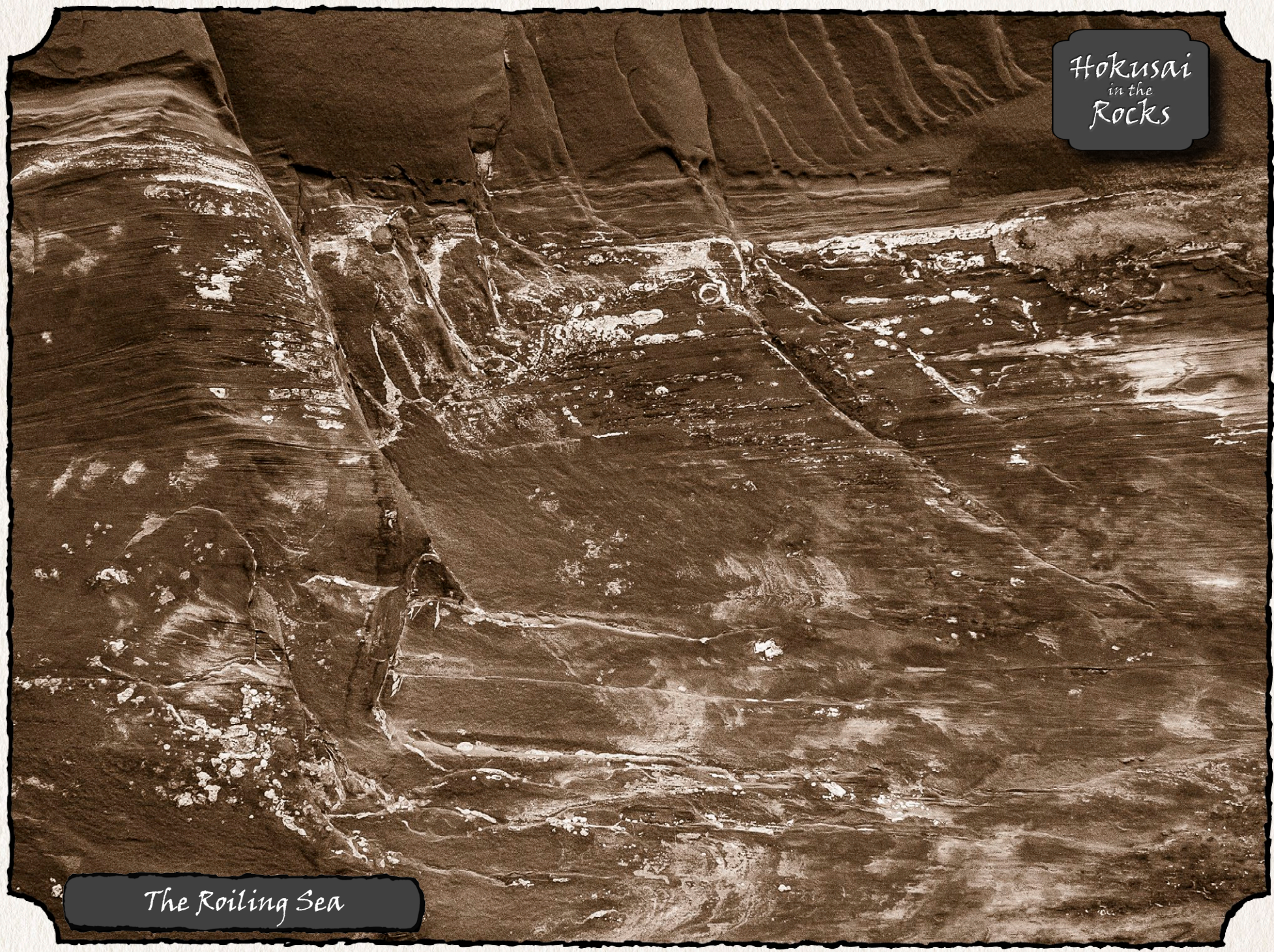
The Windswept Crag

Hokusai
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The Cataract

Hokusai
in the
Rocks

The Roiling Sea



Hokusai
in the
Rocks

Waves on Edo Bay



*Hokusai
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Snowcapped Peaks

*Hokusai
in the
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The Path up the Mountain

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The Hills in the Distance

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Storm Above Lake Biwa

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Pool of the Winds

*Hokusai
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Windswept Waterfall

About This Project

I've been inspired by Japanese *ukiyo-e* (woodblock prints) for more than 40 years. They offer such a captivating mix of image and graphic design — techniques it seems only natural to marry with images made with a camera. This project is an experiment in doing so.

Woodblock prints often include a border to outline the image; I've included this graphic element in these photographs, too. Perhaps more unusual is the presence in *ukiyo-e* of a cartouche —

typically a square or long rectangle in which is placed a poem, quote, the print title, or the project name. Many *ukiyo-e* have more than one cartouche. Here again, I've followed that convention in this photographic project, including a separate cartouche for the project title and the image title.

Perhaps of most importance, however, is that many *ukiyo-e* artists (including Hokusai) worked in extended series with multiple prints — an approach perfectly

appropriate in photography. Hiroshige's *Fifty-three Stages of the Tokaido* and Yoshitoshi's *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon* are well-known in the West. Hokusai himself is widely revered for his classics, *One Hundred Views of Edo*, and *One Hundred Views of Mt. Fuji*. Evidently, “one hundred” views was a popular project size to their contemporaries. I've limited myself to a modest 11 images. I can only hope that the great Hokusai would not be disappointed by such a modest homage.

Colophon

Hokusai in the Rocks
by Brooks Jensen

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