



## Radio Times

Welcome back, to another year of A Story A Week. I've got so many stories lined up for you I wouldn't be able to get through them in a month of Sundays! Let's start off by getting behind the microphone!

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Just a couple of weeks ago, towards the end of December, I was invited to discuss my work on an NHK radio program. I happily consented of course, even though you might think it is a bit strange to be discussing a visual art like woodblock prints on the radio! I took some of my prints with me, so that the interviewer and I would have something to look at while we were talking. The first time I ever did a radio interview, many years ago, I had worried that people listening to the program might be frustrated by listening to people talk about them, so I avoided saying things like "Look at these hairlines - how delicate they are!" or other such comments that emphasized things that they couldn't see.

It turns out that I needn't have been concerned. I had forgotten something very important about radio - that the lack of images is not a handicap, but a benefit! Human beings have been 'telling stories' to each other ever since the distant past, long before there were such things as photographs or television, and it seems we have developed very good skills at creating images in our own minds based on what we are hearing people talk about. In fact, the more detail the interviewer and I talk about, the better it is for the listener. Far from being frustrating, such a conversation draws people in to the topic, and helps bring it to life for them.

This was really emphasized to me some years back, by a pair of interviews I did (also for NHK) on both radio and television. One year, in the runup to my annual exhibition, I was featured on an evening TV news program. I chatted with the newscaster, and of course the camera showed images of the prints that would be in the exhibition. This publicity helped somewhat, and I was very glad to have the chance to expose my work. But the subsequent year, the invitation was to talk on a morning radio program, actually during the course of the exhibition itself. The night before, I stayed in a hotel near the NHK building, and then went to the studio early in the morning for the interview. The announcer and I had a pleasant talk about my work, and what sort of things were on display in the exhibition, and when we were done I made my way over to the gallery.

And what a tremendously crowded day it was there - all because of that radio interview. People had heard our discussion, thought to themselves, "I want to see that!", and actually came to the gallery, making it one of the busiest days I have ever had. The radio interview was far more effective than the TV interview had been!

So over the years I have learned which media are most important for helping me publicize my exhibitions. Radio is the top, no question about it. Good newspaper stories are also effective, as people frequently clip items for reference when they are planning a 'day out' in Tokyo. Magazines are less effective, because of their longer time schedule, and down at the bottom of the list are TV programs, although of course, every bit helps!

My next exhibition is coming up soon - it opens two weeks from today. There are no pictures of my prints included in this Story a Week episode ... won't you drop down to the gallery to see what they look like? :-)

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