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Japn 314/ Japanese Visual Culture

Portfolio Final Project

Category I, Question 1

I saw this first picture a bit blurry, but needed it to express how I felt about pre-modern Japanese art. To me, I saw Japanese historical art as a great way to express beauty. Japanese Pre-modern art, like the picture shown, does a great way to express that beauty. This is a time before pictures were touched up and looked to with high definition content. This however, shows how Pre-modern Japanese art still was able to have magnificent art like this and impact society around it. This visual art form is rarely seen now and days and has been harder and harder to find. This Pre-modern art is also done with just one shade of a color, whereas other styles of art in our time have many different ones to appeal to many audiences. This, however, ties again to being simple and just showing how to view different paintings such as landscapes, in a way many people do not see it as. The picture next to it works well to show how art forms have been changed over time. A popular image is changed to fit cultural influences around it. This image is closely related to the image of the big wave, although not a perfect match as Mt. Fuji is not in the background. However, the popular theme that is widely influenced by culture is Super Mario, and which is why a squid monster and some cheep-cheep are found in this picture. This has been an influence over time that has occurred to Japanese art. Before, this change would have been seen as an abomination, not tying close to what the original picture represents. However, now we have gotten to a time period where seeing these types of pictures are more acceptable to society.

Category 1, Question 1, Picture 1, Pre-modern Japanese Art (Left), Relates to: [A Geek of Japan](#);
page 10

Category 1, Question 1, Picture 2, Cultural Influences in art (Right), Relates to: [A Geek of Japan](#);
page 27

Category I, Question 2

So in this picture I see a lot of Pre-modern Tokyo. As mentioned in our textbooks for Tokyo in the mid-city, The Hamarikyū gardens remain intact since the 1870s. It goes to say how closely related it is to Pre-modern Japan, some things are hard to be linked to their past. The buildings had to be rebuilt in the picture after a fire raid in 1945, making the building relatively new. However, the gardens remain close to their origin to keep Tokyo grounded from this place's origins. It has been recently modified to hold many falconry exhibitions in the gardens. This picture relates to how Pre-modern Tokyo has had many places like this one that is a rare sight to see in a busy city like Tokyo. This widely differs from the picture next to it, in which modern day Tokyo has many social and cultural influences impacting everyday life. Here the picture is depicted how Modern day Japan has had an influence from the geisha culture to westernize cultural influences. This influence has come from other cultures and has impacted Tokyo to this change.

Category 1, Question 2, Picture 1, Pre-modern Tokyo, Refers to Tokyo Megacity, pgs 110-111

Category 1, Question 2, Picture 2, Modern Day Tokyo, Refers to Tokyo Megacity, pg 140

Category II, Question 3

Various art forms have become a big part of Japanese life, whether it is thought about that way or not. Many do not realize this, but the Japanese are much immersed in their current cultures based on their past and present art forms. In one way that this is expressed is what Japanese do in their daily lives. In the first picture, I found that having read so many zombie stories, which are a form of art, it is considered literature, has become a real thing for Japanese. They immerse themselves in events like the zombie bar ad I found. In other ways Japanese have had a huge impact from anime and manga. In the picture next to it is a standard maid café where

Japanese dress up as how a typical maid is portrayed through various artwork forms to be copied and shown as a real life model.

Category 2, Question 3, Picture 1, Art form influencing Japan, Refers to [A Geek in Japan](#), pg 95

Category 2, Question 3, Picture 2, Anime and Maid Café, Refers to [A Geek in Japan](#), pg 92

Category II, Question 4

So one form of Japanese art that has been really popular is woodblock prints, also known as Ukiyo-e. Blocks of wood would be carved into, having a certain design backwards, dipped in paint then stamped in a way to show anything the Japanese could think of. It was used for comics, icons, and landscaping details. These pictures analyze that while Ukiyo-e pictures generally have this ancient homely feeling, other art has also emerged like the previous one influenced by current cultural differences. It seems as though new pictures like the shown on the right have also immersed to still show the aesthetic sense that Japanese see for their artwork, especially this certain style of art. However, not everything is staying in this art form of Ukiyo-e. Having both options, of old and new techniques, describes the artistic sign of Japan well, being able to represent both old paintings and introducing new ones properly in the best sense that they can.

Category 2, Question 4, Picture 1, woodblock print and landscape, Refers to [A Geek in Japan](#), pg. 26

Category 2, Question 4, Picture 2, ukiyo-e with aesthetic sense Refers to [A Geek in Japan](#), pg 26

Category III, Question 5

There have been many influential changes to the Japanese culture. One of these changes includes the architecture done for new buildings in Japan. As previous paintings show, a big part of traditional Japanese style homes include a tea room for the host to have a tea ceremony with their guests. This is one by entering through the traditional tea room door, which is a small

opening where one has to bend down and crawl through after washing and purifying their hands. This is shown in the first picture. However, as mentioned in a Tea Room video we watching, this has now been cut out of building designs in order to save space in new buildings. This has shown a shift from how Pre-modern Japan has grown to the present values it has now. A tea room can still be included, but the old fashioned tea room entry is not as popular as it used to be.

Category 3, Question 5, Picture 1, tea room entry, Refers to [A Geek in Japan](#), pg 28

Category 3, Question 5, Picture 2, modern no tea room entry, Refers to Japanology Video: Tea Rooms and Ceremony's

Category III, Question 6

Beauty in Japan is indeed to the eye of the beholder. Pre-modern Japan was only an island and noticed it had way too many participants to live in it. So one thing that we can take from this photo is that there is still modern Japan going on in this picture. Skyscrapers have been done upwards to save the little space available for all the inhabitants that live in Japan. However, the wildlife has not been harmed while building this area, making both the Pre-modern and Contemporary art demonstrate an important transition occurring. To not just think that Japan doesn't want to build for the people who live their but wanting to not change a lot in their surrounding environment also helps. This has not been the case for other parts of Japan, however, as seen on the next image that although Japan would like to conserve as much nature as it can, buildings are needed for people to live in.

Category 3, Question 6, Picture 1, Pre-Modern Japan, Refers to [Tokyo Megacity](#), pg 125

Category 3, Question 6, Picture 2, Life in the City Today, Refers to [Tokyo Megacity](#), pg 123

Category IV, Question 7

So something that is often missed by other cultures is that Japanese have various styles of art forms. It does not just involve paintings that are drawn. One of these various styles of art form is the Japanese tea ceremony. If done right, it is a very complex art form and can demonstrate the utmost gratitude for performing it with the utmost care. The art of serving tea through a tea ceremony goes through as an aesthetic element. A hostess goes through and makes sure that everyone can be satisfied, which varies from other art forms which don't have to satisfy anyone's wants or needs. If one comes across the tea ceremony with no background information to it, they will not understand the true beauty of what is happening. Other cultures see this act as just another way of serving a warm drink, as America drinks a coffee. But Japanese have a very complex way of showing that through this art form; even serving tea can be graceful.

Category 4, Question 7, Picture 1, Traditional Tea Ceremony, Refers to [A Geek in Japan](#), pg 28

Category 4, Question 7, Picture 2, Plainly Serving Coffee, Refers to [A Geek in Japan](#), pg 28

Category IV, Question 8

I picked these pictures because I feel as though they explain wabi sabi perfectly. It does not have many fancy words or be too flashy to demonstrate what it really means. These pictures mean to be extra than what is first thought of. This helps show how simple beauty can be shown through the Japanese art concept of wabi sabi. The little plant on a bigger pot than itself may see as someone started gardening. But this was actually arranged in a certain way to be transformed into the art form of Ikebana. Through this art of flower arranging, Ikebana can demonstrate that even though a plant in an uneven jar has beauty in it. Even the fallen leaf demonstrates wabi sabi. It is not perfectly symmetrical which demonstrates how wabi sabi finds imperfection the beauty of it. The imperfection of these two images is what wabi sabi is all about.

Category 4, Question 8, Picture 1, Simple Ikebana, Refers to [A Geek in Japan](#), pg 41

Category 4, Question 8, Picture 2, not perfectly symmetrical leaf, Refers to [A Geek in Japan](#), pg

CATEGORY V, Question 9

So there have been many roles of art in my life. One has actually been a lot of music. Even though music cannot be seen, it is an art form that many people do not directly address them with. I have grown up with music since middle school, learning how to play my first instrument. This has only been more influenced by the growing sensation spread around of opera. Now this combined a way that music could be heard and seen. This has influenced in my life as I can think of other art forms combining and being able to present it better. The anime Pokémon is one of these art forms that have gone from manga, to games, to television series. This has kept evolving even to the stage that is today to better associate with people who like different types of art forms.

Category 5, Question 9, Picture 1, Opera poster, Refers to A Geek in Japan, pg 118

Category 5, Question 9, Picture 2, Pokemon Anime, Refers to A Geek in Japan, pg 101

CATEGORY V, Question 10

Japan in the 21st century has grown to become very different than what it was before. Japan had been connected to a very long time begin a country where samurais were different than what America solders are. But this has gone bigger when other countries grew to know that Japan had been the start of Anime. This has grown into a phenomenal culture spread throughout Japan the world. Many people can understand why Japanese do the things they do by reading manga comics and seeing anime series as many tie to the original Japanese culture. In the anime of Tenchi Muyo, it is set in a Japanese house where shoes are taken off, various food dishes are displayed, and how certain acts can only be easily understood by anyone reading or seeing these actions for the first time. However, many things still remain a mystery to people as Americans, such as myself; have seen a variety of Japanese commercials. I really wish these commercials where done in the US because I see the Japanese humor way more advance than ours.

Category 5, Question 10, Picture 1, Anime coming to US, Refers to A Geek in Japan, pg 97

Category 5, Question 10, Picture 2, Japanese Commercial gone viral, Refers to A Geek in Japan,
pg 86