University of Sunderland

The threads of love

Modern Japonisme in Western Lettering Arts

Critical Evaluation - MA Design Studies

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The object of this MA is to consider a contemporary mix of two ancient Japanese philosophical and aesthetic constructs, in the context of Western visual communication. The aim is to create a two-way visual dialogue that could accommodate both the Japanese and Western cultures. The globalisation and economic exchanges of the past century saw an increase in the interdependence of both cultures and contemporary artists have blurred the previously distinctive lines of Japanese and Western cultures in their creative interpretations. This MA proposes to continue the research towards integrated visual formulations as opposed to a superposition of interpretative renderings.

Reflecting on the aesthetics fundamentals of both cultures, this MA questions the feasibility and legitimacy of visually articulating the mix of cultural philosophical constructs, as well as the value of fusion narratives in a more general context of multi-cultural awareness.

Based on the study of Wabi-Sabi and Iki, two Japanese aesthetic ideals, and employing the medium of poetry and lettering art, a body of works, on the subject 'Threads of love' is developed into a new aesthetic concept, accompanied by a supporting ebook.

On a theoretical level, the universality of this new aesthetic may prove to be problematic if we take into account Kant's search for

answers to the paradox of the antinomy of taste: how do we reconcile the alleged universality of aesthetic judgment with the particularity of the subject pronouncing that judgment. If we accept the formula ”to each his own taste”, then we destroy the claim to universality without which the aesthetic field would collapse – and with it, the possibility of communal cohesion (Marra 2002, p.3).

Kuki also argues that the structure of iki, when logically analysed and clarified by its *extensional* qualities, and its *intensional* set has unique nuances of ethnic experiences. It raises problems of universality and particularity, of globality and regionality in philosophical speculation (Shûzô 2007, p.10). Therefore the challenges for this MA, are to develop an integrated aesthetic that escapes cultural isolation and also to devise a method of analysis and visual interpretation, free of ethnic consciousness.

The methodology applied to this MA is a ‘bricoleur’ approach. In research, ‘bricoleur’ is a multi-methods approach. Various methods are chosen, adapted and invented. They all relate and form a coherent and interpretative set on which the researcher relies upon to examine his work.

Following substantial literature research on Japanese and Western aesthetic philosophies, plus comparative aesthetics and Eastern and Western calligraphy, the studio based practical work focuses on the interpretation and visual narration of the key concepts with a multi methods technique. In response to the theoretical findings, tools,

materials and techniques were tested and analysed on a general level to assess their appropriateness with regards to the research question. In turn, the results of this analysis gave way to more literary research.

This Critical Evaluation is structured with an introduction, five Chapters and a conclusion. Chapter one defines the key specialist terms relevant to this research in order to avoid any confusion. It gives an overview of the literature survey and describes the methodology used for the overall research. Chapter two explores the position of this MA's central idea in wider historical, visual and philosophical contexts. Through analysing similarities in contemporary fine art practices this chapter assesses the relevance of this research. Chapter three explains the philosophical thoughts associated with the new aesthetic. Chapter four discusses the studio practice of this research and the final Chapter five addresses the answers and findings related to the practical outcome.

CHAPTER ONE

1-1 Terminology

It is essential to define some key terms referenced in the research of this MA to avoid confusion, or to clarify unknown or preconceived concepts.

The term Japonisme (or Japonism) was first introduced at the end of the 19th century by the French Journalist Philippe Burty to describe the influence of Japanese artefacts on European art movements. In the following evaluation it will be refered to throughout, as Japonisme.

Aesthetics is to be read as that branch of philosophy dealing with the beauty of art, nature and taste and how it can be recognized, ascertained and judged. (Richie 2007, loc59). Aesthetics derives from the Greek 'aesthesis' which means perception/sensation.

Japanese Aesthetics refers to the works of modern Japanese thinkers who either trained in or had a good knowledge of western philosophy.

Japanese aesthetic ideals refer to the wide number of aesthetic concepts that Japan has developed over the course of its history. This research focuses on two of them: wabi-sabi and iki, this choice being informed by their relevance in a contemporary context. By

'contemporary' this essay refers to the period beginning at the end of the 19th century onwards.

Haiku and Senryu are short forms of Japanese poetry. They are structurally similar. Haikus convey the experience of nature or the seasons intuitively linked to the human condition, whereas Senryu highlights the foibles of human nature, usually in a humorous or satirical form. (website 1)

Intensional is a term used in logic to define the necessary and sufficient qualities to belong to an object of studied.

Extensional applies to a concept or term and lists all the members belonging to the object of study.

1-2 Literature Review

The theoretical research was pursued in the key areas of aesthetics as philosophical constructs as well as studying existing applied examples of fusion interpretations.

Given the bi-cultural angle of the research, a range of material was examined for the purpose of this MA. They are categorised as follows: one- Aesthetics as a Western discourse, two- comparative (or transcultural) aesthetics, and three- Japanese aesthetics concepts, in particular the Wabi-Sabi and Iki hermeneutics. The research also includes materials on the historical context of visual, multi-cultural

expressionism. Some of the publications were ebooks and their page references are expressed as *'loc'*, meaning location.

Primary literature for the study of western aesthetics was *An introduction to Kant's aesthetics* by Christian Helmut Wenzel (2005) and the passages related to the western concept in *A tractate on Japanese aesthetics* by Donald Richie (2007) in which he states that in the West the term aesthetics describes a science of sensuous knowledge the goal of which is beauty and its related principles of good and right (Richie 2007, loc128) in contrast with logic, whose goal was truth (Richie 2007, loc67). In the West the word 'aesthetic' has many uses and the most widely applied distinguishes the beautiful from the merely pleasing, the merely moral, or (in relation to a Kantian idea) the merely useful (Richie 2007, loc120)'. The western concept finds beauty in something we admire for itself rather than for its uses, something Immanuel Kant called 'purposiveness without a purpose'.

On comparative aesthetics the sources of material were both *The pursuit of comparative aesthetics and interface between the East and West* edited by Mazhar Hussain and Robert Wilkinson (2006) and the cited above, *tractate on Japanese aesthetics*. The introduction to Japan of the field of aesthetics in the 1870s challenged Japanese intellectuals with the creation of a technical vocabulary that was sensitive to the newly imported idea (p17 the pursuit of comparative aesthetics). Aesthetician Itoh Teiji stated regarding the difficulties that Japanese experience in defining aesthetics: "the dilemma we face is

that our grasp in intuitive and perceptual rather than rational and logical" (Richie 2007, loc43). The Japanese however did not have a word corresponding to Aesthetics and coined the term 'bigaku' in order to refer to what non-Japanese meant when speaking of Aesthetics. (Richie 2007, loc144). Japanese Aesthetics is more concerned with the process than the product, on the actual construction of a self rather than with self-expression. Traditional Japan emphasises differently. It is closer to such pre-Enlightment European definitions as Chaucer's 'Beautee apertenant to Grace', where the grace of fitness excites intellectual or moral pleasure and gives rise to the concept of social approval in the form of good taste (Richie 2007, loc67).

The most relevant sources on Japanese Aesthetic ideals: Wabi-Sabi and Iki, are *Wabi-Sabi For Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers* by Leonard Koren (2008), *Wabi-Sabi The Japanese Art of Impermanence* by Andrew Juniper (2003), *Reflections on Japanese Taste the Structure of Iki* by Kuki Shûzô (2007), *An Aesthetics of Everyday Life Modernism and a Japanese Popular Aesthetic Ideal – "Iki"* by Yuji Yamamoto (1999), *The Book of Tea* by Kakuzo Okakura, electronic edition (2012) and *In Praise Of Shadows* by Junichiro Tanizaki (2001). Japanese aesthetic ideals are numerous and weave with each other rather than rejecting an antecedent (precursor) principle, and this research deliberately isolates two of those ideals, namely Wabi-Sabi and Iki.

For an historical Context in multi cultural expressionism, this essay references *Japonisme and the rise of the modern art movement: the arts of the Meiji period: the Khalili collection* by House J and Rüger A, Kris Schiermeier and Hiroko Yokomizu (2013), *Asian Traditions Modern Expressions* by Jeffrey Wechsler (1997) and *Influence Of Oriental Thought On Postwar American Painting And Sculpture* David J. Clark (1988).

This literature survey indicates that a substantial amount has been written relating to the subjects described above, but very little has been uncovered on the relationship between wabi-sabi and iki. This MA visually formalises the hermeneutics of wabi-sabi and weaves iki into the latter concept. In his book, Kuki Shuzo briefly touched upon the intimacy of the two ideals in his reference to the teahouse. Although his reflections on iki intended to be an hermeneutics of Japanese specificity or cultural coloration, he not only chose to express his account of iki itself in structural terms, as a kind of geometrical 'Abode of Fancy', or 'house of the mind', he does so in parallel with Okakura and the architecture of the tea-house' (Hussain 2006, p243).

No other significant accounts of the blend of these two aesthetics have been found during the course of this research. With Hussain's above remark, given the importance of the tea-house in the history and philosophical context of wabi-sabi and Kuki's extensive analysis of Iki this MA sets out to further research the possibility of a fusion concept.

1-3 Methodology and philosophy

To address the research question, it was necessary throughout the course of this study, for the process to constantly move back and forth between the theoric literature analysis and the response to it in the studio practice. This theoretical, visual interpretive relationship underpinned the philosophy of this research. This required flexibility in the research process and diverse practical methods were tested either simultaneously or consequentially.

The first step in the methodology used for this research was a general overview of the literature survey described in chapter 1-2. Not only was it necessary to understand the nature of wabi-sabi and iki, it became an essential intellectual requirement to place them in the overall global context of the philosophical discourse on aesthetics in order to obtain a cross-cultural view on the subject.

Reflecting on those preliminary findings, an informal verbal survey was conducted through casual conversations, with a limited number of people of different cultural backgrounds. The intention being to establish whether or not the philosophical constructs of wabi-sabi, iki, and japonisme were known, and to what extent, of those surveyed. The results of this small survey indicated that the concept of wabi-sabi was familiar to most with a Japanese cultural background, but also highlighted that if indeed the notion of the aesthetic in its visual representation was intuitively understood, it was more difficult to articulate why or what content or context made

a work wabi-sabi. For those with no Japanese cultural association, the understanding of the wabi-sabi concept was a very superficial one, loosely translated and compared to the English 'shabby-chic' and devoid of any philosophical concepts.

Iki, as per Kuki's description of a Japanese ethnic phenomenon, was unknown to almost all the survey's participants. Although the term was understood in the Japanese speaking subgroup as an imagery of the beautiful, it could not be conceptualised nor placed into any historical context. When questioned, Japonisme, in its early historical context of visual cues and style interpretations, was familiar to most but the later context, characterized by a content based approach of cultural integration, was less known.

It became clear from this preliminary survey that, in order to successfully answer the cross-cultural approach of this MA and to avoid any misinterpretations of unfamiliar concepts, it was crucial to extract the key elements and inherent qualities of each particular aesthetic.

The result is a list of all the necessary qualities, for a work to be of a wabi-sabi or iki nature. Once the objective qualities required had been established, the practical work could be undertaken; as visual interpretations. A series of experiments with tools and materials was carried out at this stage. The main intention of these preliminary explorations was to find a proper vehicle to visually convey and articulate the philosophical constructs. However, before being able

to merge the two concepts adequately and purposefully, it was necessary in the studio practice to consider each one separately.

The key tenets common to both ideals were then further developed into the fusion aesthetic. They are synthetized into a new concept on which the studio practice responds with visual interpretations. These subsequent interpretations include both visual cues and conceptual interpretive narratives in the fashion of early Japonisme. Although as the research developed a crucial interrogation emerged: how to visually reconcile the naturalistic concept of wabi-sabi with the inherent humanistic form of iki? The poetic form of Japanese haiku and senryu and the metaphoric seasonal impermanence of relationships are deemed to be adequate vehicles for such a challenge and further research of appropriate poems was undertaken.

As per Malins and Gray's statement, the 'bricoleur' approach of this MA resulted in a 'bricolage' outcome, a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation, (Gray 2004, loc1739) that represents the understanding, images and interpretations of the fusion aesthetic concept. The result from the studio practice, is a body of work representing 'the threads of love'. Imagery and text weave into one another to suggest the idea of a natural-humanistic notion of inter-relationships evolving during one's life.

It is the conceptual framework of this MA research and would enable the audience to engage with the artwork with a deeper understanding of its underlying principles.

In support of the visual outcome, an ebook on the research has been produced.

CHAPTER TWO – Historical context

Although this MA considers the possibility of a new concept of merging two Japanese aesthetic ideals in a western narrative, the exchange of cultural ideas is not new in philosophical discussions or in the field of visual communication, in particular in the discipline of fine art. From the Impressionism movement feeding on visual references to the Abstract Expressionism movement embracing philosophical beliefs, globalisation, and by extension Japonisme, the peculiar artistic development that ensued, undeniably played a significant role in shaping subsequent modern art movements, and western discourses on aesthetics, resulting in varieties of propositions not exempt of eastern concepts.

2-1 Visual cultural exchanges between Japan and the West

In 1868, the opening of Japan to the west during the Meiji government and the trade treaty with the monarchy of Austria-Hungary triggered the development of a new artistic sensibility and social behaviour across Europe.

In Austria, a market for all things Japanese quickly arose and the Japanese aesthetics of the new objects became the new ideal in Western minds (House 2013, p91). The catalytic effect of Japanese artefacts is clearly expressed in the work of Gustav Klimt. We can identify a number of decorative elements related to the Viennese Japonisme as Tayfun Belgin explains: 'the work of Gustav Klimt,

particularly that of his golden period, is in a way very much connected to Japonisme.

When analysing the painting Adele Bloch-Bauer (Figure 1) he remarks: 'the figure portrayed is asymmetrical on the right side. The influence of the layout of design in a Japanese woodcut print is evident here. The abstract folds of the dress call to mind patterns and shapes found in Japanese prints of beautiful women. Klimt was fascinated with sensuous art and many details in this work speak of an important influence from Japan (House 2013, p99). Klimt's use of non-Western patterns is purely decorative; he seemingly never considered the original symbolism and usage of such motifs. For example the free use of the black and white chessboard pattern (border of Japanese tatami) in the bar on the lower left of the painting of Adele Bloch-Bauer is an example of Klimt using Japanese patterns as a simple reference.' Belgin also notes that the overall composition, rather than any Japanese influence was for Klimt the most important factor. To the same extent Klimt did not think about the original use of patterns and the message they would have originally conveyed. An example is the spiral, as the symbol of flowing water or a stream rising, Klimt reinterprets it as an erotic moment. Klimt's painting refers to Japanese art without being especially Japanese or wanting to be (House 2013, p100).

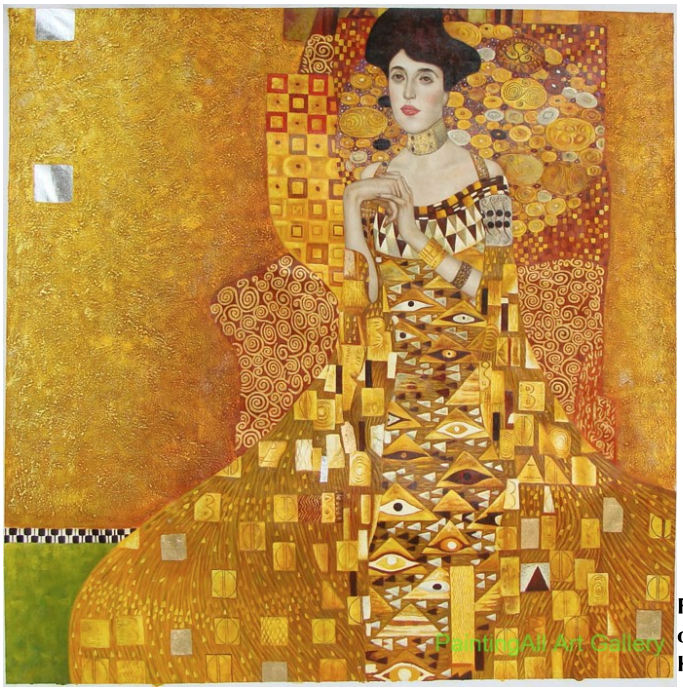

Figure 1, painting of Adele Bloch-Bauer, oil-silver and gold on canvas, Gustav Klimt, 1907

Whereas in Austria, Japonisme was primarily a social fashion, the same euphoria for Japanese products, was also happening in France, in a slightly different context. Artists, in particular the radical Impressionist and Post-Impressionist groups, were impacted by the peculiar qualities of Japanese wood block prints. Some paintings can be argued as examples of 'Japonaiserie', a form of superficial engagement with the decorative surface qualities of Japanese art, but artists such as Manet, Degas, Van Gogh, Whistler, Cassatt transcribed or juxtaposed elements of designs into their paintings, engaging with 'Japonisme' at a deeper level with underlying formal principles (House 2013, p113). They related to the coloured woodblock prints and their immediate engagement with a foreign experience. This new experience acted as a stimulus for their own artistic ambitions: to depict modern life, social behaviours and nature in a more intimate and informal fashion. They found in Japanese art, with its immediacy and apparent, although deceptive, informality, what Chesneau

described as ‘a confirmation rather than an inspiration, in their personal way of seeing, feeling, understanding and interpreting nature. Hence an increasing of individual originality rather than a cowardly submission to Japanese art’.

Breaking from tradition, and acting on what Chesneau describes in the same article as a profound ‘surprise, admiration, enchantment’ artists adapted the Japanese compositional devices to their own sensibilities and reiterated this diversity of responses: ‘With intelligence, each of them assimilated from Japanese art the qualities closest to their own gifts: M. Alfred Stevens, some unusual delicacy of tones; M. James Tissot, his boldness and even strangeness of composition…..; M. Whistler (Figure 2), the exquisite fineness of his colours, M. Manet, the directness of his touches of colour and his curious sense of form……; M. Monet, the suppression of detail in favour of an overall impression;…..M. Degas (Figure 3), the realistic fantasy of his groups, the striking effect of his lighting and his astonishing scenes of café-concerts’ (House 2013, p396).

Figure 2, Rose and Silver the princess from the land of porcelain, oil on canvas, James Whistler, 1865

Figure 3, Cafe-Concert, pastel over monotype on paper and board, Edgar Degas, 1876

Monet himself said of Japonisme: 'In the West, what we have most appreciated is their bold way of cutting off their subjects. Those people have taught us to compose differently, there is no doubt about that, and in a letter to his brother Theo in 1888, Van Gogh wrote 'In a way all my work is based to some extent on Japanese art' (Web 2).

The rise of this Japonisme had an unexpected impact on the Japanese arts and crafts markets, which blossomed as an increased interest in 'all things Japanese'. While the West was enjoying sustained growth following the industrial revolution, Japan was still recovering from lengthy conflicts of regional warlords and economic devastation. With the modernisation, often referred as westernisation, traditional patrons of the arts disappeared and the demand for traditional arts and crafts declined. In an effort to counteract the loss of this traditional source of revenue, and to better position Japan in a global world, the Japanese government, acting on the appetite of the west for their exotic traditional products, made the political decision to employ Western advisors and specialists to work with Japanese craftsmen to introduce new and improved methods of production. From this the slogan Wakon Yosai (Japanese spirit, Western techniques) was adopted. The Japanese then modified their traditional designs to Western tastes. As Francis Brinkley commented on Japanese art, 'they do not denote Japanese taste, but the Japanese idea of Western taste'. A whole new industry of art and craft specific for the export market developed. Soon products manufactured in

Japan by highly skilled local artisans incorporating characteristics of both Japanese and Western designs found their way to overseas markets. Japanese artisans used their individual artistic talents to adapt to Western sensibilities, as did European painters in a similarly inverted manner, a reverse cross-cultural influence.

2-2 From visual elements to ideology

The post wars years saw Japonisme shift from 'mere cross-referencing of cultural symbols and formal devices' to a deeper interpretation of oriental thoughts. Those years nurtured artistic rebellion, either against traditional dictats in the case of the Japanese, or the social political view of the world as a window to consumerism for Americans and Europeans. From the middle of the 20th century, philosophical exchanges, particularly the Zen theories, derived from Taoism, spread in key artistic centres.

D.T. Suzuki was certainly the most important interpreter of Zen as far as artists were concerned. He advocated a fast, intuitive method of working, and one in which reworking is eschewed. Comparing life, delineated on a canvas called time, to Japanese sumi-e painting where no correction or hesitation is possible, without leaving the painting lifeless, he demonstrated a connection between art and Zen (Clark 1988, p80).

The discovery of a philosophy devoid of religious connotations, intuitive, active, refusing symbolism, advocating emotional expressions, weaving consciousness and unconsciousness, resonated

deeply with art practitioners of the time and had a profound impact on creative practices and outcomes. They embraced its principles of not confining art to a final representational object but as a more holistic way of being.

The use of 'void spaces' as active areas, the spontaneity and the energy of the marks impacted by the emotions of the artists and more essentially the core engagement with nature in the Eastern arts and philosophies justified the developing practices in the Avant-Garde movements of Abstract Expressionism, lyrical painting and tachisme. Contrary to Greenberg's opinion that western abstraction of the 1950's does not need the influence of Japanese art (Wechsler 1997, p10), many American Abstract Expressionists' practices were informed by Suzuki's writings and teaching. Mark Tobey with his white writings (Figure 4) uses calligraphic strokes, a feature he derived from his own study of Asian calligraphy, or in his 'sumi' paintings (Figure 5), which he himself describes as 'his imperfections') (Clark 1988, p127).

Figure 5, Composition No1, sumi ink on Japanese paper laid on linen, Mark Tobey, 1957

Figure 4, Oncoming White, oil on canvas, Mark Tobey, 1972

The gestural approach is evident and the flung ink resonates with Japonisme. Tobey's aspiration was to 'animate' his paintings with 'stroke energy' and 'awareness of Nature', two fundamentals, which evolved from his understanding of Zen's conceptual approach to painting. In 1958, he wrote: 'we hear some artists speak today of the act of painting, but a State of Mind is the first preparation and from this the action proceeds. Peace of Mind is another ideal, perhaps the ideal state to be sought for in the painting and certainly preparatory to the act' (Wechsler 1997, p31).

Ad Reinhardt, with his black paintings (Figure 6), all black, all the same size and all five feet square, voluntarily took away from the viewer any attention catchers, to convey and not distract from, a sense of nothingness, and engage with an inter cultural concept in aesthetic contemplation. It is clear that he had in mind a particular painterly tradition in Japan, based on a quotation from Hokusai elevating black to something more than a simple colour hue. 'There is a black which is old and a black which is fresh. Lustrous black and dull black. Black in sunlight and black in shadow. For the old black one must use and admixture of blue, for the dull black and admixture of white for the lustrous black, gum must be added. Black in sunlight must have grey reflections.' (Hussain, p239)

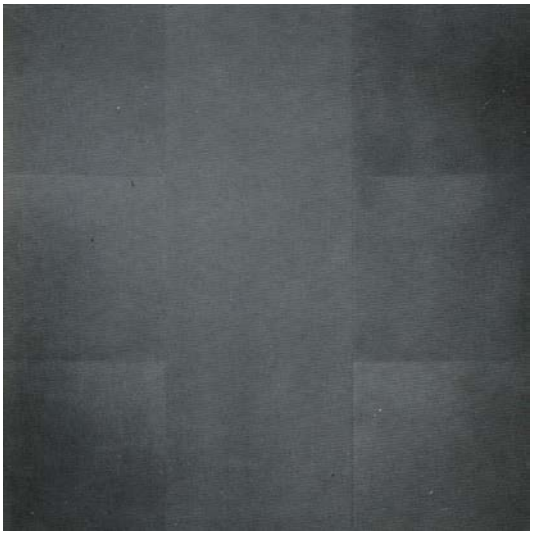

Figure 6, abstract painting, oil on canvas, Ad Reinhardt, 1960

In Europe, Tachisme or Art Informel is often referred as the counter movement of the American Abstract expressionism but the same Zen influence is visible. Jean Degottex's pensée de transition (transitional thoughts) (Figure 7), is a hybrid of sumie painting and calligraphic marks. This affinity between modern art and calligraphy is a recurrent feature in a large proportion of post war artists' works worldwide. Jeffrey Wechsler states that the introduction of words and lettering into the imagery of Western painting was received as a startling breakthrough in modern pictorial aesthetics. The use of letters was lauded as an act of 'vital significance' for modern painting although this method prefigured in Eastern paintings (Wechsler 1997, p79).

Figure 7, Pensée de transition, Jean Degottex, 1959

2-3 Transcending national boundaries

A particular interest of this research is the example of how Western societies transcended national boundaries, and engaged with the representation of natural energies, a core subject in most Japanese art, through abstraction and specific creative practices. Saburo Hasegawa analysed this new concept of 'western abstraction' as the modern occidental attitude in search of the absolute (Wechsler 1997, p58).

From the mid 20th century onwards, Japonisme was philosophically and religiously content based. The modern artists mentioned in chapter 2-2 had a great appetite for a representation of a more religious Zen ideology. They relied upon unique features of Eastern arts (flung pigments, gestural marks, spontaneity, textual forms) combined with a set of tools and methods that allowed them to stay

true to their western social and cultural specific backgrounds (aggressive spirit, strong colours, westernized use of same materials) to synthesise Western artistic traditions and translations of Eastern concepts. This notably differentiated the whole movement from its original influence as it was seen to go beyond the sense of calm and meditative restraint inherent to much Asian art, as well as its gently nuanced and subtle colour harmonies (Wechsler 1997, p74).

But for the purpose of this research, it is noted that although they addressed the visualisation of multi cultural ideologies, and did so without referencing any particular aesthetic ideals.

2-4 Aesthetics as an interface between East and West

Modernists with their integration of Eastern philosophical tenets translated visually (to some extent) what scholars of comparative aesthetics formulated conceptually, when comparing aesthetics concepts and beliefs as well as artistic practices from different cultures. (Hussain, p1)

The 20th century developed the idea of uniting the East and the West through aesthetics, as stated by the Japanese scholar Francesco Yosio Nomura 'perhaps in the region of aesthetics we are mostly confronted with the deadlock of nationality and the differences of languages. But we should not despair. It is our task to comprehend the real divergence of the meaning and realization of Beauty among humankind along with their history. I think it is one of our urgent

tasks to investigate Oriental and Occidental aesthetical ideas by comparative methods' (Hussain, p13). Max Dessoir, in the 20th century, was determined to develop a more global outlook of principles. He was insistent that the arts cannot be properly understood independently of their links to the rest of the culture in which they are embedded. In his hands aesthetics ceased to be a section of an a priori philosophical system, a set of abstract meditations on the concept of beauty, and became a much more inclusive subject with a considerable empirical element (Hussain, p12). This research intends to formulate a variegated aesthetic beyond the semantic contents of Japanese and European cultures.

CHAPTER THREE – The philosophy

In a fusion concept, this new aesthetic has to also take into account the western philosophical view on aesthetics and art. This research not only uses some elements of comparison for the study of different cultural aesthetics, it endeavours to integrate the analytical and systematic approach of western thoughts, with the more sensorial and intuitive Japanese approach of the way of the arts.

3-1 Wabiki in the Western and comparative discourses

Aesthetics has long been a subject of discourse in European philosophy. Aristotle listed order, symmetry and definiteness as the universal elements of beauty and his theory of logic dominated medieval theories. The beauty of an object was to be found in its form and order, the relationship of the parts with each other and the whole. We find this concept later on, with the gestalt theory. Baumgarten in 1735, named and elevated Aesthetics to a philosophical subject as opposed to logic. Following Baumgarten's thesis, Kant firstly denied the possibility of aesthetics as a philosophical subject, then formulated its foundations for an aesthetics judgment. He separated them into three main forms of aesthetic experiences: first is the experience of beauty, second is the experience of the sublime, and third is the experience of fine art. Kant's approach is marked by a certain shift of focus, a shift from the object, to the judgment about the object (Wenzel loc107). Kant's aesthetics is concerned with feelings of pleasure and displeasure and

not with sensation or perception as a form of cognition (Wenzel loc188). This theory is important for this research which is concerned with enabling the viewer the free play of enjoyment, and reconciling the underlying multicultural ethnic principles, and a universal judgment of the art.

The philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer in his modification of Kant's theory, comprehends aesthetic contemplation (or aesthetic experience) rather than aesthetic judgment, as the ultimate goal for freedom of reason and aesthetic disinterestedness. Both notions are at the core of the Zen theory of art.
As the majority of aestheticians, he recognizes an object as a representation of the surrounding world, as a manifestation of the will, a phenomenal form that is universally recognized.
Schopenhauer also thought that up until his day, it had not been understood that the will was identical with the essence of every working power in nature (Hussain, p40). This theory is very close to another core concept of Zen artistic practices, that is the notion of Chi, or vital energy associated with the creativity and imagination of the artist. This also resonates with Kant's idea of 'genius', the mental medium through which nature gives rules for artistic expression. The resulting artworks are then exemplary, and serve as referential for the rules of judgment. The mental faculty of the genius allows him to harmonize between the intuitive and cognitive powers, between imagination and understanding, realizing the connection between the analytical and the intuitive.

3-2 Obliterating the cultural bias

This study works on the core idea of transcribing a fusion of aesthetics and integrating them with a visual concept characterized by a tension between rules and freedom. As Kant noted 'in a product of art one must be aware that it is art, and not nature; yet the purposiveness in its form must still see to be as free from all constraint by arbitrary rules as if it were a mere product of nature' (Wenzel 2005, loc1620).

Kant's theory accounts for both the formal rhetoric of rules and the free play of the judgment and open the possibility of obliterating the cultural bias vis a vis the final visual outcome. According to Wenzel explanation on Kant's theory on art: 'beyond all the rules that went into its production, there must be possibilities for different perspectives from which to view the object and different possible combinations of such perspectives, which we enjoy playing with and which we find purposive beyond the determination of the rules that went into the production of the work of art' (Wenzel, loc1645).

The final purpose of the practical outcome of this research is, for the viewer, not only to be aware of the relevant underlying aesthetic concepts which initiated the artwork, but also to go beyond those concepts and not be bound by them - to experience the art as if it were given spontaneously, as in a Kantian theory 'art can only be called beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it looks to us like nature' (Wenzel 2005, loc1628).

This research intends to recreate these ‘possibilities for different perspectives’ for an audience of diverse cultural backgrounds.

CHAPTER FOUR – The studio practice

The studio practice is an experimentation and investigation towards the interpretation of a new aesthetic. Before embarking on the communication of the fusion concept it is necessary to visually define both aesthetic ideals separately.

4-1 Wabi-Sabi: transience and impermanence of the natural world

Wabi-sabi is the most conspicuous and characteristic feature of what we think of as traditional Japanese beauty. It occupies roughly the same position in the Japanese pantheon of aesthetic values as the Greek ideals of beauty and perfection in the West (Koren 2008, p21). With this description Leonard Koren introduces the notion of Wabi-Sabi to western audiences and although it is true that wabi-sabi is probably the pantheon of Japanese aesthetics, its *intensional* qualities and principles are far removed from those of their western counterparts.

When Japanese art encompasses a wabi-sabi spirit, its beauty comes from the representation of the truth of the natural world. Linked to the Zen Buddhism philosophy of seeing the world with a mind free from attachments or judgments (Juniper 2003, p21), and its 7 principles (asymmetry, simplicity, weathered, natural without pretence, not obvious subtly profound grace, free of convention, tranquillity). Wabi-Sabi advocates the ideas, also central to the Zen philosophy, that everything in the universe is in flux, coming from or

returning to nothing, that it is able to embody and suggest the essential truism of impermanence, and that experiencing wabi-sabi expressions can engender a peaceful contemplation of the transience of all things and by appreciating this transience a new and more holistic perspective can be brought to bear on our lives (Juniper 2003, p27).

Therefore wabi-sabi is a beauty of things imperfect, permanent, incomplete, modest, humble and unconventional (Koren 2008, p7). But most importantly, wabi-sabi can be considered as a universe by itself, with its metaphysical basis (the notion of nothingness), its spiritual values (the truth coming from the observation of nature, where greatness exists in the inconspicuous and overlooked details and beauty can be coaxed out of ugliness). Also emcompassing its state of mind (the acceptance of the inevitable and the appreciation of the cosmic order) and finally its moral precepts (getting rid of all that is unnecessary, to focus on the intrinsic and ignore material hierarchy) (Koren 2008, p40-41). Figures 8 and 9 are both preliminary visual explorations of this conceptual knowledge. The intent of these is to explore the possibility of visually interpreting the notions of impermanence and nothingness.

Figure 8 represents the state of flux in natural abstraction. The nothingness represented by the white elements are layers back and front, as a symbol of the evolution of nature, in particular the inevitable cycle of the seasons when nature starts from nothing to decay to nothing. Spring and summer, the blue and green elements

are mingled together. The metaphor of the seasons has been chosen, as it is a recurrent theme in the wabi-sabi aesthetic system.

Figure 8, wabi-sabi exploration 1, encaustic on wood, Nathalie Moisy 2014

Figure 9, is a practical abstract interpretation of the beautiful in natural decay. This piece tries to emulate the natural process of

Figure 9, left: wabi-sabi exploration 2, encaustic on wood, right: beauty in natural decay, photography, Nathalie Moisy 2015

decay, and to explore the natural energies coming through transience. The seasonal metaphor is still present in the choice of the colour scheme, but for this piece the materials and tools were specifically chosen for their properties in relation to wabi-sabi.

To emulate the energetic and inevitable power of the invisible cosmic order, a medium of cold wax and oil colour was applied in layers. Heat was used to fused each layer with the underneath medium. This is an unorthodox method when working with encaustic as usually cold wax medium is left to dry by itself and not fused. The decision to fuse the layers was informed by the desire to apply an external unpredictable energy to crack through the veil of nothingness. The result was an asymmetrical crackled effect, which enabled the under-layers to come through, ignoring the material hierarchy in an irregular fashion.

4-2 Iki

Iki, as another Japanese aesthetic ideal on the other hand, is not to describe a natural phenomenon but a manifestation of gendered human consciousness. It is a word for taste (and its judgment) born from the life of urban pleasures of townspeople (the mercantile classes) during the Edo period and more specifically the early 19th century. It is therefore a vernacular concept of aesthetic pleasure. Although a popular subject for Edo people it was not subject to academic scrutiny until Kuki Shûzô published, in 1930, his 'reflections on Japanese taste the structure of Iki' in which he stated

that the ‘word iki exists only in our language, it will be a term with specific ethnic characteristics’ (Shûzô 2007, p27).

According to Kuki, by clarifying both the intensional (the necessary and sufficient qualities) and the extensional (Kuki provides an extensive list of expressions of iki) structures of iki we might comprehend the being of iki as a phenomenon of consciousness in its entirely (Shûzô 2007, p37). In his research, Kuki who studied Western philosophy in Europe is applying Western philosophy methods to support his arguments for the study of iki.

In its intensional qualities Kuki lists coquetry towards the opposite sex, an erotic allure, as the first feature defining clearly iki as a topic, which concerns relationships with the opposite sex. According to Kuki this coquetry depicts a possible relation between the self and the opposite sex that needs to be refined, not ordinary and most importantly has to preserve its possibility as possibility (Shûzô 2007, p38-39).

The second feature is the brave composure feature or as Shûzô says ‘iki is chic’ (Shûzô 2007, p39). This brave composure was a phenomenon of consciousness in Edo people. Iki shows resilience, resistance and idealism. Lastly iki is resignation (Shûzô 2007, p41) an indifference with renounced attachment and based on knowledge of fate.

If coquetry is the foundation of iki, the brave composure and resignation both determine the ethnic and historical colouring of iki (Shûzô 2007, p43).

Having listed the intensions for a person or a situation to be iki, Kuki attempts to further define iki with its extensional qualities. Iki stands as an intermediate term between a list of opposite qualities such as refined/unrefined (Shûzô 2007, p50), showy/subdued (Shûzô 2007, p53), chic/conventional (Shûzô 2007, p56) and astringent/sweet (Shûzô 2007, p58). In fact, iki is somehow a moderate aesthetic that avoids the extremes but take its source in various predecessors aesthetic features of multiple ideals.

In the studio practice, it was necessary to find a visual vehicle for the interpretation of iki. The immediate response was a reaction to the humanistic aspect of iki values. Because of it uniqueness attached to the human race the medium of language, words, poetry, and its visual application through lettering arts was the primary choice.

Figure 10 interprets the ambiguity of the pleasure quarters from where Iki is originating. Personal demeanour is not always what it seems in such a world of appearances. Only words were used in this graphic artwork to exaggerate the unique feature of expression that is language. The chaotic emotional responses to a life in the shadows is representing by the layering technique and in the strong colour contrast. The structure of detachment that symbolises Iki is represented by the choice of static and predictable computer

generated typographic elements, and their layered tonal values, as a symbol of the resignation towards the predetermination of the inevitable. The extravagant thoughts of passion are narrated through the medium of bold and energetic hand lettering. The emotional discordance is in the play with legibility/illegibility.

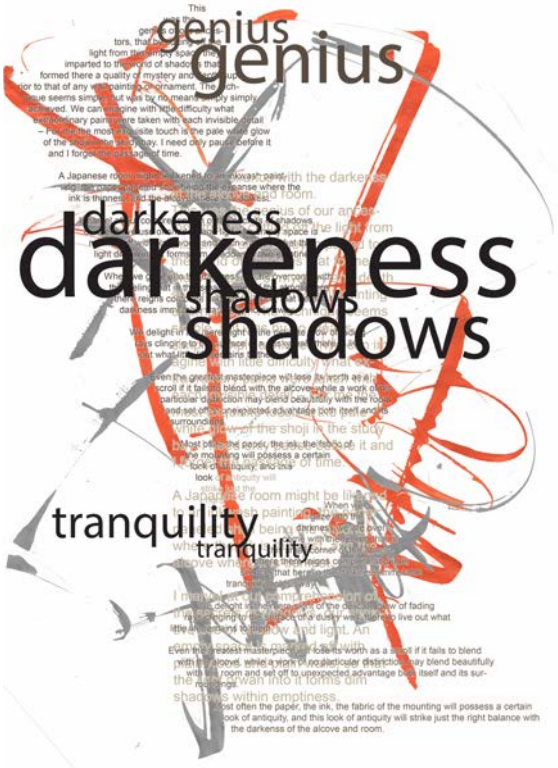

Figure 10, Lettering 1, mixed media collage, folded pen and digital manipulation, Nathalie Moisy, 2014

4-3 Wabiki: the hybrid aesthetic, from concept to visual communication

Once conceptualized, the new fusion aesthetic ideal, Wabiki needed an appropriate theme and visual narrative elements, which combine some elements of Wabi-Sabi, Iki with European concepts. Following the literature research, it has been theoretically established that Wabi-Sabi and Iki overlapped in some of their intrinsic qualities.

The expressions of Wabiki in its natural forms would include the following:

A natural evolution towards something different,
An evocation of human relationships
Organic materials
Freedom of form
Unconventionality
Humility
Innate beauty and energy of the material or subject
Intimacy
Semi-weathered state

In its artistic forms Wabiki is represented by

Semi roughness
Simplicity/sobriety
Empty spaces
Designed elements organised and balanced in a naturalistic way
Unforced designs
No symbolism or pictorial representations
Slight imperfections
Muted colours/restricted colour schemes
Small accent on a specific detail to evoke the appreciation of the unusual the unseen and the unconventional

The Japanese textile folk tradition of 'boro', loosely translated to 'rag' in English found a relevant philosophical and visual resonance with

wabiki for both its naturalistic and humanistic qualities, in term of transience, evolution to and from nothingness and detachment.

Boro describes items of clothing or bedding made by poor rural Japanese populations. The precarious lives of those people meant that they would repair existing items, layering and patching cotton pieces, forming new and used with old. These items would be handed down to the next generation who would in turn narrate their own stories through the safe keeping of their boro items. In time they would transcend their origins to become collective memories.

Figures 11 and 12 are paper interpretations of this tradition of patchwork textiles and visible mending by the poorest. The use of a restricted colour palette is homage to those populations, which by law were forbidden to use any other colours than indigo, brown and black.

Figure 11, Boro, Nathalie Moisy, 2014

Figure 12, Boro, Nathalie Moisy, 2014

Figure 12-a, Boro Fabric, Somerset House Exhibition, Picture Nathalie Moisy, 2014

Figures 13 and 14 attempt to convey evolution through reconstruction. These two pieces where worked with consecutive techniques, mono printing, collage and digital manipulations to emulate the recycling and upcycling of available material. The colour scheme is retrained to indigo to stay true to the simplicity and modest origins of boro.

Figure 13, Boro, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

Figure 14, digital boro, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

The natural element of wabi-sabi was reconciled with the human component of iki in a selection of poetic haikus and senryus on the subject of love. Haiku's and Senryu's immediate imageries disengage with the artist's hermeneutical capabilities. The Zen tenets are coded in a minuscule form of poetry, devoid of symbolism. This is therefore the perfect medium to enable the audience a freedom of interpretive play, and a prime choice for this research in regards to its quest for universality.

The narrative of love through one's life, created a metaphor for nature seasonal variations, which was considered appropriate for this combined aesthetic. Love as the main theme addresses the problem of the cultural bias and the possibility of a ubiquitous experience, as it is generally considered a universal human phenomenon.

Throughout the final body of work, the arrangement of the calligraphic lines references the iki prerequisite, that coquetry represents 'the dualistic and dynamic possibility that is made absolute only in the form of a possibility' (Nara, p19). lines never touch or overlap or intersect. They can converge, separate or stay in close proximity, depending on the sentiments that need to be depicted.

In Figures 15 and16, Spring is a metaphor for new beginnings: a blossoming love, but also a rebirth of nature from which beauty emerges from desolation and nothingness. The faint writing depicts the delicate state of those early sentiments and the calligraphic

arrangement, all the lines are leaning towards the centre one, are representative of the emotional attractiveness of one for another, but retaining a certain reserve and shy of stronger connections.

Figure 16, Purest white Nathalie Moisy, 2015

Figure 15, Purest white Nathalie Moisy, 2014-2015

In Figures 17 and 18, Summer is the peak of sensuality and loving relationships. A symbiotic season for hearts and souls, and a period of passions. A joyful state of mind and a period of strength represented by the black ink, and the energetic decisive tonal value of the brush marks. In Figure 17 the lines are closer together to express this proximity of two beings.

Figure 17, Robes, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

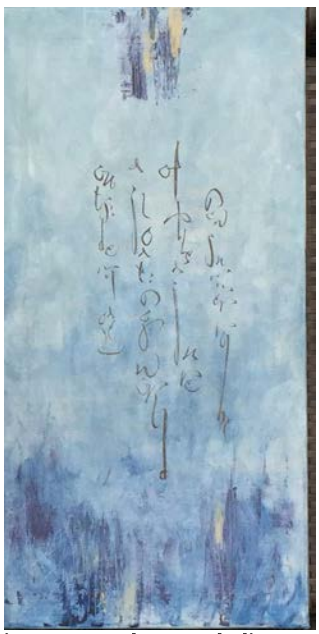

Figure 18, Robes, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

In Figures 19 and 20, autumn marks the decline of passion and the beginning of melancholia. Sorrow peaks in natural degradation and separations from the preceding summer unity. This is a chaotic transition of struggling and sufferings. A world of sorrow, that one must experience in his or her journey towards enlightment.

Although still strong, the shift from passion to a more quarrelsome and argumentative type of relationship is depicted with the reuse of black ink, with a slightly more weathered tonal value. The placement of the lines in the overall composition of Figure 20 is separated in the middle, hinting at angry and disturbed emotional responses.

Figure 19, Insects, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

Figure 20, Insects, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

Winter, in Figures 21 and 22, is the realization of the end and the metaphor, for the impermanence and inevitable evolution and decay of things (objects and sentiments alike). It represents the desolation

and regret of loss, and hope for new beginnings in a different state. The enlightment is not far off and peeks through the veil of consciousness.

The almost indiscernable writing is the evocation of the meditative state that enables the voyage in and out of consciousness, where thoughts and activity are losing their grasp. One wanders through illusion, and perceives the reality of flux and fluidity of life as a whole. Then only when emptied of realities, the pure qualities of clarity, compassion and courage arrive.

Here to reinforce the sentiment of impermanence and the inevitable decay, the text is written in a very broken arrangement, with a white tonal value that is barely legible, as if the brush is just grazing the paper, as thoughts are just outside the veil of perception.

Figure 22, Moon, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

Figure 21, Moon, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

Figure 23 uses threads and the craft/act of stitching and lace as an imagery of both attachment and detachment. The threads run through all the visual elements of the artworks, and are applied in such manner as to represent the state of the relationship in a given moment in time, where one stands in his or her journey through love and enlightment.

Figure 23, Needle lace, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

Brush lettering was decided upon as the best medium to visually represent the senryus because of its relation to the philosophy of the Japanese art of calligraphy, the quality of its lines and the contrast with the other elements in the piece. The emotional expression in brush lettering comes from the visible gestural mark left on the support. The manipulation of the brush becomes an immediate and instinctive translator of the artist's emotional mind. The energy represented by the calligraphic line is the vital force central to Zen philosophy and what European philosophers called the manifestation of the will.

Figure 24 is a personal variation of Latin letters written with a brush, in the style of Japanese kana calligraphy. This writing style is used for all the poems in the final body of works. The slender and connecting brush marks have a similar symbolism to the decorative threads running through the artworks. This fusion style of writing makes the text less legible which, in the particular context of this research, is not a concern, as the objective is for the recipients of the artworks to experience the narrative with their own hermeneutic and cultural background, rather than use an imposed cognitive interpretation, through a specific language.

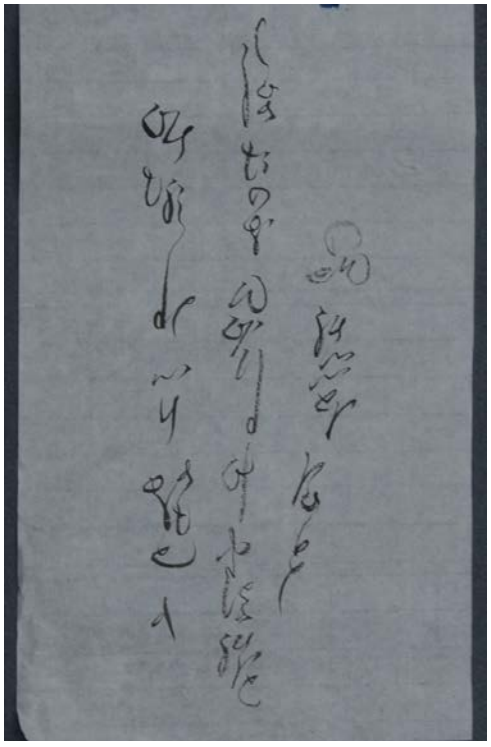

Figure 24, Senryu, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

CHAPTER FIVE – the final artworks, the survey answers and findings

5-1 The final artworks

The final body of works invite the audience to experience a complete immersion in the world of wabiki.

Norens are traditional Japanese fabric dividers commonly hung between walls, in doorways, windows and front of shops. The artwork in Figure 25 alludes to the noren, which when entered, one has to reconcile with its own humility. The transluscent quality of the Japanese paper enables the pieces to be seen both from the front and the back. On the reverse, the paint absorbed into the paper organically against the white resist, giving a visual effect similar to the batik technique on fabric. This is particularly important to this study in reference to the boro elements and the serendipity of the philosophy behind it.

Figure 25, boro noren, 200*300 cm, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

The participants in the wabiki experience enter a tatami room devised around the poetry of the threads of love.
Figure 26 is the representation of the notion that something beautiful will emerge from the emptiness, nothingness and the chaotic. From the random pattern of wood, as a representation of the power of nature, a thread of love emerges to be used to express the sentiments of one's love through time.

Figure 26, needle of love, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

Figure 27, needle of love, details, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

The imaginary room of love where various sentiments of affection are to be expressed, articulates around an arrangement of poetic pieces

In the Japanese patterns of the traditional tea room. The association with the tea room in relevant in the context of wabi-sabi (see Appendix 2). The artworks in Figure 28 are ideally displayed on the floor and the pattern can be rearranged depending on the mood of the individual. This then becomes an interactive artwork.

Figure 28, The love room, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

Figure 29, The love room detail, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

On the walls, and serving as room dividers, are various sizes of interpretations of the love poems in a more simple aesthetic. The imagery of threads, is running through all of them, and the different sizes of the pieces are intended as explorations of the different sentiments in the quality of the changing dimension and dynamic of the brush marks. For example the smallest version (Figure 30) with all the poems on one page is a more intimate experience than the medium individual, but related pieces, and the scale of the larger ones (Figure 31) gives a stronger energy to the artworks.

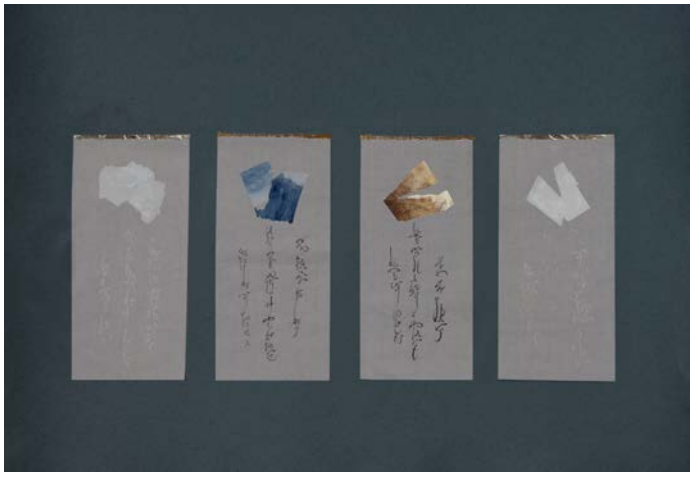

Figure 30, Four seasons of love, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

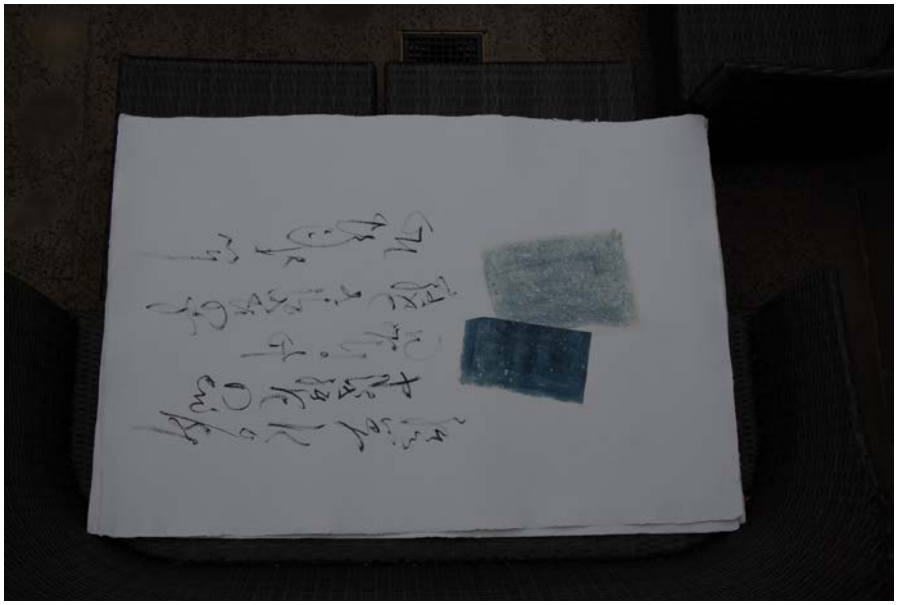

Figure 31, Robes, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

5-2 The survey

Using social media (Facebook) and personalized emails this study invited a larger audience to participate in a survey. The survey was designed to assess whether the final body of work (from which were extracted two pieces: Figures 32 and 33) clearly answered the original intention, set out at the beginning of this research: a development of an aesthetic ideal embracing a balanced fusion, named wabiki, that would minimise the ethnic and cultural biases.

At the time of analysis 195 answers were received. Although the survey was sent to friends and acquaintances, the results were kept completely anonymous and private, to avoid any personal partiality and to promote honest answers.

The full results of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1. However, in brief, significant data indicates that the majority of the audience were familiar with Japonisme, Japanese culture, Wabi-Sabi and western aesthetic concepts. Conversely, Iki is unfamilar for a vast majority (almost 80% of respondents)

The audience was asked to comment on both Figures 32 and 33, and were presented with a list of qualifiers, representing the principal characteristic of Wabiki). Unanimously, neither artworks presented signs of gracefulness, fragility and liveliness – three of the characteristic choices of the survey.

The predominant emotional responses from Figure 32 were sadness/melancholy/anxiety, anger/disgust, happiness/joy, calm/tranquility, optimism, humility, surprise, detachment, resignation/submission, seduction/eroticism/coquetry. The artwork was found graceful, simple, fragile, unconventional, lively and informal. It has a more Naturalistic (representation of natural elements) than humanistic (representation of figuratives elements or sentiments/emotions) sensibility and it feels imperfect or weathered. There is balance in the assymetry of the artwork. Overall the sensibility of this work is acceptable for it to be considered of Wabiki essence.

Figure 33 was interpreted as conventional, simple, fragile, formal, graceful and the emotional responses to it were determination/pride, happiness/joy, calm/tranquility, optimism, strength, boredom/indifference, humility, freedom, admiration, detachment, seduction/eroticism/coquetry. It does not render a sentiment of being Naturalistic, and tends towards a humanistic interpretation. It does not convey the feeling of being imperfect or weathered. This artwork is seen symmetrical and balanced. Although depicting many attributes of the Wabiki sensibility, this work is leaning more toward the Iki ideal. The lack of naturalistic perception does not permit its classification into the Wabiki aesthetic.

Figures 32 and 33 are both perceived as not obvious in their themes and narratives, with Figure 33 marginally more explicit. This is considered a desirable feature of Wabiki.

Figure 32 is considered to have a balanced European-Japanese aesthetic. Figure 33 is not balanced. This seems to indicate that the intended goal of a balanced fusion aesthetic is better achieve in the work titled 'love in the tea house'. But a large proportion of the respondents found that the pieces have a predominant Japanese sensibility and the survey did not separate the two pictures in the question of the dominant aesthetic. It leads us to the questioning of the validity of survey's last question, and the possibility that the last two questions were not adequately phrased, leading somehow to confusion for the respondents, and as a result distorting a proper and informative feedback. But admittedly serves to justify partly the aim of this research for a universal aesthetic.

Neither texts in Figure 32 and 33 was perceived as significantly more English or Japanese. Figure 32, was interpreted as marginally more Japanese than English, and is considered more inviting and legible than the text in figure 33, which was perceived as slightly more English than Japanese. Due to the anonymity of the survey and the nature of the questions, it is difficult to fully acknowledge any cultural bias. But given the relatively balanced spread (50/50) of English/Japanese perceptions of the texts, the predominance of illegibility in Figure 32 and the relative equal distribution regarding the legibility of Figure 33, we can extrapolate the possibility of a free play of interpretation in the tested audience, without any cultural colouring hinting again at a universal aesthetic.

Figure 32, love room, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

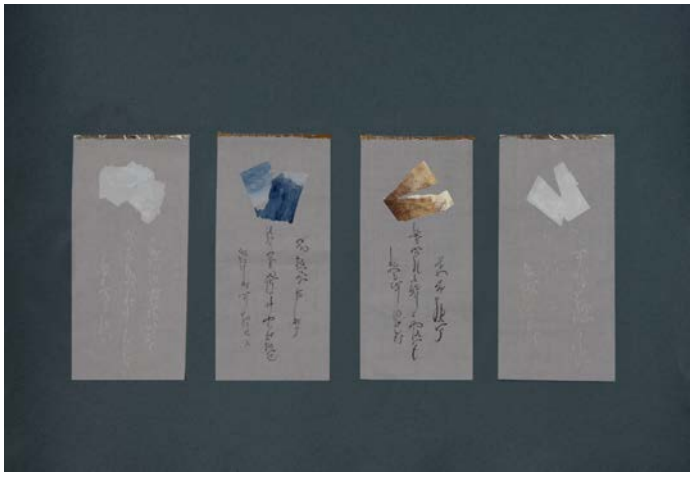

Figure 33, Four seasons of love, Nathalie Moisy, 2015

CONCLUSION

Throughout the course of this research, it became clear that there are some differences in the formal representations of aesthetic ideals between the East and the West, but within deeper philosophical constructs, overlaps exist. Notions such as natural energies, veils of perception and the moral and cultural implications of an aesthetic experience are all tenets of cross-cultural philosophies.

This study's visual body of works attempts to circumvent culturalism; the idea that individuals are determined by their culture, has been partly successful. Love's immateriality is a challenge to depict in a visual narrative, and the introduction of the language as a communication tool could have hindered the freeplay of interpretation sought by this research. However modifying the cognitive value of the language by suppressing its legibility, while maintaining the visual emotional connections addresses the problem, and demonstrates that language, in an abstract form, can be a neutral medium for the transference of emotion, from the artist to the spectator regardless of cultural background.

The search for a new Japonisme in this research opened the door to the study of spiritual and philosophical theories (Japanese and European) and their applications in art. This relatively new field of comparative aesthetics is particularly interesting and invites further research into theoretical concepts and potential visual applications.

To evaluate the status of an object as something naturally beautiful or artistically successful, we pay attention to beauty in nature, or in art, in a disinterested way regardless of any use of the object in a practical project. We simply regard and experience the beautiful in the object. Although this seems to give too much control to the participants of the experience, it also suggests that any object can become naturally beautiful or artistically successful, if we simply decide to attend to it in a disinterested way. This aesthetic theory can ultimately be applied in the enjoyment of everyday life. This notion of an ordinary application of aesthetics can be further developed in Western societies and can offer aesthetic enjoyment to a wider audience. This idea could be further researched as a possible foundation for social cohesion through appreciation of art.

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APPENDIX 1 : the poems

1-1 Haikus and Senryus

Haikus, with their unrhymed 17 sounds, in the rhythm of 5-7-5, are short poetic forms. They convey the experience of nature or the seasons, intuitively, in a pure and unadorned fashion devoid of artisitic interpretations. Through haikus, a poet reconciles the harmony between Nature and the human race.

Senryus are structurally similar to haikus but do not depict natural manifestations. On the contrary senryu uses humour or satire to depict the weaknesses or eccentricities of the human nature.

Zen Buddhism had a significant impact on the development of haikus as most Japanese haiku writers had a deep connection to it. The strong emphasis on the depiction of seasons this poems means that inevitably haikus express the ideas of change and impermanence.

In this research a mix form or haiku/senryu is used to address the dual humanistic/naturalistic concept of the fusion aesthetic.

1-2 The author

Kobayashi Issa, known simply as Issa (meaning a cup of tea), is one of the four great haiku poets. Born in 1763 Issa, lost his mother at the early age of three, an event from which he never emotionally

recovered. He migrated to Edo (old Tokyo) after the death of his grand mother and suffered a life of tragedies, misfortunes and failures. As R.H. Blyth states 'Issa is moved with the movement of fate. Life goes along joyfully and painfully, with ecstasy and anguish, and Issa goes with it. He does not praise or condemn, but he is not withdrawn from anything which exists. More than this, Issa has that Shakespearean quality of not telling things what they ought to be, or not knowing better than God himself how the universe should be run, of not opposing the predestined accidents of life, or its strange course to an unknown goal.' (Blyth, p303).

Marked by poverty and suffering, Issa translated these emotions in his poetry, full of sadness and sorrow. Issa is one of the most Japanese of haiku writers, but his work has a universal appeal. In his writing Issa is not bound to conform to societal rules and regulations. Although a moral man, (Issa was a lay zen priest) he tells the truth wholly and is not concerned only with interpretation of higher spirits but 'has a broader view of life, one that can hardly be put into any rules or maxims. In other words life is more important than art; our art and poetry are to be put into our living. Beauty is to be found in our daily life; it is then created naturally and spontaneously.' (Blyth, p304 and p306).

For all those reasons Issa's poetry, which concerns human behaviours, and the beautiful in daily, mundane, life is of particular interest to this research

1-3: the poems

Spring: Love's many forms
All the threads of desire
Begin in purest white

Summer: Outside my gate
A floating world of pleasure
New summer robes

Here Issa play with the double meaning of the floating world, on one side the Buddhist metaphor of the impermanence of life and on the other the denomination of the pleasure quarters.

Autumn: Don't cry insects
Lovers must always part
Even the stars

Winter: The moon tonight
If only she was still here
My old grumbler

APPENDIX 2 - Wabi-Sabi, its origins and its association to the tea ceremony

The concepts of Wabi and Sabi are quite closely associated These words have distinctive meanings, but both, find their origins in the Zen nihilist view, that everything comes from and returns to nothing.

Wabi means to languish and tends to be associated with life style and philosophical constructs. Originally, it described the negative sentiments associated with loneliness (a discouraged, dispirited, cheerless emotional state), but the meaning of the word evolved towards a positive connotation when the term was used to describe a life that was liberated from material considerations. Poverty and solitude in the Zen philosophical construct are desirable attributes to the path of enlightenment. With wabi came 'the poetic ideal of a man who has transcended the need for the comforts of the physical world and has managed to find peace and harmony in the simplest of lives' (Juniper, p48).

The concept of Wabi centres around the attraction to an unadorned, subdued, and imperfect form. One might describe wabi as the feeling of melancholy and humbleness, which comes from a realization of one's insignificance in nature's scheme.

Sabi is an aesthetic ideal, with an emphasis of the value of ageing. It conveys a sense of inconsolable desolation, and suggests the natural

process of destruction with its ultimate reality of death. In the term Sabi there is the notion that nothing remains unchanged and this idea, which relates to the metaphysical and spiritual principles of Zen, translates into physical expressions of the aesthetic. Sabi's representations evoke a sense of impermanence and the formal interpretations are ambiguous and unpretentious.

Over time the meanings of the two terms crossed over so much that the combined term of wabi-sabi found legitimacy in its own right.

Wabi-Sabi has a strong association with the tea ceremony and 'the tea room is to wabi-sabi what the church is to Christianity' (Juniper, p32). The tea ceremony is a multi-layered experience from which the aesthetic pleasure is amplified by the presence of wabi-sabi elements in the tea room. 'The influence of Zen on the tea ceremony promoted ideas of muted colours, simple utensils, and economy of expression. It was Sen no Rikyu, a tea master, who managed to crystallize these ideas into an aesthetic whole and to blend the garden, the tearoom, the food, the tea, and the conversation into the refined art form it is today' (Juniper, p36). Under the guidance of Rikyu, the tea ceremony developed a veneration for the modest and the mundane. In adopting a humble and restrained attitude in the practice of the tea ceremony, Rikyu united the ideals of tea and the principles of wabi-sabi. Wabi-sabi became un-dissociable from the art of the tea. In this spirit, and with the association of a human activity with natural artistry, wabi-sabi became the symbiosis of the work done by Nature, and the work done by man (Juniper, p42).

APPENDIX 3 – Kuki Shuzo, Iki and Japanese cultural identity

In the combined aesthetic of Wabiki, Iki represents the urban, humanistic side of the ideal. As explained in Chapter four of this critical evaluation, it implicitly has a mundane connotation and overlap with Wabi-Sabi, which is becoming more recognized by a global audience. But Iki has a special space in the realm of Japanese aesthetics because of its modern relevance, its place in everyday life and its structural cultural foundation.

Kuki Shuzo, who was a scholar of Western philosophy, was the first to logically analyse the phenomenon named Iki. In his book *The Structure Of Iki,* Kuki uses devices of Western philosophy, particularly some from the hermeneutics field. 'Within a framework of philosophical tenets, Kuki often switches from abstract thoughts to concrete details and uses his examples to devop his ideas rather than choosing them to illustrate his more general points' (Nara, p133). This is somehow an unusual practice for a philosopher.

In Kuki's theory, Iki is a very specific ethnic phenomenon, taking place at a defined time and place in history, but it can be argued that is rooted in more ancient Japanese aesthetic ideals, such as miyabi (elegance), wabi-sabi and yugen (mysterious and profound) and has resisted the passage of time, as it is still referenced as an exemplary ideal of beauty and elegance in contemporary Japan.

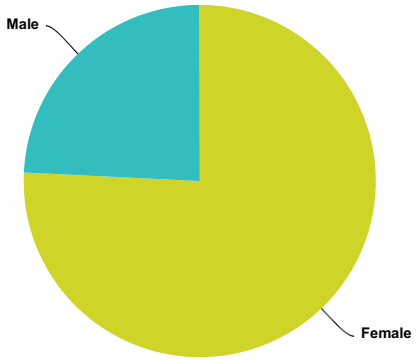
Kuki's style of writing engages the reader in a lively and informal almost conversational tone. This can be interpreted as Kuki's attempt to revitalize Japanese cultural identity, through the education of ordinary people, at the time of the opening of Japan to the West.

Another technique used by Kuki, is the use of the Japanese system of Hiragana to designate Iki. When a word is written with the Japanese hiragana system and not with the more sense-restrictive pictorial ideograms, it leaves the door opened to multiple interpretations of its meaning, and Iki, as defined by Kuki, is not exempt of this ambiguity. 'Kuki intends to help his reader see a vital connection between Iki and what the Japanese people do to exist as humans. In this sense everyday life could be linked in a word play chain based on iki. Kuki seeks to persuade us that the Japanese live (iki), breathe (iki) and move (iki) all in the context of an ethos whose distinguishing spiritual characteristic is, in a word, iki understood as pride. The goal of this book was nothing less than reviving and reinvigorating a nation' (Nara, p105)

APPENDIX 4 – questionning the realisation of the new aesthetic wabiki – the survey

Q1 What is your gender?

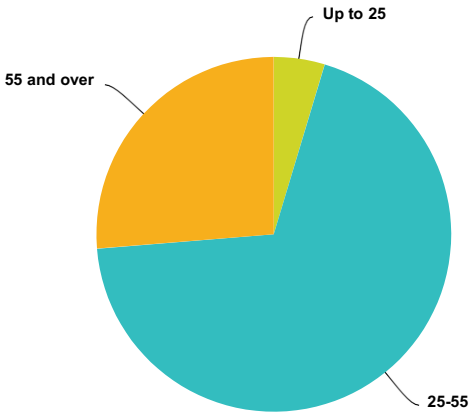
Answered: 194 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Female	75.77%	147
Male	24.23%	47
Total		194

Q2 What is your age

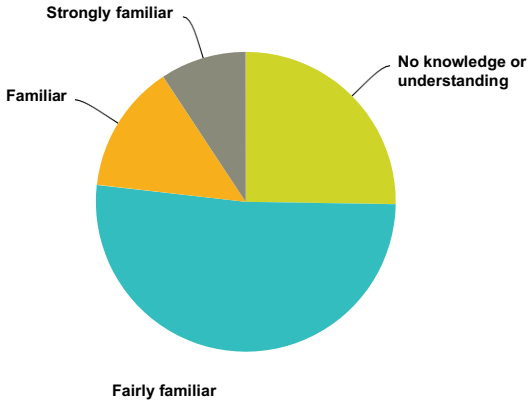
Answered: 194 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Up to 25	4.64%	9
25-55	69.07%	134
55 and over	26.29%	51
Total		194

Q3 How familiar are you with Japanese art and Culture?

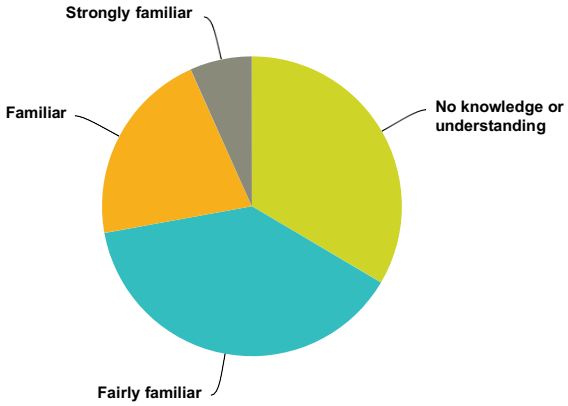
Answered: 194 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
No knowledge or understanding	25.26%	49
Fairly familiar	51.55%	100
Familiar	13.92%	27
Strongly familiar	9.28%	18
Total		194

Q4 Japonisme is a term used to describe the influence of Japanese artifacts on European art movements from the end of the 19th century. For example artists such as James Whistler, Edgar Degas and Vincent Van Gogh were influenced by Japanese woodblock prints. Frank Lloyd Wright's inspiration was Japanese architecture.How familiar are you with Japonisme?

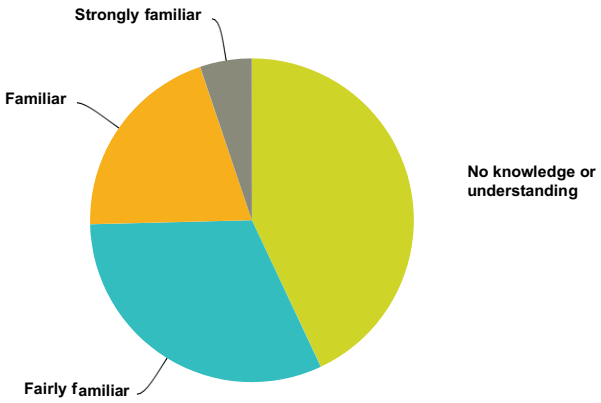
Answered: 194 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
No knowledge or understanding	33.51%	65
Fairly familiar	38.66%	75
Familiar	21.13%	41
Strongly familiar	6.70%	13
Total		194

Q5 Wabi-Sabi is a Japanese aesthetic celebrating the transience and impermanence of the natural world. It can also be described as the beauty of imperfect things, weathered or incomplete. Some arts that exemplify the Wabi-Sabi spirit are the Japanese tea ceremony, raku pottery and Japanese flower arrangement.How familiar are you with the Wabi-Sabi aesthetic?

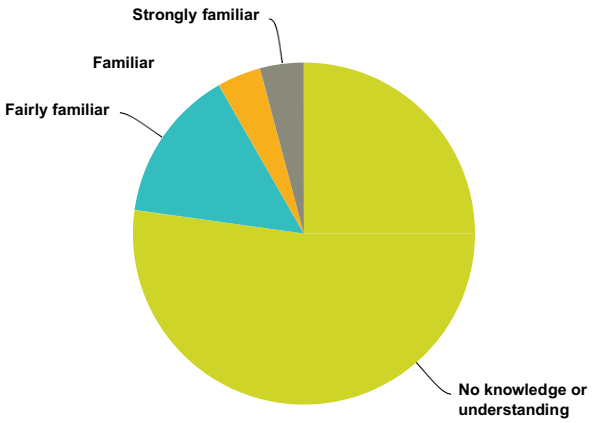
Answered: 193 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
No knowledge or understanding	43.01%	83
Fairly familiar	31.61%	61
Familiar	20.21%	39
Strongly familiar	5.18%	10
Total		193

Q6 Iki is a Japanese vernacular concept of life's aesthetic pleasure. It rooted in Edo's (old Tokyo) pleasure quarters and the life of merchant classes during the early 19th century.How familiar are you with the Iki aesthetic?

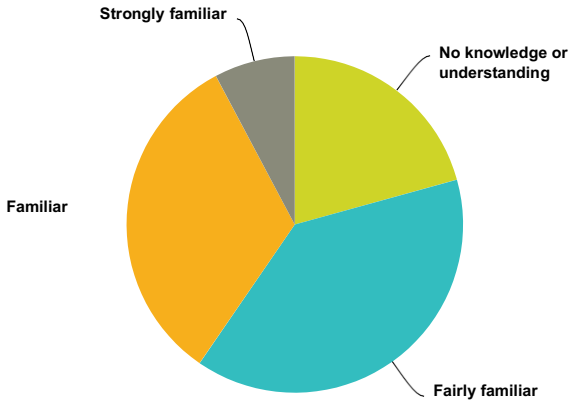
Answered: 193 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
No knowledge or understanding	77.20%	149
Fairly familiar	14.51%	28
Familiar	4.15%	8
Strongly familiar	4.15%	8
Total		193

Q7 How familiar are you with the ideals of European Aesthetics: the contemplation and/or the appreciation of beauty and art as a philosophical construct?

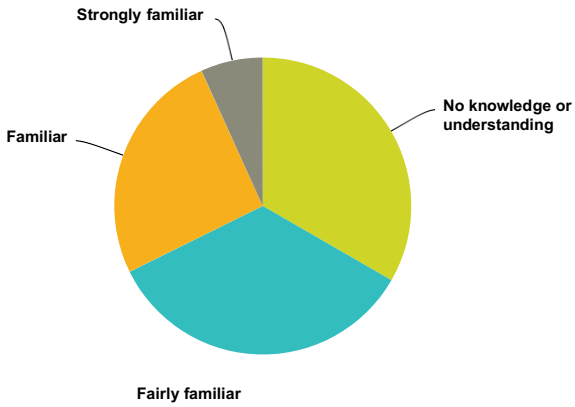
Answered: 193 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
No knowledge or understanding	20.73%	40
Fairly familiar	38.86%	75
Familiar	32.64%	63
Strongly familiar	7.77%	15
Total		193

Q8 How familiar are you with Japanese calligraphy?

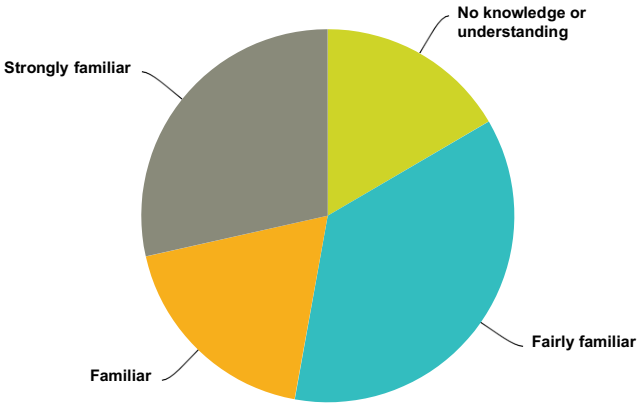
Answered: 192 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses	
No knowledge or understanding	33.33%	64
Fairly familiar	34.38%	66
Familiar	25.52%	49
Strongly familiar	6.77%	13
Total		192

Q9 How familiar are you with Western calligraphy and/or lettering arts?

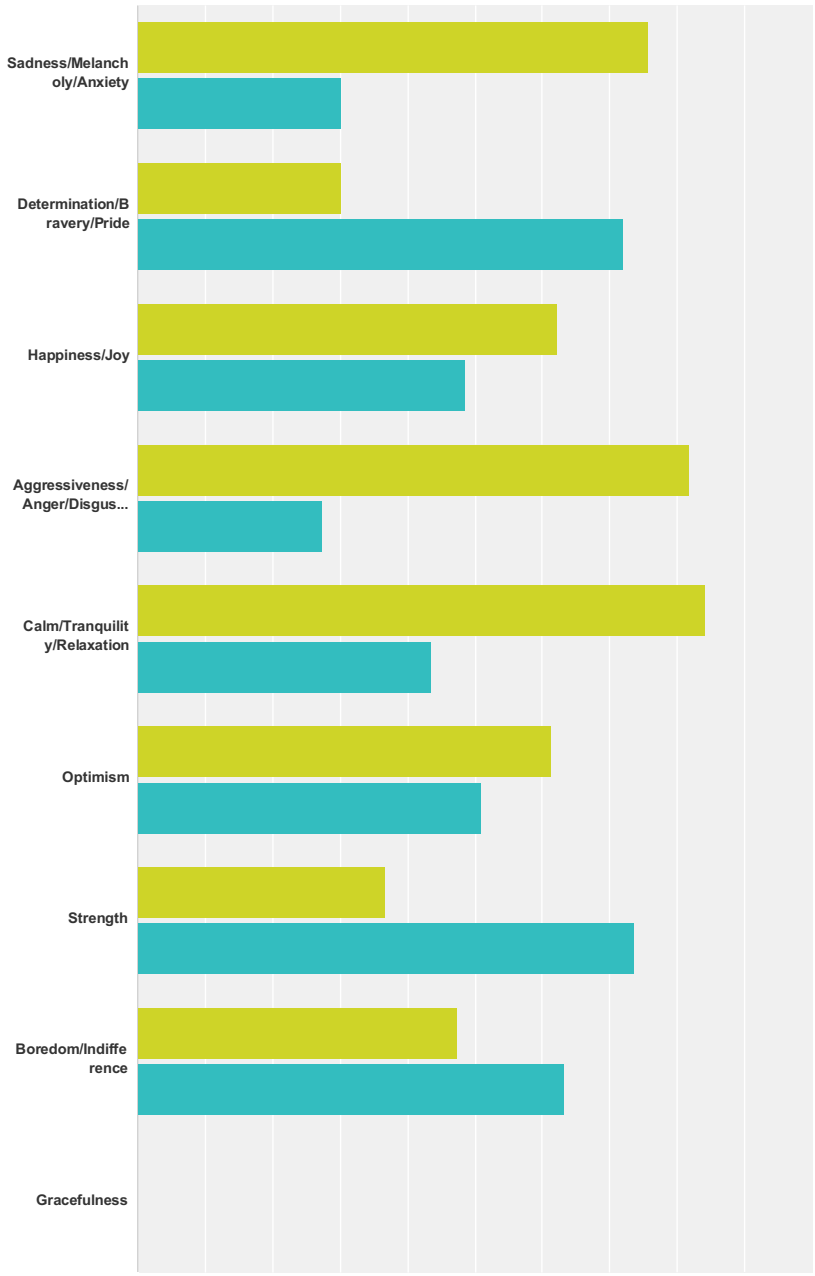
Answered: 193 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
No knowledge or understanding	16.58%	32
Fairly familiar	36.27%	70
Familiar	18.65%	36
Strongly familiar	28.50%	55
Total		193

Q10 What emotional responses do the above artworks communicate? Please select as many as you feel appropriate.

Answered: 153 Skipped: 42



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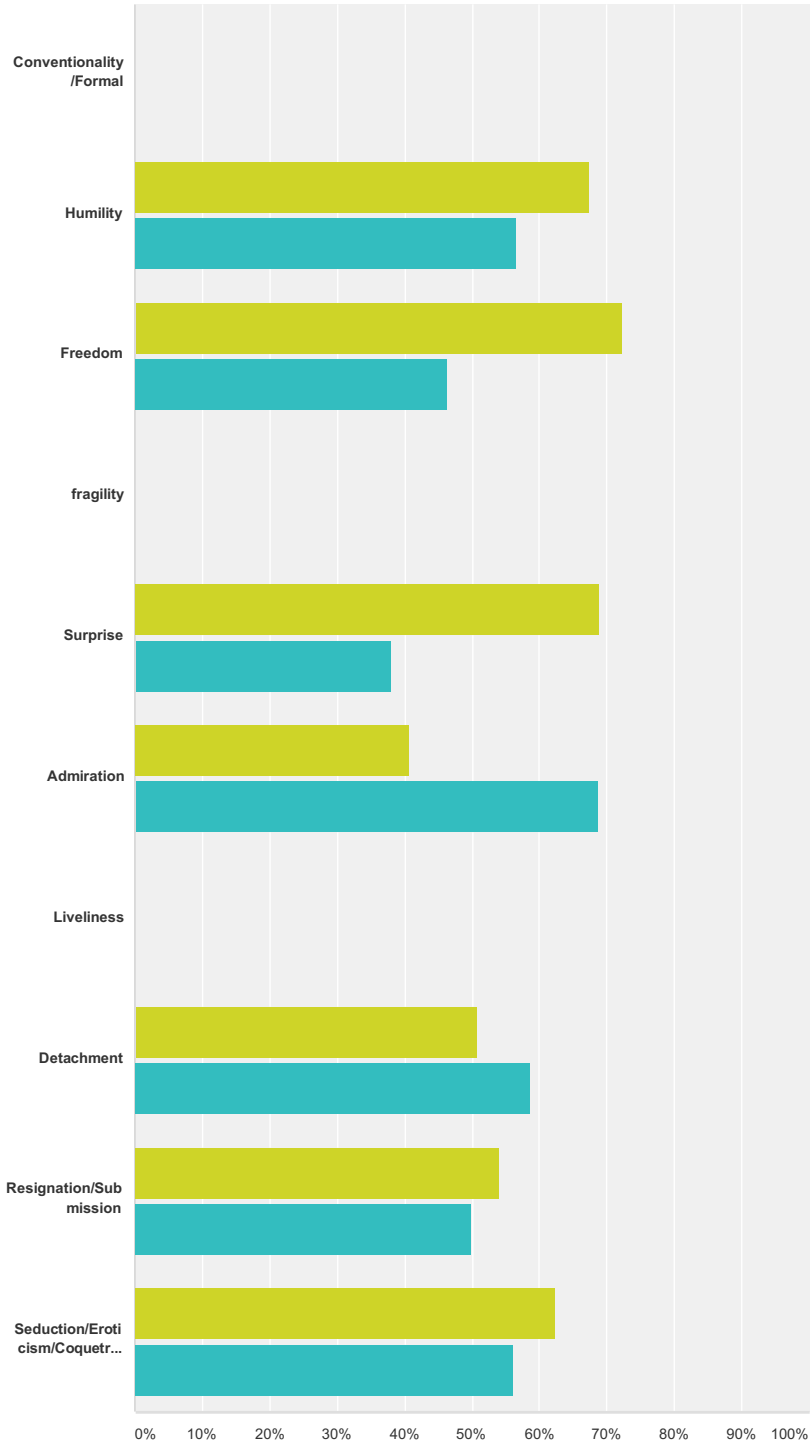
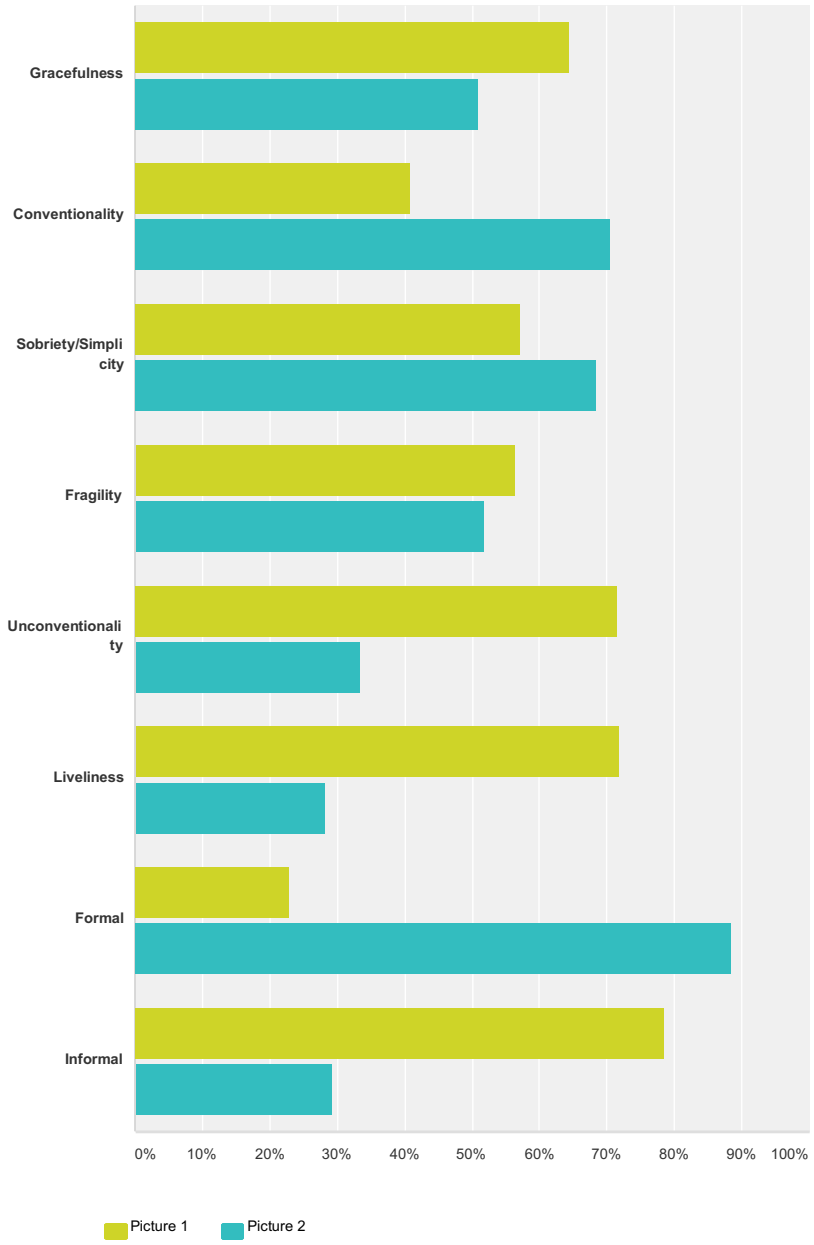

Conventionality /Formal
Humility
Freedom
fragility
Surprise
Admiration
Liveliness
Detachment
Resignation/Submission
Seduction/Eroticism/Coquetr...
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%

11 / 24

	Picture 1	Picture 2	Total Respondents
Sadness/Melancholy/Anxiety	**75.76%** 50	**30.30%** 20	66
Determination/Bravery/Pride	**30.23%** 13	**72.09%** 31	43
Happiness/Joy	**62.16%** 23	**48.65%** 18	37
Aggressiveness/Anger/Disgust/Contempt	**81.82%** 9	**27.27%** 3	11
Calm/Tranquility/Relaxation	**84.21%** 112	**43.61%** 58	133
Optimism	**61.40%** 35	**50.88%** 29	57
Strength	**36.84%** 28	**73.68%** 56	76
Boredom/Indifference	**47.37%** 18	**63.16%** 24	38
Gracefulness	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	0
Conventionality/Formal	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	0
Humility	**67.39%** 31	**56.52%** 26	46
Freedom	**72.22%** 39	**46.30%** 25	54
fragility	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	0
Surprise	**68.97%** 20	**37.93%** 11	29
Admiration	**40.63%** 13	**68.75%** 22	32
Liveliness	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	0
Detachment	**50.79%** 32	**58.73%** 37	63
Resignation/Submission	**54.17%** 13	**50.00%** 12	24
Seduction/Eroticism/Coquetry/Desirability/Love	**62.50%** 10	**56.25%** 9	16

Q11 What visual attributes do the above artworks communicate? Please select as many as you feel appropriate.

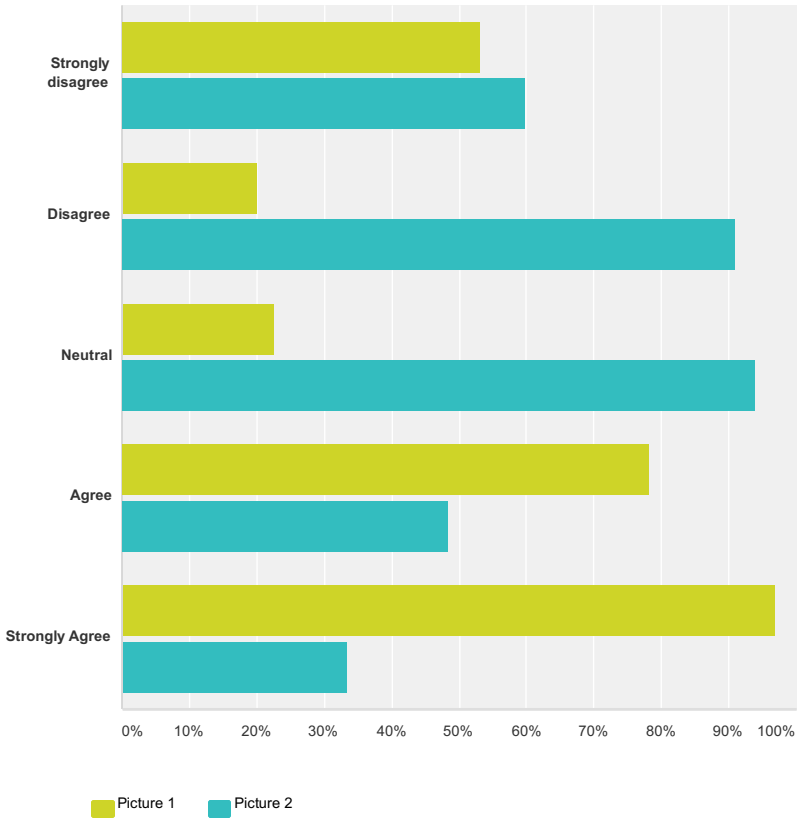
Answered: 164 Skipped: 31



	Picture 1	Picture 2	Total Respondents
Gracefulness	**64.55%** 71	**50.91%** 56	110
Conventionality	**40.98%** 25	**70.49%** 43	61
Sobriety/Simplicity	**57.26%** 71	**68.55%** 85	124
Fragility	**56.47%** 48	**51.76%** 44	85
Unconventionality	**71.67%** 43	**33.33%** 20	60
Liveliness	**71.74%** 33	**28.26%** 13	46
Formal	**22.92%** 22	**88.54%** 85	96
Informal	**78.46%** 51	**29.23%** 19	65

Q12 The artworks are Naturalistic (representative of natural elements)?

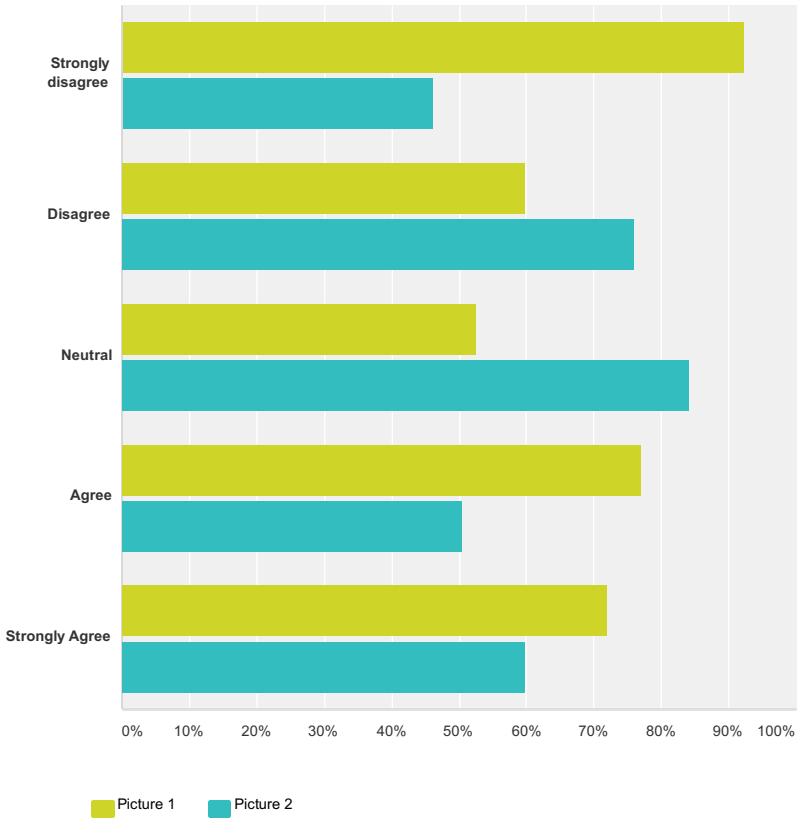
Answered: 162 Skipped: 33



	Picture 1	Picture 2	Total Respondents
Strongly disagree	**53.33%** 8	**60.00%** 9	15
Disagree	**20.00%** 9	**91.11%** 41	45
Neutral	**22.45%** 11	**93.88%** 46	49
Agree	**78.35%** 76	**48.45%** 47	97
Strongly Agree	**96.83%** 61	**33.33%** 21	63

Q13 The artworks are Humanistic (representative of figurative elements or sentiments/emotions)?

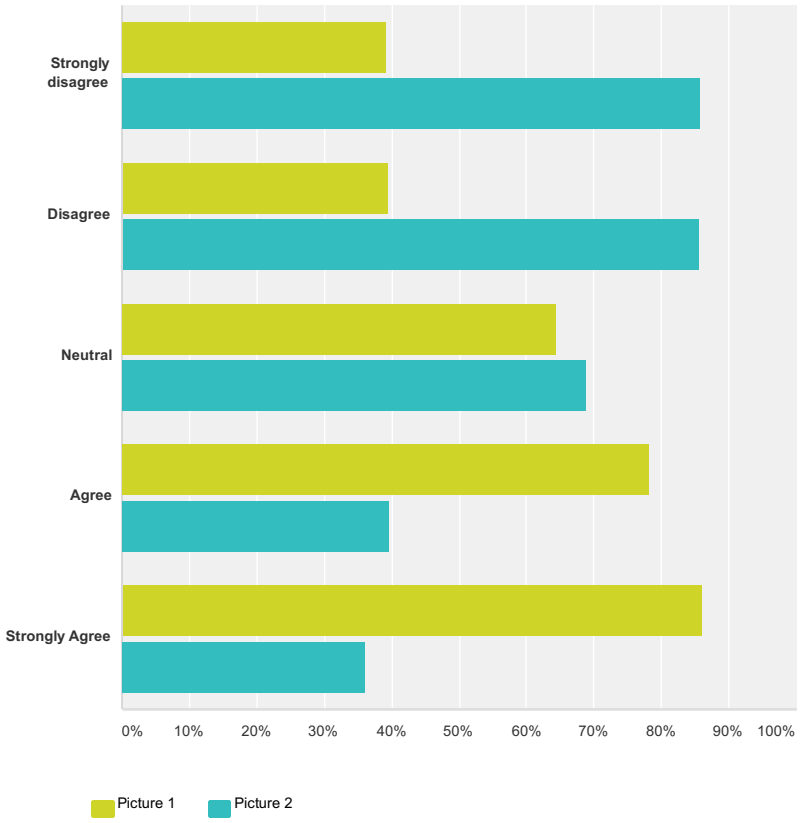
Answered: 162 Skipped: 33



	Picture 1	Picture 2	Total Respondents
Strongly disagree	**92.31%** 12	**46.15%** 6	13
Disagree	**60.00%** 30	**76.00%** 38	50
Neutral	**52.63%** 40	**84.21%** 64	76
Agree	**77.11%** 64	**50.60%** 42	83
Strongly Agree	**72.00%** 18	**60.00%** 15	25

Q14 The artworks give a perception of being weathered or imperfect

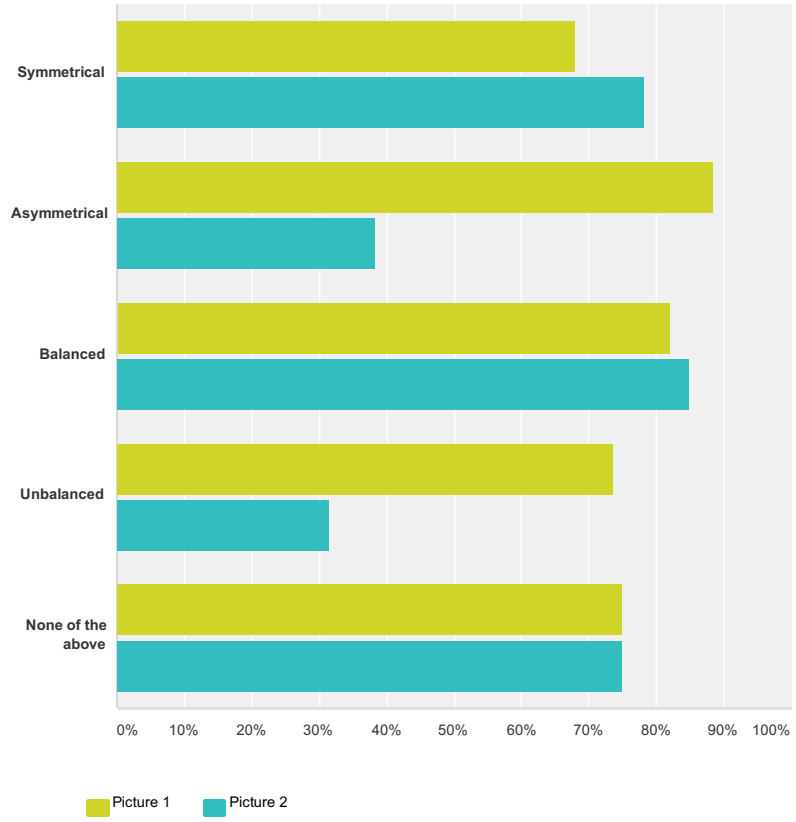
Answered: 160 Skipped: 35



	Picture 1	Picture 2	Total Respondents
Strongly disagree	**39.29%** 11	**85.71%** 24	28
Disagree	**39.47%** 30	**85.53%** 65	76
Neutral	**64.44%** 29	**68.89%** 31	45
Agree	**78.21%** 61	**39.74%** 31	78
Strongly Agree	**86.11%** 31	**36.11%** 13	36

Q15 The artworks are

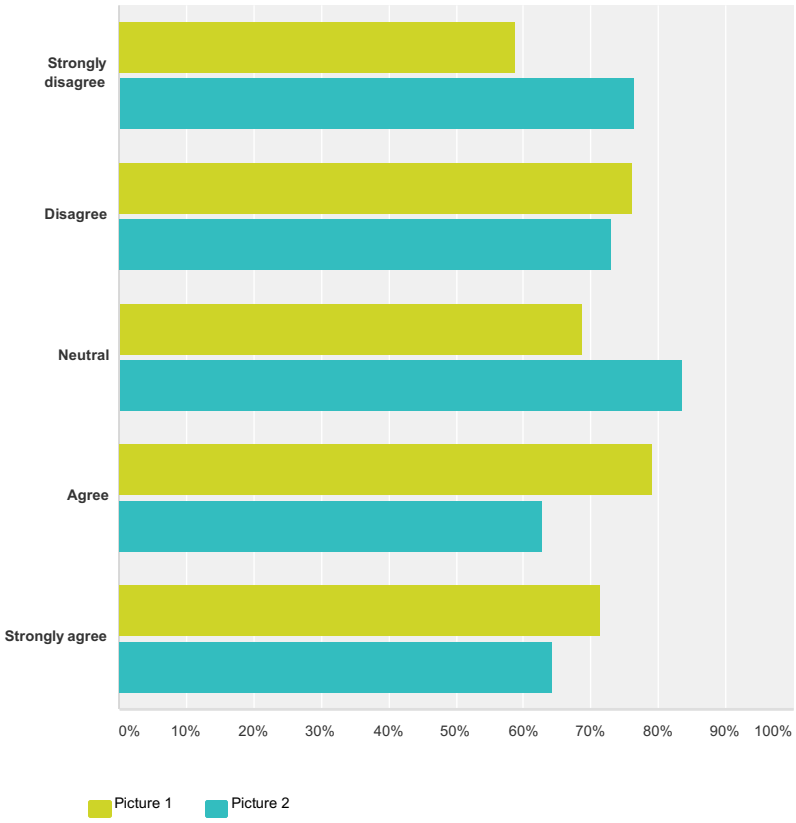
Answered: 161 Skipped: 34



	Picture 1	Picture 2	Total Respondents
Symmetrical	**68.04%** 66	**78.35%** 76	97
Asymmetrical	**88.46%** 23	**38.46%** 10	26
Balanced	**82.14%** 115	**85.00%** 119	140
Unbalanced	**73.68%** 14	**31.58%** 6	19
None of the above	**75.00%** 6	**75.00%** 6	8

Q16 The artworks are obvious in their themes and narratives

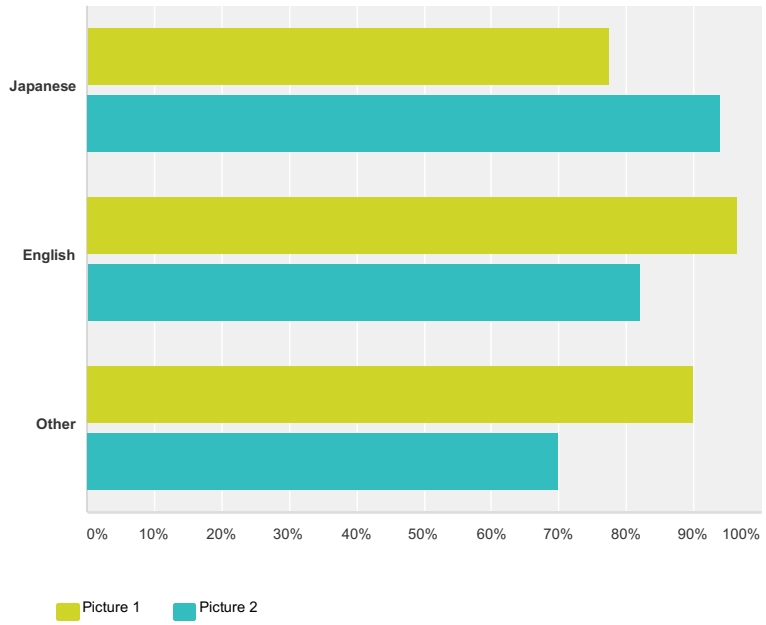
Answered: 161 Skipped: 34



	Picture 1	Picture 2	Total Respondents
Strongly disagree	**58.82%** 10	**76.47%** 13	17
Disagree	**76.19%** 48	**73.02%** 46	63
Neutral	**68.66%** 46	**83.58%** 56	67
Agree	**79.03%** 49	**62.90%** 39	62
Strongly agree	**71.43%** 10	**64.29%** 9	14

Q17 Which language is the writing in the artworks?

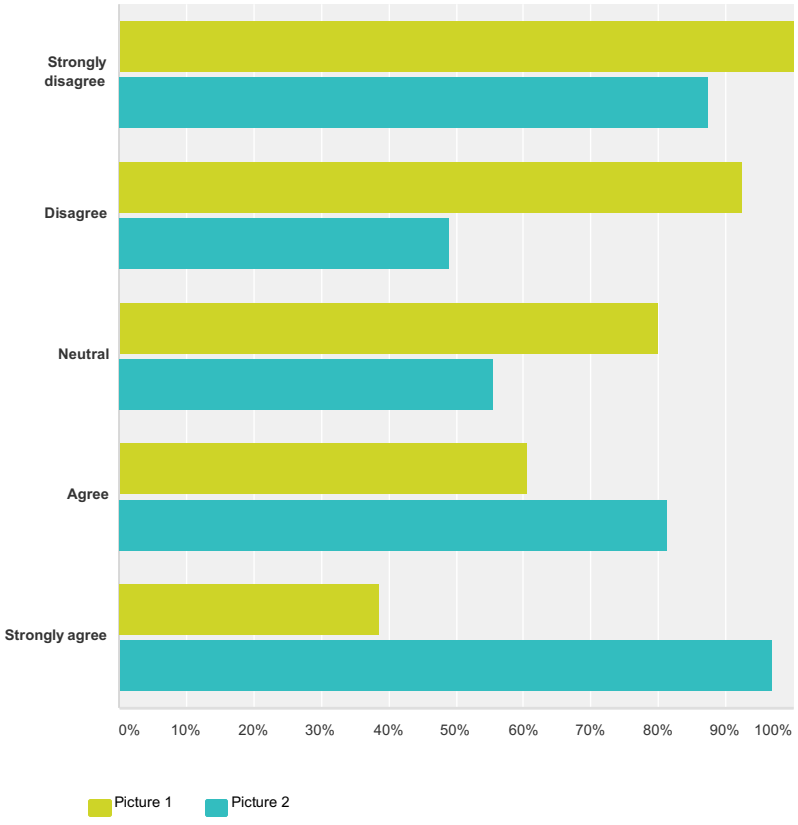
Answered: 153 Skipped: 42



	Picture 1	Picture 2	Total Respondents
Japanese	**77.55%** 76	**93.88%** 92	98
English	**96.43%** 27	**82.14%** 23	28
Other	**90.00%** 54	**70.00%** 42	60

Q18 The artworks invite you to read the text

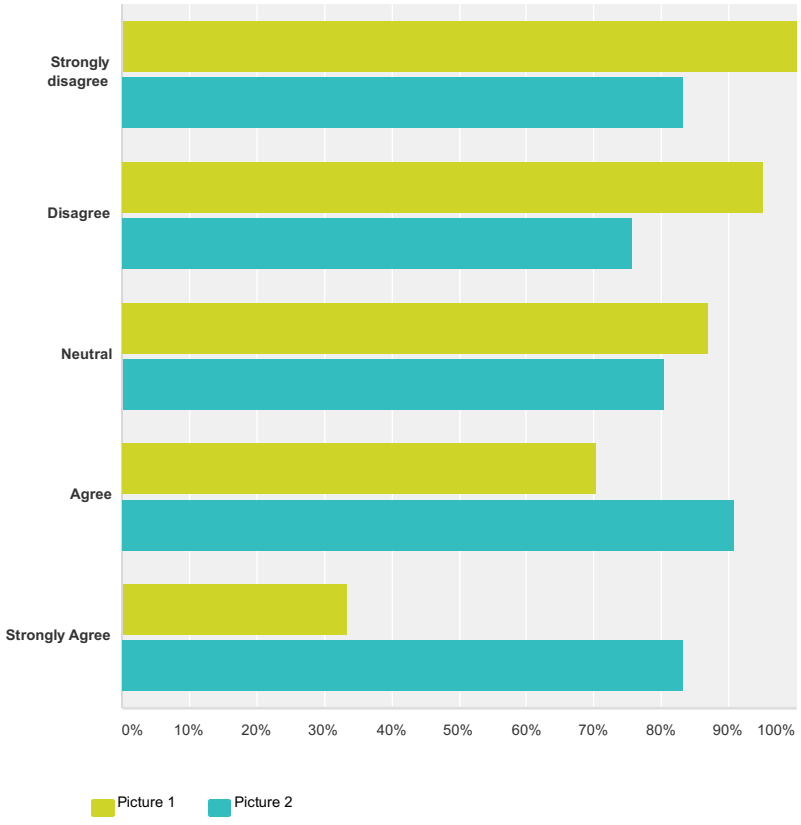
Answered: 154 Skipped: 41



	Picture 1	Picture 2	Total Respondents
Strongly disagree	**100.00%** 8	**87.50%** 7	8
Disagree	**92.45%** 49	**49.06%** 26	53
Neutral	**80.00%** 36	**55.56%** 25	45
Agree	**60.49%** 49	**81.48%** 66	81
Strongly agree	**38.71%** 12	**96.77%** 30	31

Q19 The writing in the artworks is legible

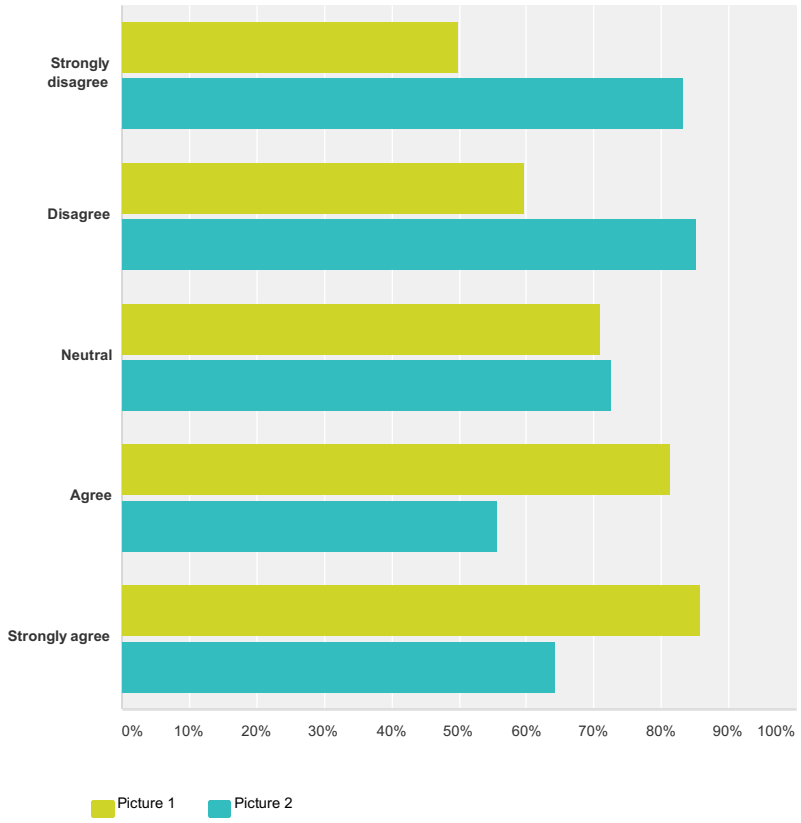
Answered: 152 Skipped: 43



	Picture 1	Picture 2	Total Respondents
Strongly disagree	**100.00%** 12	**83.33%** 10	12
Disagree	**95.16%** 59	**75.81%** 47	62
Neutral	**86.96%** 40	**80.43%** 37	46
Agree	**70.37%** 38	**90.74%** 49	54
Strongly Agree	**33.33%** 4	**83.33%** 10	12

Q20 The artworks have a balanced European-Japanese aesthetic

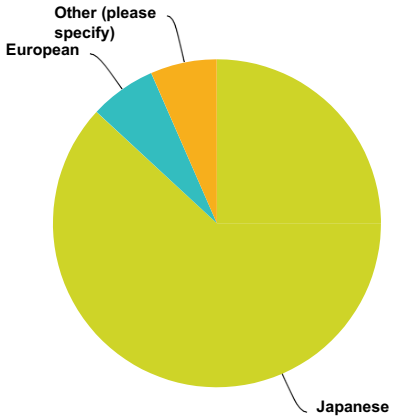
Answered: 154 Skipped: 41



	Picture 1	Picture 2	Total Respondents
Strongly disagree	**50.00%** 6	**83.33%** 10	12
Disagree	**59.70%** 40	**85.07%** 57	67
Neutral	**70.91%** 39	**72.73%** 40	55
Agree	**81.43%** 57	**55.71%** 39	70
Strongly agree	**85.71%** 12	**64.29%** 9	14

Q21 If the artworks are unbalanced what do you think is the stronger influence ?

Answered: 122 Skipped: 73



Answer Choices	Responses	
Japanese	86.89%	106
European	6.56%	8
Other (please specify)	6.56%	8
Total		122