Formal Analysis of Japanese Art

Japanese Art History
ARTH 2071

"Thanks to art, instead of seeing a single world, our own, we see it multiply until we have before us as many worlds as there are artists."
Marcel Proust (1871 – 1922)

21st Century Learning Skills

- As technology evolves, the pace of change accelerates.
- With constant change in our future, the most important job skill will be:
  - Learning how to learn.
- The most important learning skills are:
  - Observation
  - Analysis
  - Communication

In ART 2071 you'll sharpen those skills:
- in class discussions
- in writing assignments

Analysis

- Today you'll learn and practice skills of formal analysis – how artists combine elements and principles of design to create an image.
- In our next class you'll learn skills of contextual analysis – how religion, politics, economics, social organization, artistic and international influences affect artists and their patrons.

The Rich Aesthetic of Japanese Art

- The purpose of this presentation is to teach you how to do a formal analysis of an artwork to understand how artists communicate their ideas, feelings, beliefs and values. This gives us a common vocabulary for discussion.
This presentation follows the outline in your handout “Formal Analysis of Visual Art.”

Formal Analysis of Japanese Art

Formal Analysis of Visual Art

Formal Analysis explores:
- Elements and Principles of Design
- The Elements of Content
- Composition
- We'll look at the Elements and Principles first.

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

The Elements of Design are the basic building blocks of art:
- Line
- Color
- Shape
- Texture
- Space

Formal Analysis: Principles of Design

The Principles of Design describe how an artist combines the Elements:
- Repetition
- Emphasis
- Balance
- Unity
- Contrast

Formal Analysis: Elements of Content

The Elements of Content are what the artwork is about:
- Subject matter
- Ideas in the work
- Intention of the artist
- Symbols and symbolism

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

First we will look at the Elements of Design. We'll use examples from our textbook and other sources.

Elements of Design:
- Line
- Color
- Shape
- Texture
- Space
Formal Analysis of Japanese Art

- **Lines:**
  - Outlines, edge, silhouette, lines that define the shape and space.

- **Amida Triad (Detail)**
  - 710 from Horyuji
  - Mason fig. 101

- **Playing the Koto in the Mountains by Uragami Gyokudo**
  - Early 19th century
  - Mason fig. 393 *

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **The primary colors** are made from pure color, not mixed:
  - Red
  - Yellow
  - Blue

- When they are mixed, they create the **secondary colors**:
  - Green
  - Purple
  - Orange

Formal Analysis of Japanese Art

- **Warm colors:**
  - red, yellow and orange
  - seem to move towards us

- **Fall At Ono on the Kiso Highway by Hokusai Katsushika**
  - 1831
  - Minneapolis Institute of Art

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Cool colors:**
  - blue, green and purple
  - seem to move away from us

- **This color chart shows the different color values:**
  - pure colors are in the center
  - Tints are on the left
  - shades are on the right.
Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- Colors change in value:
  - white is added to make a tint, a lighter color.

Puppies in Snow
By Isoda Koryusai 1778
Freer & Sackler Gallery

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- Colors change in value:
  - black is added to make a shade, a darker color.

Taj Mahal, Night
By Yoshida Hiroshi 1932
Freer & Sackler Galleries

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- Saturation:
  - describes the intensity of the colors
  - bright colors are highly saturated

The World Which Woke Up
By Senso Ichino 1986
Web Exhibit

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- Less saturated colors:
  - dull shades or tints of a color
  - quiet or subdued colors

Hachiman In The Guise of a Monk
By Kaikei 1251
Mason fig. 222

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- Texture:
  - real textures are those that can be felt

Jomon Early Vase
5,000 – 2,500 BC
Dr. Hirayama

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- Textures:
  - implied textures are painted or drawn to look like real texture

Peacock (Detail of Screen)
By Ogata Korin (1658 – 1716)
Scanned Image
Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Shapes:**
  - geometric: made of lines, angles and measured curves

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Shapes:**
  - organic: following natural curves

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

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Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Organic:**
  - following natural curves

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Space:**
  - two-dimensional with height and width, a painting, print or photograph

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Space:**
  - pictorial depth, showing three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface

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Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Three-dimensional**
  - having height, depth and width, such as a sculpture or building

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

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Next we will look at the **Principals of Design**. We'll use examples from our textbook and other sources.

- **Principals of Design:**
  - Repetition
  - Emphasis
  - Balance
  - Unity
  - Contrast
Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Repetition:**
  - repeating one or more elements

Raijin, God of Thunder
By Kajiyokusai c. 1875
Diameter 2.5 inches
L. A. County Museum of Art

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Repetition:**
  - Pattern, repeating the same element to create an overall design

Tabuko (Covered Box)
By Hiro Kishu 1924 – 1930
Freer & Sackler Galleries

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Emphasis:**
  - one part larger, darker or brighter

Amitabha Rising Above The Hills
14th century
Freer & Sackler Galleries

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Balance - Symmetrical:**
  - calm or formal, same on left and right, a mirror image; if a line is drawn through the middle, it is the same on the left and the right.

Pagoda at Daigoji
10th century
Mason fig. 167

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Balance - Asymmetrical:**
  - energetic, unequal on the left and right

Old Plum Screen
Attributed to Kano Sansetsu 1645
Metropolitan Museum of Art

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- **Unity:**
  - proportion, pleasing relationship of all parts to each other and to the whole

Haniwa Horse
300 – 550 AD
Minneapolis Institute of Art
Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- Unity:
  - Variety, differences that give interest to artwork

Tiger, One of A Pair of Screens
By Yamada Yorikyo c. 1550
Minneapolis Institute of Art

Formal Analysis: Elements of Design

- Contrast - opposites, differences between the elements:
  - line (straight vs. curved)
  - color (dark vs. light)
  - shapes (organic vs. geometric)

Lotus Sutras, Chapters 20-23
Handscroll, 1180 AD
Freer & Sackler Galleries

Formal Analysis: Elements of Content

- Next we will look at the Elements of Content.
  We'll use examples from our textbook and other sources.

Elements of Content:
- Subject Matter
- Intention
- Ideas
- Symbols

Fudo Myoo at Todaji
9th century
Scanned Image

Formal Analysis: Elements of Content

- Subject Matter:
  - representational, a viewer can identify the subject - the person, place or thing

Iris Garden at Honkiri
By Ando Hiroshige 1857
Minneapolis Institute of Art

Formal Analysis: Elements of Content

- Intention:
  - record beautiful people, places or things

Touch the Earth # 800
By Sia Shoichi 1994 – 1997
Freer & Sackler Galleries

Formal Analysis: Elements of Content

- Non-representational, made of lines and/or shapes, but there is no recognizable subject

Freer & Sackler Galleries
Formal Analysis: Elements of Content

Intention:
- honor a person or religious figure

Portrait of Minamoto Yoritomo (the first shogun) 13th century
Kyoto National Museum

Intention:
- record history, legend or tradition

History of the Founding of Tsukimine Temple
By Tosa Mitsunobu 1495
Freer & Sackler Galleries

Intention:
- create beautiful objects to enjoy everyday

Negoro Bale-handled Footed Bowl
Muromachi Period 1333 – 1573
Minneapolis Institute of Art

Intention:
- Experiment with materials, techniques or subjects - this is one of the first colored wood-block prints.

Goro Uprooting a Bamboo Tree
(hand-colored print)
by Torii Kiyomasu 1697
Mason fig. 330

Ideas

Social commentary, a hero for a troubled time

Sugawara Michizane Expelled
By Kiyochika Kobayashi 1884
Minneapolis Institute of Art

Ideas:

Political - a condemnation of the Japanese military in WWII.

Hinomaru Illumination
By Yanagi Yukinori, 1991
Mason fig. 468
Formal Analysis of Japanese Art

Formal Analysis: Elements of Content

• Ideas:
  – religious and spiritual, a powerful protector of Buddha

Kujaku Myoo
12th century
Tokyo National Museum

Formal Analysis: Elements of Content

• Ideas:
  – Artistic: continue traditions or experiment; this painting uses traditional ink and brush but uses Western perspective.

Waterfall in the Cascades
By Takashima Hokkai
(1860 - 1931)
Freer & Sackler Galleries

Formal Analysis: Elements of Content

• Symbols
  – Myths and legends

New Year's Eve Foxfires
By Ando Hiroshige, 1858
Freer & Sackler Galleries

Formal Analysis: Elements of Content

• Symbols
  – Religious signs or ways of representing spiritual beings, the halo and lotus pedestal indicate a Buddhist deity

Standing Amida Nyoiri Buddha
13th century
Tokyo National Museum

Formal Analysis: Composition

• Now we will explore the next last part of a formal analysis:
  – Composition

Formal Analysis: Composition

• Composition is the manner in which the subject is presented:
  – Framing
  – Pose
  – Placement
  – Background
  – Lighting
We'll continue to use examples from our textbook and other sources.

**Elements of Composition:**
- Framing
- Pose
- Placement
- Background
- Lighting

**Framing:**
- Point of view, how much of the subject is shown and from what angle

**Pose:**
- The position of the living subject - a person or an animal

**Placement**
- Grouping of persons or objects
Formal Analysis: Composition

- **Placement**
  - proximity, how near, how far

**The Armor Pulling Scene**
c. 1720 – 1738
Freer & Sackler Galleries

Formal Analysis: Composition

- **Placement: sightlines**
  - horizontal lines are calming

**Rice Planting (detail of a screen)**
14th century
Tokyo National Museum

Formal Analysis: Composition

- **Placement - sightlines**
  - Vertical lines are formal

**Kannon**
Late 12th century
Freer & Sackler Galleries

Formal Analysis: Composition

- **Background**
  - general, could be anywhere

**The Actor Ichikawa Sadanji as Akiyama Kimori**
By Toyohara Kunichika 1894
Freer & Sackler Galleries
Formal Analysis: Composition

- Background
  - specific or historical

Formal Analysis of Japanese Art

Moonlight Revelry at Dozo Sagami Late 18th century Freer & Sackler Gallery

Formal Analysis: Composition

- Background
  - none

Formal Analysis of Japanese Art

Courtesans Parading With Attendants By Suzuki Harunobu 1766 Minneapolis Institute of Art

Formal Analysis: Composition

- Lighting
  - flat lighting, no shadows

Formal Analysis of Japanese Art

Jitsukawa Enjaki in the Role of Danshichi By Natori Shunsen 1926 Freer & Sackler Galleries

Formal Analysis: Composition

- Lighting
  - contrasting with highlights and shadows

Formal Analysis of Japanese Art

Night View, Sarawaku Street By Ando Hiroshige 1857 Minneapolis Institute of Art

Formal Analysis: Composition

- Lighting
  - dramatic focus, in a spotlight

Formal Analysis of Japanese Art

Snowy Night By Ito Shinsui 1953 Minneapolis Institute of Art

In Class Worksheet

- It’s time to practice your new skills in analyzing the formal elements of an artwork.
- Each of you will have a worksheet with questions for one of the four areas of formal analysis.
- You’ll analyze a Japanese artwork, using your skills of observation and analysis.
Practice: Formal Analysis

- Answer the questions on your worksheet based on your close observation of this artwork.

Formal Analysis of Japanese Art

Ichikawa Danjuro VIII as Gongoro in Shibaraku
By Utagawa Kunisada, 1836, Fitzwilliam Museum

I hope that you now have a better understanding of how Japanese artists use the Elements and Principals of Design, the Elements of Content, Composition and Style to express their feelings, ideas, values and beliefs.