DES IGN

HIST ORIES

Week 5
10/26—10/27

The Lens of Colonialism

> "So what does Japan have to offer the world from its corner of Asia? There are many aspects to this question, but in my opinion the most significant offering we can make is the Japanese aesthetic, its eye for beauty backed by a long history of development. The ability to see through to the underlying beauty of things should receive much more attention."
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> **—Soetsu Yanagi**

When surveying the current landscape of graphic design— with it's focus on digital platforms, dynamic typography, and modular layouts—the contributions of premodern Japan might not immediately come to mind as a primary reference point. However, if you closely examine the approaches within our field and trace the lineage of their development, you will discover that the Japanese perspective is a significant and defining factor. From minimalism to geometric stylization, many of the methodologies and techniques we employ within our contemporary practice have been significantly shaped by the legacy of Japanese creative innovation.

There is evidence of human inhabitance on the archipelago of Japan that dates as far back as the prehistoric era— 30,000 BC. The earliest documentation of Japanese language and culture can be found in Chinese sources dating from the 3rd century. Although the exact origins of Japanese culture remain a mystery to this day—it is generally agreed upon among scholars and historians that many aspects of early Japanese culture were significantly impacted by Chinese contributions. The Japanese written language utilizes Chinese characters called Kanji, and a large portion of its vocabulary is borrowed from Chinese. The earliest examples of Japanese painting deploy styles and motifs which align with those found in preceding Chinese works. Buddhism, which is currently practiced by over half of the Japanese population, was first introduced through the arrival of Chinese and Korean monks around 550.

By the eighth century, Japan had developed a distinct and refined culture all its own. The duration from 794 to 1185 is known as the Heian period and is regarded as a golden age of classical Japanese art and culture. Named after the then capital city of Heian—or modern day Kyoto—this era is defined by a social structure centered on the ruling emperor and his imperial court. Part king and part religious leader, the emperor was the concentrated source of authority and influence. During this period, he and his accompanying nobility dominated the politics and economy of Japan and were also the primary patrons for the arts. Painters of the Heian period generally focused on classical subject matter that aligned with the tastes of this elite echelon. Traditional themes like idealized images of nature, mythological scenes, and images of noble life were the chosen subject matter for works created during this time.

Opposite page:
Battle coat of high-ranking samurai featuring the crest of the Naitō family, Momoyama period (1573–1615).

Architectural detail featuring a Japanese family crest.

Samurai battle fan, Edo Period.

During the Heian period, noble families began to employ graphic symbols to signify status and identity. Family crests or Kamon were hung on walls and entry-ways, embroidered on clothing, printed on fabric screens, and attached to belongings to indicate ownership. The designs of these icons often included stylized interpre-tations of natural elements like leaves and flowers. Though functional, Kamon or Mon for short, were most revered for their decorative quality and were regarded as elements of aesthetic beauty.

The Kamakura period
Directly following the Heian period was the Kamakura period—named after the new capital city of Kamakura—which spanned from 1185 to 1333. It was during this era that the position of the emperor and his aristocracy diminished and a different type of ruling class took their place within an emerging feudal system. At the center of this new system were shoguns— powerful dictators who represented a new elite class centered on military legacy and conquest. The first Shogun was Minamoto Yorimoto. In 1192, after many years of rival families and rogue emperors vying for political dominance, Yorimoto consolidated power over the country. He came from a powerful imperial family. The succeeding Shoguns that followed Yorimoto would also come from powerful lineages. These rulers were appointed by the emperor and supported by feudal lords called daimyos. While the position of emperor became almost entirely ceremonial during this era, with almost no real political influence, daimyos and their extended families controlled huge portions of land and wielded important economic and political power.

During the Kamakura period, there began a duration of time marked by inner conflict, civil wars, and political unrest which would last for over four centuries and bring about major shifts in the socio-economic structure of the country. This era is distinguished by a lack of a cohesive centralized government which contributed to a continuous power struggle between various emperors, shoguns, and daimyo's. During this tumultuous time, military warriors called samurais were employed for protection. Samurais were considered an elite class of officer and an essential pres-ence on the battlefield as well as at the helm of the daimyos' vast estates.

It was during the Kamakura period that the Samurai class adopted the use of Kamon as expressions of identity. A Samurai's symbol or crest would often be seen at a distance emblazoned on a flag, helmet, or coat of armor as he was entering the battlefield. Because of this, the design of the Kamon became much more simpli-fied and abstract. Many Samurai Kamon are made up of geometric shapes —these distilled forms retain their visual impact even when seen at a glance or from far away.

Over the next 400 years, the use of Kamon would become more popular and wide-spread eventually becoming used by the common classes as a means of cultural and familial

A New Perspective
By the mid 1400's, after a succession of short lived rulers and vanquished Mongol invasions, daimyos began to usurp the shogun as the center of leadership in Japan. While past Emperors and Shogun were from noble lineage, daimyos could ascend from a variety of backgrounds and social classes. Some daimyos were, like the Shogun before them, the progeny of prestigious military dynasties; however, many came from more humble origins. There were daimyos who began their careers in military service or as government officials. By the 1600's, many samurais began to rise to the rank of daimyo. These feudal dignitaries were quite different from the aristocratic leaders of the past. They were not content being secluded in palaces away from common citizens. They were not interested in the classical art and culture that had been de rigueur within the noble caste for centuries.

This change in leadership coincided with a larger evolution in Japanese society. through the 16th and 17th centuries, a culture once exclusively shaped by the experi-ences of the elite begins to collectively expand it's perspective to center on a broader

range of class identity. This change spanned all aspects of Japanese life—social, political, and economic. Within the arts specifically, a new creative sensibility arose that responded to the tastes of a new class of patrons who were looking to break with tradition and embrace a different way of looking at the world. Artists began to depart from the refined subject matter and restrained expression that had, for centuries characterized past approaches in favor of vibrant colors, bold linearity, and dynamic fluidity. In place of the familiar subjects—nobility, nature, depictions of war—paint-ers and illustrators during this time began to focus on the vibrancy, humanity and beauty of common everyday existence.

The Edo Period
In 1603, Japan was again brought under shogun rule. Tokugawa Leyasu began as the son of a daimyo and rose to power in the wake of the Battle of Sekigahara in which he defeated internal rivals for power. Tokugawa unified Japan and instilled a sense of stability that would last almost 300 years. Following him came a long line of familial successors; the Tokugawa shoguns ruled up until 1868 when the emperor and impe-rial court regained power under the Meiji Restoration.

The period of The Tokagawa Shoguns is referred to as the Edo period (1603—1868)— named after the then capital city of Edo which is modern day Tokyo. Tokugawa Leyasu and his administration understood the significance of Japanese culture and wanted to create an environment of safety and security so this culture could thrive. In an effort to address both inner conflict and the looming threat of European Colonialism which had began to rise during the 1400's, a policy of Sakoku or national isolation was established. Under this policy, not only did Japan close it's borders to all other countries, Japanese citizens were also forbidden to travel abroad. Leaving the country was punishable by death. This period lasted for over two centu-ries until, in 1854, Japan was ordered by the US to open its ports and participate in trade and commerce with the West. When Japan finally came out of isolation, it was discovered that the country had missed the European Renaissance, the Age of Scien-

tific Discovery, and the industrial revolution.

Within the seclusion of the Edo period, there arose a wealthy leisure class who thrived within the developing economic prosperity that characterizes this era. To cater to this flourishing middle class, entertainment districts were established in all major cities. Areas containing theaters, bars, massage parlors, baths, teahouses, and brothels became centers of metropolitan life and creative culture throughout Japan.

Edo-period cities contained newly rich townspeople, mostly merchants and artisans known as chōnin, who gained economic strength by taking advantage of the dramatic expansion of the cities and commerce. Eventually, they found themselves in a paradoxical position of being economically powerful but socially confined. As a result, they turned their attention, and their assets, to conspicuous consumption and the pursuit of pleasure in the entertainment districts.

Department of Asian Art. "Art of the Pleasure Quarters and the Ukiyo-e Style." In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/plea/hd_plea.htm (October 2004)

The word Ukiyo originates from a Buddhist term which is meant to express the impermanence and fleeting nature of life. The approximate translation is "to float". Within the context of the hedonism and mystery that distinguished life in the Edo period of Japan, the term Ukiyo took on a very different meaning. The pleasure centers of cities like Edo (modern day Tokyo),Kyoto, and Osaka catered to the desire for fantasy, wonder, and escape that exemplifies the zeitgeist of Japan throughout the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. These spaces became known as "floating worlds"

where everyday people could see and experience the pleasures of metropolitan life— art, performance, fashion, romance, and connection. The characters who inhabited these floating worlds were larger than life. Courtesans, actors, and dancers captivated the clientele who frequented the establishments of these districts. These dynamic figures also captured the imaginations of artists and writers of the time and became the central subject of many creative works of the Edo period. Certain literary works which centered on the experiences inside the entertainment districts of Japan were called ukiyo-e-zōshi or "floating world booklets". Paintings, illustrations, and prints from this era are known as ukiyo-e—"pictures of the floating world.

A History of Printing

Woodblock printing first came to Japan from China in the 700's and by the 12th century was primarily being used to print Buddhist texts. The first non-religious book— a dictionary of Chinese and Japanese terms— wasn't printed until 1590. Many more books focusing on secular subject matter soon followed. Though movable type was first developed in China in 1040 by the inventor Bi Sheng, movable type was introduced to Japan through Korea around the time that Tokugawa Leyasu was rising to power—around 1593. Leyasu later ordered the creation of movable type printing presses to produce publications which featured historical and political subject matter. Other private presses were established which printed works of Japanese literature.

Because of the vast size of the Japanese alphabet, a press which incorporated movable

Above:
The Hikone Screen, artist unknown, an early painting in the Ukiyo-e style depicting a scene of leisure—men, women, and children playing games, writing letters, and engaging in conversation, 1640's.

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type was quite an investment and the books created using this system were expensive and not accessible to those outside of the noble classes. The Edo period marks a time where, along with economic prosperity and cultural innovation, literacy and scholarship were on the rise. There was a large demand for books from Japanese citizens of all classes. Because of this, the format of woodblock printing—an easier and cheaper method of book production—became the dominant means of printing during this era.

To create a woodblock print in the traditional Japanese style, an artist would first draw an image onto washi, a thin yet durable type of paper. The washi would then be glued to a block of wood, and—using the drawing's outlines as a guide—the artist would carve the image into its surface.

The artist would then apply ink to the relief. A piece of paper would be placed on top of it, and a flat tool called a baren would help transfer the ink to the paper. To incorporate multiple colors into the same work, artists would simply repeat the entire process, creating separate woodblocks and painting each with a different pigment.

Richman-Abdou, Kelly. "The Unique History and Exquisite Aesthetic of Japan's Ethereal Woodblock Prints" My Modern Met (August 2019) p. 24

During the mid 1600's a demand for illustrated publications grew creating a growing market for book illustrators, many of whom were also painters. Hishikawa Moronobu was one artist who was well known for both his paintings and his book illustrations. He worked with a book publisher to create what is considered one of the first Uiyo-e prints—a single sheet, one color woodblock print featuring illustrations of female figures. The prints immediately became popular with collectors and many other artists began to emulate this new format. The prints were initially printed in black. Many artist later integrated watercolor and colored ink to achieve full color works.

Ukiyo-e celebrated everyday city life and the drama and romance of the pleasure districts. Artworks depicted townspeople shopping in the market, crowds gathered at a festival, or patrons enjoying a theatre performance. The early works were almost exclusively focused on erotic subject matter—courtesans and their relationships with their clientele. Courtesans were paid to court the wealthy merchants, officers, and artisans that frequented the brothels and bathhouses. There position was critical within the social structure of life in the Edo period.

Thus, the Japanese courtesan both was and was not a prostitute. She was, indeed, bought for money; but at the same time she enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom and influence. in her own limited world. It was this unique quality, plus the traditional Japanese unconcern with moral problems in this connection, that was to make the Japanese courtesan...the subject of and the stimulus for a vast body of surprisingly excellent literature and art that was to sustain itself for nearly three hundred years.

Lane, Richard. "Images From the Floating World, The Japanese Print" Secaucus, New Jersey: Chartwell Books (October 2004) p. 24

Over the years, as Ukiyo-e prints rose in popularity, their subject matter began to expand. By the late 1600's, prints began to depict themes outside of the erotic and featured samurais, actors, and ordinary townspeople in addition to courtesans and their suitors. During this time, Kabuki theaters began to appear in the entertainment districts. A stylized form of dance and performance art first invented by a Japanese dancer and Shinto priestess named Izumo no Okuni, Kabuki incorporated lavish costumes, dramatic makeup, and artful choreography. Kabuki performers made ideal subjects for Ukiyo-e prints and paintings.

The rise of the Ukiyo-e artist Suzuki Harunobu in the mid 1700's coincided with the development of multicolor woodblock printing. The unparalleled vibrancy of Harunobu's prints is juxtaposed with a solemn and quiet sensibility. His work often depicts children and scenes of domestic life.

The creation of the full color Ukiyo-e print is regarded as a significant milestone in

Above:
Sugimura Jihei, *A Beauty Walking*, hand-colored woodblock print, 1681—98

Opposite page:
1. Hishikawa Moronobu, woodblock print depicting an intimate scene between two lovers, this print is from a book of erotica, 1675—1580.

2. Hishikawa Moronobu, woodblock print featuring a street scene in which a courtesian engages in a conversation with a samurai, late 1600's.

Above:
Katsushika Hokusai, *The Great Wave*, from the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, multicolor woodblock print, 1830-32.

the history of Japanese culture. Because Ukiyo-e prints were multiples printed in editions, they were less expensive than singular artworks, making them accessible to a wider range of patrons. The prints, however, were not viewed as cheap imitations of the paintings or illustrations from which they were derived. These prints signify a fully realized embodiment of the artistic sensibility of the Edo period and eventually became more sought after than paintings. They were perceived as a new and dynamic artform.

The format of woodblock printing perfectly aligned with the prevailing style of the Edo period. The inherent flatness of woodblock printing intensified the flatness of the linear language and stylized perspective that characterized the Ukiyo-e approach. Woodblock inks contained a high ratio of pigment resulting in dazzling and luminous colors which were more vibrant than those found in traditional paintings. The graphic flatness and bold colors resulted in eye-catching works whose appeal transcended class and social status. The Ukiyo-e prints bridged high and low culture within Japan and beyond.

By the 1800's artists like Katsushika Hokusai and Utagawa Hiroshige began to depart from figural themes and revisit the subject of nature which had been so prevalent in the earlier classical works of preceding periods. Landscapes, seascapes, flora and fauna, when rendered in the Ukiyo-e style as full color woodblock prints, were infused with a fresh perspective. In the 1830's, when Hokusai was in his seventies, he created some of the most prominent works within the Ukiyo-e genre. His Mount Fuji series and the iconic *Under the Wave at Kanagawa* are immediately recognizable not just as masterpieces of the Edo period but as seminal works within the global history of art and design.

Hokusai's landscapes inspired many younger emerging artists—one of which was Utagawa Hiroshige. In his 30's, Hiroshige decides to devote himself to the study of landscape painting. His masterful depictions of Japanese landscapes would earn him

the position of one of the most revered artists of the Edo period. His work would serve as an inspiration for future generations and would be later discovered by European artists of the Avant Garde.

Above:
Utagawa Hiroshige, *Hodogaya*, multicolor woodblock print, 1840.

Wabi-sabi

Japan has a rich tradition of craft that dates back to ancient times. Throughout its long history of development, Japanese craft, has been intimately interconnected with the adjacent fields of art, design, and architecture. There is a long legacy of shared approaches within these creative disciplines. During the Muramachi period which began in the 14th century, there began to emerge a distinct cultural perspective centered on minimalism, materiality, and a reverence for nature. These concerns have roots in both Zen Buddhism and the tea ceremony which, during the 1400's, went from being a religious ritual to a widely adopted social practice. It was during this time that the concept of wabi-sabi originated. Wabi-sabi is an aesthetic philosophy which values simplicity, emptiness, impermanence, and imperfection.

Within different creative practices, the concept of wab-sabi is represented in a variety of ways—from material choice to layout and proportion. Collectively, the presence of wabi-sabi translates into a specific value system within which elements like emptiness, negative space, pure form, abstraction, and deformation are viewed as essential features of meaning and experience. If we compare these approaches with conventions or styles that appeared in European countries at around the same time, we see an extreme contrast in perception. From ancient Rome to Victorian England, the European perspective has long positioned labor, realism, and idealized execution as central elements of value and legitimacy.

Above:
Frank Lloyd Wright, Frederick C. Robie House, Chicago, Illinois, 1909-1910.

Opposite Page:
1. Utagawa Hiroshige, *Residence with plum trees at Kameid*, multicolor woodblock print, 1857.

2. Vincent van Gogh, *Japonaiserie: Flowering Plum Tree, after Hiroshige*, oil on canvas, 1887.

The End of Sakoku

In 1853 Japan's period of Sakoku was brought to an abrupt end by the US Navy. Under the command of US General Matthew Perry, Japan was ordered to once again open it's ports and engage in trade and commerce. When Japan finally emerged from its time of isolation, the country would find it had missed The European Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution.

Japanese art and design quickly made its way across the globe as the newly industrialized world received its first glimpse of the creative masterpieces of the Edo period. An exhibition of works from Ukiyo-e artists was featured at the International Exhibition of 1867 in Paris. Shortly after, Ukiyo-e prints became highly sought after in major cities like London, Paris, and Madrid. The Ukiyo-e style would became one of the primary catalysts of the avant garde and modernist movements. These works served as important examples to artists throughout Europe who were looking to break with past styles and find alternative models of creative expression. The organic linear quality of Ukiyo-e prints and the focus on nature in later Ukiyo-e works informed the development of the art nouveau style. The graphic flatness and bold stylization found in both Ukiyo-e prints and Japanese Kamon inspired artist like Van Gogh and Gustav Klimt as well as laid the groundwork for art deco in the early 1900's. The minimalism and materiality inherent in Japanese craft, architecture, and interior design influenced prominent modernist architects from Frank Lloyd Wright to Richard Neutra.

As we survey the impact of Japanese work on the European creative perspective, it is important to understand the characteristics which defined European experiences during this time and to acknowledge how outside perspectives and cultures were received within these experiences. The popularity of Japanese art and design that ignited throughout Europe in the wake of the end of Sakoku is referred to by historians as Japonisme. As Japanese contributions were first beginning to infiltrate the European consciousness and Japonisme was growing, European countries were at the height of their colonial campaigns and at the center of a newly developed industrialized world. Inherent in colonialism and, in turn, capitalism and industry are systems of dominance, desecration, and erasure. As European countries expanded their territories across countries in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, they would, through plunder and forced assimilation, erase existing cultures and histories and, in their place, institute Euro-centric customs and beliefs. This dominance is present in all transactions with outside cultures. Though Japanese approaches were highly regarded and valued by European audiences, this positive reception was centered on concepts of "otherness" and defined by a lack of cultural understanding. At its core, Japonisme was opportunistic and self-serving. European creatives were exposed to Japanese works at a time when they were looking for alternative creative approaches. Within the new industrialized landscape, labor and realism, which had long been hallmarks of legitimacy, were fast losing their cultural relevance. With the advent of mechanical processes, the "look" of labor could now be cheaply replicated. The development of photography would soon render the skill of naturalistic replication obsolete. Surely European creatives felt the clock ticking and responded in kind. The "new" and "exotic" functioned as means of "inspiration" for artists and designers looking to break from traditional European perspectives at a time when those perspectives had run their course.

An unfortunate circumstance of the European appropriation of Japanese works is the loss of cultural context. The traditional Japanese perspective represents a complete shift in values, both aesthetically and philosophically, when compared to those of 19th century Europe. Surely an outlook in which concepts like emptiness, and simplicity are regarded as meaningful and worthy could have served as an opposing and corrective force against the surge of European colonialism and capitalism that would, by the twentieth century, come to dominate the world.

The Rise of Colonialism

During the 1800's, Europeans were seeing examples of art and design from different cultures around the globe, not only in the books and publications that were being

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Female mask, Chokwe peoples, Democratic Republic of Congo, early 20th century, wood, plant fiber, pigment, copper alloy.

African textile from Zimbabwe.

printed but also in the form of physical artifacts that were appearing throughout Europe as a result of colonial conquests.

The era of European colonialism spans from the 1400's up until the 20th century. The colonial era, named the age of discovery by some historians, began with Portugal who was, in the 1420's, exploring the coast of Africa trying to find a trade route around India. Portugal ended up colonizing several African islands, setting up trade posts, and established a lucrative business selling resources of the region—namely gold, ivory, and slaves.

The next country to colonize was Spain who sent Christopher Columbus on a similar expedition to establish a trade route with India. His journey of 1492 landed him on the continent of North America. Spain eventually claimed most of Latin America, while simultaneously expanding into the Philippines. During this time, Portugal claimed Brazil in addition to other African territories. Both countries enslaved the native populations living in the lands they colonized and put them to work on plantations or in mines.

Other countries who began expanding outside their borders were England and France who fought over areas of Africa in the late nineteenth century, and the Netherlands who took control of parts of Indonesia in 1800.

By 1900, 90% of African lands had been colonized by European powers—France, England, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, and Italy. The only countries to escape colonization were Ethiopia and Liberia. These European powers were interested in the resources of Africa—minerals,agriculture, ivory and slaves. Today Africa is made up of 53 countries. These borders were not drawn by Africans, rather, they were the result of 7 European countries dividing up the continent in 1884 and staking claim on territories without regard for cultures, tribes, or regions.

The Impact of Africa

In addition to stripping the conquered countries of natural resources and enslaving it's people, another result of colonial conquest was the looting of indigenous artwork. Beginning in the late 1800's, thousand of objects from colonized lands began to appear in museums, galleries, and specialty shops throughout European cities like Paris, Berlin, Munich, and London. African sculptures and textiles were among the works most prevalent at this time. Though at first regarded with a novel curiosity by Europeans, who used words like 'savage" ,"tribal", and "primitive" to describe the indigenous works, eventually, the bold stylization and graphic geometry of the masks and prints taken from countless cultures living on the continent of Africa began to grab the attention of emerging artist like Picasso and Matisse. During this time, many of the artists who were living and working in these prominent European cities were contributing to a series of creative movements that would significantly alter the course of art and design. The creative approach of African artists and designers would be one of the key elements that would spark this visual revolution.

Starting from the ancient Greeks and Romans and continuing through the middle ages, the Renaissance, and the Victorian era, the primary value system within which practitioners of the visual arts were working was centered on replication. Creative endeavor, in large part, was in service of literal representation. Though there are, within this system, countless examples of expressiveness, inventiveness, mastery, and conceptual expansiveness, they all take place within the narrow confines of the European perspective which rarely departs from the objective of interpreting the natural physical world and the corporeal bodies that inhabit that realm. The few examples where imagination is employed to execute a departure from naturalistic subject matter are most likely in service of interpreting the more otherworldly aspects of Christian mythology.

The highly stylized and abstracted work from nations like Gabon and the Republic of the Congo in Central Africa or the Ivory Coast which is on the Western part of the continent, presented examples of creative perspectives looking within. African artist were using imagination and intuition to re-imagine and reinvent the world around

African Kuba cloth (detail), 19th century.

them. They were departing from the conventions of naturalism and mixing aesthetic concerns with elements of function resulting in a sophisticated and groundbreaking combination of art and design which would serve as a model for the future modernist movement. When we survey the avant garde and modernist movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries,

Begining in the twentieth century, the success of artists and designers would hinge upon their ability to create the appearance of visual innovation. Within the growing spaces of media, marketing, and advertising, there would be a constant expectation of novelty and reinvention. The perception of the "new" —new ideas, new messages, new forms—would function as a means of grasping the imaginations and attentions of consumers which is the primary intent of marketing. You can imagine that, towards the end of the Victorian Era, artists and designers of the time were feeling the pressure of these expectations. So many aspects of life had completely transformed; yet, the prevailing visual styles of the Victorian era were, at best, mashups of recycled conventions from subsequent eras.

Towards the end of the 1800's, we see a variety of approaches which depart from the Victorian perspective. The Arts and Crafts movement looked to the past. They rejected the sensibilities of the Victorian era and their accompanying methods of production in favor of revisiting Renaissance and pre-Renaissance styles and methods. Other artists and designers of the time looked to outside cultural perspectives for inspiration and ideas. In the late 1800's, there emerged a number of experimental movements centered on finding new means of creative expression. These creative communities collectively formed the European avant garde. Constructivism, Futurism, Cubism, Art Nouveau, and countless others were united in a quest for finding new ways of seeing, thinking, and making. For these artists and designers, Japanese and African works served as doorways into new ways of looking at the world. The artist of the avant garde employed aesthetic approaches like minimalism, abstraction, geometry, flatness, and stylization—qualities which are inherent in traditional Japanese and African examples.

DES IGN HIST ORIES

Mon & Tues

9am—2pm

Fall 2020

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