

My art piece is a Geisha, which is a very important part of the Japanese culture. Geisha, also known as geiko or geigi, are Japanese female entertainers or hostesses of traditional art like classical music, dance, games, and conversations. The word geisha consists of the kanji for “gei” (芸), which means art and “sha”(者) means person. The first geisha was very different than the modern geisha. Starting in the 18th century, the first geisha were actually men. 20 years later, female geisha appear. Geisha popularity grew, and they became vital providers of hospitality and entertainment at dinners for large companies and government officials. During the post war, a large number of U.S soldiers were stationed in Japan and had their first interaction with Japanese culture, which led to some misunderstandings. First, they were often mispronounced as “Geesha girls”. Another common misunderstanding was that they were prostitutes.

Geisha can be found all over different cities across Japan. Kyoto is the most prestigious place to become a geisha. Young girls would move there at age of 15 to be taught communication, hospitality skills, and different traditional Japanese arts. The location of a typical geiko dinner is an ochaya (tea house). They are important because they show the art of the Japanese culture to others. My art piece is an example of a Geisha, whom I have named Aika.