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Research Paper # 1

Design is something that has been around for a long time. It has been done in many cultures and countries throughout the world. It changes in each of these places. Sometimes it changes a bit, sometimes it changes a lot, but it is always changing. An example of this is seen in Japanese culture and one design, in particular, is the design piece Nihon Buyo A design by Ikko Tanaka. The design was a poster being created for the Asian Performing Arts Institute, an art school, and was created in 1981. The design, when looked at, seems to look like a geisha. A geisha is a Japanese performer who sings, dances, and plays instruments. They will wear white makeup, a kimono, and a bun hairstyle. The geisha image is made up of different shapes being placed together to create the image. The shapes are all standard colors like red, blue, green, black, purple, and a lighter blue. The man who made it was named Ikko Tanaka. He was born in the ancient Japanese capital of Nara in 1930. He then attended an art school known as the Kyoto City College of Fine Art. Ikko graduated from his college at the age of 20 in 1950. After he went on to join two design groups known as Sankei Paper Group and Japan Advertising Artist Club. He then acquired two awards for his design work, which got him recognition as a great designer. Ikko was a designer who wanted his designs too to be simple but unique, designs that could each stand on their own. He would fuse both Japanese traditions and International style to create his design work. This was important, especially with what was happening in design during this time. During this era, many Japanese designers began to emulate western designers. The emulation of how western designers

created and the value's they held as designers. This was all happening due to the effects of the ending of WWII. The end of WWII saw the Japanese having to rebuild due to the destruction caused by it. The rebuilding caused Japan to advance more in terms of technology, causing a cultural change in Japan. Japanese people began to reject traditional Japanese culture and begin to take on a more western style.

Ikko's design style and design beliefs carry many of the same ideas as those created by the Bauhaus art style. One of the theories Bauhaus used was the idea of simplicity in their design work. The creators wanted designs too to be effective but not to have unnecessary elements that would be a distraction. Ikko believed in this idea of simplicity, wanting people too to experience the spirituality of his designs without it having unnecessary elements that would not support their design. The second theory of Bauhaus that was responded to was the idea of using geometric shapes in the design. Ikko responded to this by having some of his designs created using shapes and drawings of people. Sometimes using shapes. To create the images of a simple person. Another theory used by Bauhaus as explained in the reading by Walter Gropius is uniting traditional art and artists instead of keeping them separated and allowing traditional art to die out. Ikko connected to this by having his work be a fusion of both traditional Japanese art and his style of design to create his work. He even stated that some of his works were based on theater shows that he viewed himself. Finally, there is the theory of Bauhaus of wanting every design to be different and more advanced than the last. This is so Bauhaus art style was always evolving and changing and would allow the artist to express themselves in their own way. As shown in the readings by Herbert Bayer and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy both came up with new techniques to add to the Bauhaus art style. For Herbert, it was

Typo photo which was combining photography with typography. For Laszlo, it was a new way of us typography that would express a point more easily. Ikko expressed this idea by making every one of his designs different from the others. As he put it he wants to make sure that if someone were to look at his designs that they would not be able to tell if it was created by the same artist.

As shown Ikko carries many of the ideas from Bauhaus in his own art and this is shown in the work I choose. One way is that Nihon Buyo has shapes that are being used to create the image of a woman. From squares to triangles to circles all are being used to create this design. There are even smaller shapes being used to create the eyes and mouth of the women. Another way it shows this is that the design is very simple, having one subject the viewer is focusing on. At the same time having nothing that would distract the viewer from what they should be focusing on which is the image of the women. Finally, the design displays a unification of both traditional art and modern art. Having their design focus on one figure who is looking forward like a portrait, but has the figure made up of shapes instead of it being a regular person. Showing a combination of old art and new art at the same time.

As shown, Ikko design work has many connections to Bauhaus philosophy. Even if his work can be different from theirs sometimes there is a connection there even if it is hard to see. Ikko was a great designer who wanted each of his designs to be different, wanting each to show his own expression of design. Bauhaus was a style created to be ever-evolving and changing along with the designers. Even though they were created in different places, both carry the same idea that design is something that must keep changing along with the designers who are doing it.



Biography

Aranda, Juan. "Biography, Tanaka Ikko [V.2]." *Medium*, Medium, 31 Jan. 2018, <https://medium.com/@jaranda.des/biography-tanaka-ikko-v-2-68f34c95cc3a>.

"Portfolios." *Graphis*, <https://www.graphis.com/bio/ikko-tanaka/>.

Outline