PRE/PRO JAPAIN

TECHNOLOGIES OF POPULAR VISUAL CULTURE

Williams College Museum of Art
October 1, 2021 – March 20, 2022

REPRO JAPAN

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Christopher Bolton

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Making Japanese Popular Visual Culture

by Christopher Bolton, Professor of Comparative and Japanese Literature, Williams College

Repro Japan is about making Japanese popular culture. We might frame this topic, and the exhibition, with a series of questions that highlight each of these four ideas in turn: making, popularity, culture, and Japan.

What Makes Japanese Popular Culture?
Let's start with this idea of making, by asking what it is that makes Japanese popular visual culture. That is, what are the material technologies and socioeconomic processes that have enabled the production of popular visual media in Japan?

      The answers to that question take us back to Japan's Edo period (1603–1868), where the exhibition begins. To make mass media, you first need a mass audience, and in Japan that came with the growth of large urban centers during this time. The period is named for the new capital city of Edo (later Tokyo), which featured new arts and entertainments catering to the merchants and commoners who populated this growing metropolis. And these new arts—from kabuki theater to landscape prints—came hand in hand with new media technologies developed to produce and reproduce them.

Many of these new visual media technologies were printing technologies, and several of these are highlighted in the smaller of the two exhibition galleries. During the Edo period, color woodblock printing allowed the mass production of illustrated books and artwork for a broad audience, while fabric-printing technology using paper stencils fostered new popular fashions. Later, printing would evolve through photography, motion pictures, and animation or anime, where sequential images were painted on plastic cels and transferred to film to produce moving images for the even larger audiences created by cinema and television.

      The essays in this publication by **Panalee Maskati** and **Wei (Maggie) Wu** describe some of these media as well as the links between them. And as we move into the main gallery, we can see the most

important of these connections: the ways these media technologies reproduce or re-mediate one another. As an example, Edo-period textile patterns and clothing fashions were portrayed in woodblock prints of the time, then those prints were imitated by nineteenth-century photographers, and now contemporary photographers adopt and transform the very same tropes. Elsewhere in the gallery we see how characters migrate from one medium to another, for example from a video game to a manga or print comic, and from there to self-published spin-off manga called *dōjinshi*—a huge and hugely popular media world of its own.

So while we started by asking *what makes* Japanese popular visual culture, this layering of technologies and reproductions blurs the line between production and reproduction, or making culture and *remaking* it.
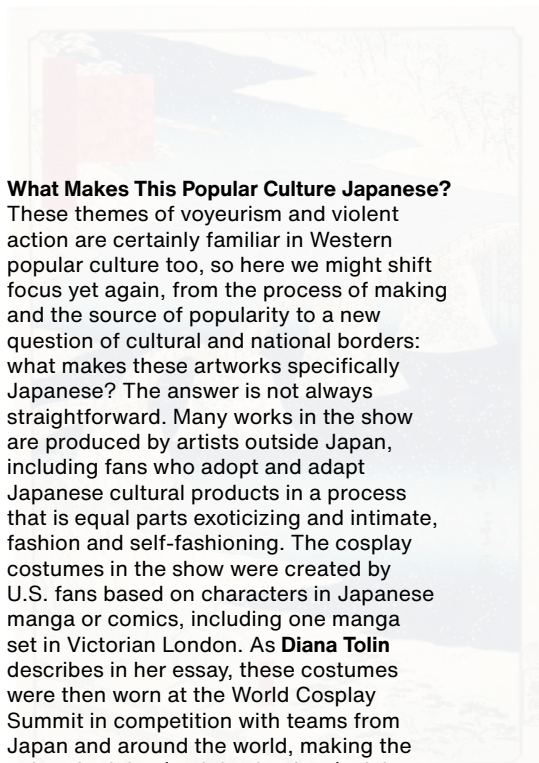
What Makes This Japanese Culture Popular?
Another approach to understanding the making of Japanese popular visual culture would be to shift our focus from technologies of making to investigate this notion of popularity. Technology may enable the production of these media, but what is it about them that has made them so popular—in their time and today,
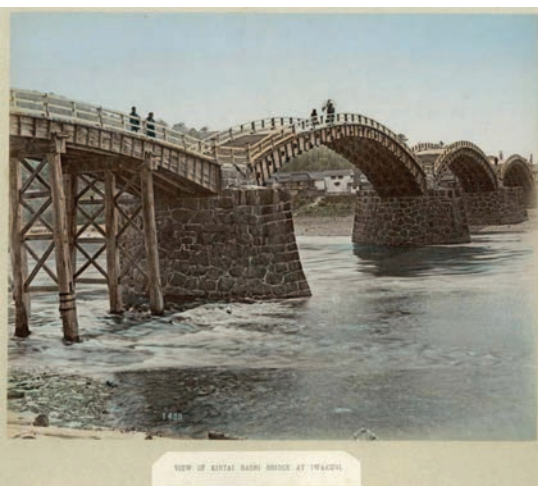
in Japan and around the world? *Repro Japan* highlights some visual similarities between different media as a way of identifying certain themes and motifs that have generated interest across generations. For example, the fascination with feminine beauty and the voyeuristic desires of media consumers are represented by the woman's face in a mirror, a trope we can trace through many different eras and media starting with Edo-period woodblock prints and continuing in early photography, in anime, and beyond. Maskati and Wu curated the sections of the exhibit on cel art and early photography, respectively, combing through thousands of woodblock print images, anime cels, and photographs to identify and illustrate the striking parallels we see in the gallery.

Here one might point out that these visual parallels are driven in part by the powers and limits of specific technologies: for example, the mirror motif allowed the viewer to see the female subject from multiple angles at once, investing a two-dimensional woodblock print (or photograph, or animation) with a third dimension, multiplying the aggressive visual access that constituted the promise, the appeal (and the threat) of these media. Another trope, the tightly juxtaposed faces of warriors or sumo wrestlers, gave a sense of dynamic tension to static woodblock prints, conveying the sense that a still image might explode into motion. A century later, anime directors trying to generate the maximum sense of energy with the minimum number of drawings use similar scenes and a similar rhythm of movement and stillness to create the same kind of dynamic tension.

What Makes This Popular Culture Japanese?
These themes of voyeurism and violent action are certainly familiar in Western popular culture too, so here we might shift focus yet again, from the process of making and the source of popularity to a new question of cultural and national borders: what makes these artworks specifically Japanese? The answer is not always straightforward. Many works in the show are produced by artists outside Japan, including fans who adopt and adapt Japanese cultural products in a process that is equal parts exoticizing and intimate, fashion and self-fashioning. The cosplay costumes in the show were created by U.S. fans based on characters in Japanese manga or comics, including one manga set in Victorian London. As **Diana Tolin** describes in her essay, these costumes were then worn at the World Cosplay Summit in competition with teams from Japan and around the world, making the cultural origins (and destinations) of these creations intriguingly complex.

Just past the costumes in the main gallery, we come to one of *Repro Japan*'s most layered examples of cultural crossing and remixing—a Lolita dress commissioned from Argentine fashion designer Triana Martinez Dufour. Lolita is a Japanese fashion subculture that draws on European Baroque style to produce a look something like a Western china doll. (Even its name has a complex genealogy: a borrowed English literary trope associated with the objectification of young women, it has been reappropriated by Japanese women for a subcultural style associated

with personal choice and reinvention.) This appropriation of Western style is a subculture that originated in Japan, but one that has been adopted and interpreted by subcultural fashion designers around the world. Dufour's Wa Lolita dress is a Lolita variant that layers kimono design elements back over the Japanese Victorian aesthetic. Executed in fabric printed with woodblock and stencil designs drawn from other works in the gallery, it links together many of the different periods, cultures, styles, and media featured in the exhibit.

Animation cel from a *Fighting Spirit* series
Date unknown

Utagawa Kunisada
Sumo Match between Shiranui Mitsuemon and Jimmaku Hisagoro
1859

Yasmin Saaka (pen name Sakai Minami)
Detail from *Ren'ai Funare Joshi no LOVE GAME*
2018

Is It Popular Culture That Makes Japan?
Global activities like cosplay and subcultural fashion make clear that while we might be tempted to think of Japanese culture as something monolithic that is "made in Japan," in a real sense it is multiple and global. As fans around the world consume and produce Japanese popular visual culture, they are creating their own images of Japan. And as Japan sees itself reflected in the mirror of global art culture, global museum culture, and global fan culture, its image of itself may change as well. Whereas we started by asking how Japan makes popular culture, it is also interesting and important to consider how popular culture constructs our notions of and about Japan.

A complex example of this dynamic is the cosplay photography in the final part of the exhibit. Photographic documentation is an inherent part of cosplay culture, but depending on the photographer, the costume, and the model, the photos may be images of Japanese culture; images of a fictional world only glancingly related to Japan; images of fandom as its own unique subculture; or self-reflexive inquiries into the processes of image making and cultural construction themselves. The curator for this part of the exhibit is photographer and critic **Eron Rauch**, who teases apart these layers in a provocative essay on cosplay photography and the photographic arts, taking up these categories and simultaneously taking them apart.

Iwata Sentarō
Cool Breeze
1976

Making *Repro Japan*

The range and reach of Japanese popular
visual culture, and the multiplicity of
its creative and critical practices, are
expressed not only in the wide array of
media featured in *Repro Japan*, but also in
the variety of institutions and individuals
that contributed work for the show: eight
different museums and over a dozen
individual artists. It is also evident in the
diversity of the exhibition's curatorial team,
which includes graduate and undergraduate
researchers as well as professional curators
and critics. Lisa Dorin and I had the privilege
of supervising this group, each member
of which has their own uniquely creative
relationship to the material. This emerges
clearly in their essays for this publication,
each with its own voice and approach, but
all interconnecting in interesting ways.

     The final essay by exhibition
designer **David Gürçay-Morris** describes
how the gallery layout is intended to
recognize this diversity and interconnection:
inspired by the sequential structure of a
manga or comic book, Gürçay-Morris's
design highlights one set of works at a
time, but encourages visual and conceptual
connections that can be glimpsed across
the gallery through strategic gaps between
panels and walls.

     As you view each part of the
show and read each of the essays that
follow, I invite you to take over the critical
process the curators have begun: to read
our interpretations but to draw your own
conclusions; to see the links the exhibition
makes between different works, but also
make new connections of your own; to learn
something about Japan through its popular
visual culture, but also to consider and
reconsider how popular culture informs
our understanding of Japan.

Textiles and Fabric Stencils

by Panalee Maskati '20
and Christopher Bolton

While its origins go back more than five hundred years, the practice of stencil dyeing textiles expanded dramatically in the Edo period (1603–1868) to become a central fixture of Japanese material culture.

Stencils wed function and beauty: these material units of analog printing were also masterfully crafted art objects in and of themselves. The term for textile stencils (*katagami*) translates as "pattern paper," and the dyeing method (*katazome*) to "pattern dyeing." As the emphasis on patterns indicates, the principal function of stenciling is reproducibility. The stencils are made from layers of mulberry paper, the delicate paper latices often supported with a grid of silk threads. A dye-resistant paste made from rice flour was applied to fabric through the stencil to create areas that would remain undyed. Stencils could be

used to produce new kinds of designs, but also to simulate patterns produced by much more expensive, time-intensive dyeing techniques, so that that these patterns could be mass manufactured by and for a new fashion-conscious urban merchant class.

In this way, the technology of fabric stencils resembles the woodblock printing technology being used to mass produce artwork for the same audience, and popular fashions were an important subject for these prints. *Repro Japan* traces the connection between these two media by juxtaposing Edo-period stencils with woodblock prints that feature the same textile designs. These parallels show a love of pattern common to both media: the prints capitalize on the geometric quality of these designs, portraying printed fabric garments but also carrying textile designs into other objects and even the backgrounds.

Consider Itō Shinsui's twentieth-century print *Woman in a Chignon* (1924). The subject wears a kimono with a traditional *igeta* pattern created using the *kasuri* technique, where individual threads are dyed before weaving. She also has a hair ornament with a *shiborizome* or tie-dyed design, created by meticulously wrapping tiny areas of the fabric by hand. The *igeta* and *shiborizome* stencils in the exhibit simulate the look of these more expensive techniques, making an elite style available for mercantile consumption. Itō's artwork makes the fashion consumable in a different way, allowing its depiction, reproduction, and circulation as a print.

When Japan's self-isolation ended at the close of the Edo period, Japanese stencils, textiles, and prints flooded Europe, and the aesthetics of Edo-era popular culture permeated Western art. At the same time, Western technology and aesthetics influenced Japanese arts in profound ways. Itō's print seems to float somewhere between the twentieth century and the nineteenth. Its draftsmanship and exquisite detail borrow from Edo woodblock techniques and compositions but also
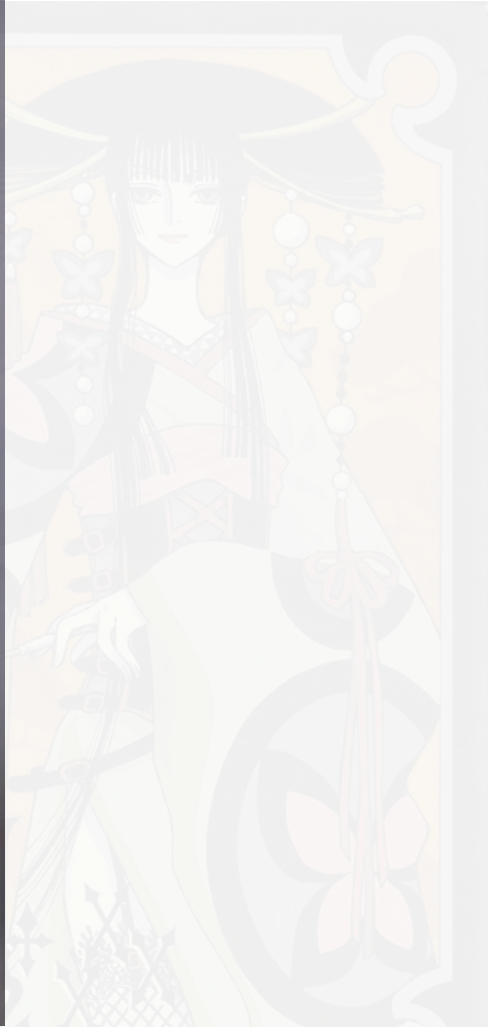
update them. Its subject seems intended to be a twentieth-century woman wearing a traditional, Edo-period design; but she might also be interpreted as a beauty from the Edo era portrayed in a more contemporary style.

As these complex interchanges across time and place suggest, we should be wary of essentializing Japanese cultural production by circumscribing all Japanese art and culture within the temporal and cultural tableau of the Edo period. Instead, the comparisons in *Repro Japan* turn toward the places where Japan's cultural landscape folds over itself, where certain motifs and formal elements resurface, transmute, and are recomposed upon the dynamic terrain that lies within certain horizons—the horizons of the idiom we call "Japanese."

CLAMP
xxxHolic
2008

Cosplay

by Diana Tolin, World Cosplay Summit Alumna and Coordinator

Cosplay—the word itself is a kind of reverse import, a Japanese term derived from the English "costume play"—is the practice of dressing up as characters from popular culture, particularly at fan conventions and events devoted to these media. As American comics, Japanese anime and manga, and video games have gained mainstream popularity over the last thirty years, cosplay has grown from a subculture within a subculture into a widespread phenomenon. While many cosplayers and costumers enjoy just wearing these costumes, attending events, and taking photos, there is another stream, competitive cosplay, where people compete in contests of craftsmanship and performance.

At the pinnacle of these competitions is the World Cosplay Summit held annually in Nagoya, Japan. WCS started in 2003 as an invitational cultural event with four countries attending. In 2019, forty countries across six continents sent teams of two representatives each to determine who has the best craftsmanship and performances in the world. As the archivist and curator of the World Cosplay Summit USA Alumni Retrospective, it is my pleasure to share two examples from the competition for this exhibit.

The costumes displayed represented the United States in 2011 and 2017: Alexandra Weber's Ichihara Yūko costume, based on a character from *xxxHolic*, and Megan Tubridy's Ciel Phantomhive costume drawn from *Black Butler*. The two look very different, but both show the combination of Japanese and Western influences that characterizes the anime and manga from which they are drawn. Yūko has a traditional kimono with a bold motif that recalls the printed patterns from the first part of the exhibit, but combined with an art deco sensibility we can see in the style of the original manga—all topped by a Western buckle and lace-up bodice. Ciel features Victorian elements in the style of Gothic Lolita, a stream of subcultural Japanese street fashion that playfully reinterprets 18th- and 19th-century European clothing. (For another example of Lolita fashion, see the Wa Lolita dress designed by Triana Martinez Dufour, at the center of the exhibit.) These pieces beautifully showcase how current Japanese popular culture draws from traditional roots while incorporating and re-imagining Western influences, and also how pop culture itself is taken up and reinterpreted by fans in other cultures around the world.

Early Photography

by Wei (Maggie) Wu, MA '19

In the nineteenth century, colonialist expansion and early forms of globalization initiated by European countries and America forced other nations to connect with the West. Newly accessible countries like Japan inspired wide interest, and touristic photographic albums—celebrated for their supposed accuracy and vividness—became popular commercial goods. The traveling photographer emerged as a profession.

A British subject born in Italy in 1832, Felice Beato was a well-traveled commercial photographer whose itinerary included India, China, and Egypt. In 1863 he opened a commercial studio in the treaty port of Yokohama, Japan, selling tourist photographs and albums primarily to foreign customers. Beato influenced a generation of photographers working in Japan, including the Japanese photographer Kusakabe Kimbei. This exhibit features work from Beato's *Views of Japan*, the first commercial photo album of Japan, as well as later works linked to Kimbei's studio.

Views of Japan was published in 1868, the same year that the Edo period ended and the Meiji Restoration jumpstarted Japan's total modernization, i.e. Westernization. But while Beato worked at a time when Japan was undergoing these transformations, under his camera

the country showed no sign of domestic turbulence or foreign influence. Borrowing from Edo-period popular media like woodblock prints, Beato constructed his own imaginary Japan unaffected by time.

This essentialist view of a culture is problematic, and many scholars have argued that Beato's lens perpetuates a colonial bias.[1] We could make an ethical judgment of Beato's work and cast it aside as representing an outdated ideology, but there is in fact a visible and material presence there that questions Beato's colonialist agenda. As though the photographs were not meaningful enough by themselves, Beato had them hand-colored. This choice was hardly radical at the time. When photography was first invented in 1839, its inability to render color was disappointing to many. As an obvious solution, hand-coloring appeared as early as 1840 and enjoyed immediate public success.[2] By the 1860s, when Beato started working in Japan, European hand-colorists were using powdered watercolor pigments with a high level of translucency, pigments made specifically for their trade. Yet Beato was not satisfied with any available method, and he hired Japanese artists to use Japanese ink, a material

never applied to photographs before. The Japanese pigment contributed a distinctive visual effect, which combined with the Japanese models and subjects to create an even stronger sense of a "Japanese reality."

But Beato's efforts might have gone too far for the purposes of realism. In *Woman Using Cosmetic*, the blue pigment on the porcelain teapot in the lower-right corner disrupts the fading vignette effect, distracting the viewer from being immersed in a voyeuristic fantasy. In the foreground, primary colors pop out from the tray instead of blending into a subtle poetic atmosphere. Their opacity makes it impossible to discern what these blobs of blue, yellow, red, and green represent. This is because the Japanese ink was applied wet, and as water diffused from the center, it carried the pigment and occasionally exceeded the boundary delineated by the underlying photograph, creating a small halo that looks almost like a stain.

If Beato's colonialist perspective, which assumes non-Western culture to be frozen in time, saw a Japanese past fixed for his appropriation, the Japanese ink proves its mobility and resilience as it refuses to be contained in a designated spot or fulfill its assigned task of enhancing a poetic effect. Its presence almost invites one to scratch the paper to see if it can be removed. That desire to touch the photograph immediately turns it from a distant dream to an immediate fact, something which can no longer serve as a transparent portal into another world. Instead of sustaining the illusion of reality, the colors reveal the artificial and superficial process of construction.

In Japanese woodblock prints, it was an accepted practice to apply colors independently of reality or the intended design of the artist. For instance, both editions of Utagawa Hiroshige I's *Night View of Saruwaka-machi* (1856, 1892) depict people wearing only the color blue, which not only made printing easier but which also creates a unified pictorial effect. When the 1892 edition omits the warm yellow light and dark blue sky and recolors the black

building white, it makes the atmosphere look cooler and almost seems to depict a midday scene. This independence of Japanese color thus competes with Beato's intention and challenges the colonialist desire to document, to know, and thereby to control. It is by interrogating their agency as material artworks that we transform these nineteenth-century photographs from deficient documentary by a British photographer to creative, even interventional art by the Japanese artists he hired.

[1] Eleanor M. Hight, "The Many Lives of Beato's 'Beauties,'" in *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, ed. Eleanor Hight and Gary Sampson (New York: Routledge, 2002), 126–158. See also Anne Lacoste, *Felice Beato: A Photographer on the Eastern Road* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), 19.

[2] Alice Swan, "Coloriage des Epreuves: French Methods and Materials for Coloring Daguerreotypes," Appendix II in *French Daguerreotypes*, by Janet E. Buerger (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 150. Swan describes the gilding treatment developed to make silver-mercury particles hard enough to be layered on with a brush.

A Cosplay Photography De-Primer
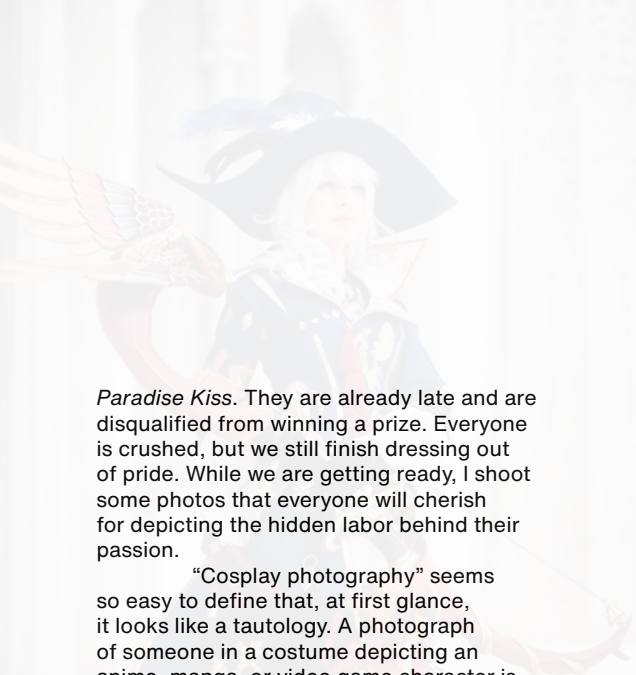
by Eron Rauch, Artist and Critic

I'm removing my pants in a hotel room while a crying stranger works a sewing machine next to me. My hair is sprayed bright blue. A woman stuffs her bra on the bed while a man with his hair under pantyhose lies on the divan doing elaborate makeup. I take a photo, which ends up in an expensive frame in a gallery exhibition 2,000 miles away.

Let me start again.

I am at Anime Central, a fan convention in a suburban mega-hotel outside Chicago. An old friend from my anime club grabs me as an emergency substitute to join their group cosplaying as characters from

Paradise Kiss. They are already late and are disqualified from winning a prize. Everyone is crushed, but we still finish dressing out of pride. While we are getting ready, I shoot some photos that everyone will cherish for depicting the hidden labor behind their passion.

"Cosplay photography" seems so easy to define that, at first glance, it looks like a tautology. A photograph of someone in a costume depicting an anime, manga, or video game character is a cosplay photograph. Case closed. But under scrutiny, a single "simple" photo fractures into shards that reflect different modes of making and different cultural contexts. Reading a cosplay photograph means following all the numerous strands that connect it to other nodes in its wider communication network.

For example, is a photo of someone in a punk outfit a cosplay photograph? What about a photo of the same person dressed as the infamous punk, Sid Vicious? What if they were wearing a recreation of the outfit Gary Oldman wore to portray Sid Vicious in the movie *Sid and Nancy*? Where, precisely, is the delineation between that and a photo of someone dressed as Nagase Arashi, the Japanese fashion-student character who features in *Paradise Kiss*, whose outfit and look are a paean to Vivienne Westwood and that same historical punk aesthetic?

These questions investigate only a single photograph and its subject. But as art critic Taco Hidde Bakker points out in *The Photograph That Took the Place of the Mountain*, photography is but one part of a broader system of imaging and reproduction technologies, including those featured throughout this exhibit, and as

such always has to be read in a context of its production and circulation.[1] For an example of how these subtle complexities influence our reading of an image, let's take two photographs, one by Joseph Chi Lin and another by Elena Dorfman, that seem materially similar at a first glance but are functionally and affectively quite different.

Joseph Chi Lin is a professional photographer whose photographs of cosplay are colorful and clear, with the subject framed to be seen. Lin has deep connections to the cosplay world, and this type of image circulates primarily amongst cosplayers and fans. Lin's use of wrapping natural light, subtle camera techniques, and naturalistic backgrounds collaborate with the cosplayer's performance. Together they craft a fictional world for the character depicted and simultaneously showcase the workmanship of the costume itself.

Elena Dorfman is also a professional photographer, and her image in the exhibit is richly colored, clearly rendered, and framed to emphasize the cosplayer. Her work is displayed in a fine art gallery context, with her other projects ranging from a series of rock quarry landscapes to portraits of men who have relationships with realistic sex dolls. In

Dorfman's photographs, the cosplay subject is isolated on a dark backdrop, strobes cast sharp light from the sides, and the poses are restrained. These photographs are not building fictional worlds with the cosplayer (like Lin's images), but instead leverage similar photographic technologies and techniques to introduce dissonance between character and cosplayer, drawing attention to details that highlight the abject boundary between reality and fiction.

Frequently the context for photographs, especially photographs of cosplay, involves multilayered cultural exchanges. Wei (Maggie) Wu's essay on nineteenth-century touristic photography elsewhere in this publication describes how Japanese subjects, often women, were captured in images by foreign male photographers. It is hard to talk about cosplay photography without touching on these same complexities: the cross-cultural gazes and subject positions (often Orientalist and gendered) inherited in

this genre of image-making. But as Henry Jenkins has discussed in his classic essay, "*Star Trek* Rerun, Reread, Rewritten," fandoms are also capable of queering and critiquing the traditions they engage and play with.[2]

Japanese conceptual photographer Morimura Yasumasa has built his oeuvre on reversing and relinking flows of Western-centric valuation and gaze by inhabiting characters depicted in canonical Western artworks. In *Daughter of Art History (Princess A)* (1990) he has isolated a single child from Diego Velázquez's visually and rhetorically dazzling *Las Meninas* (1656). Velázquez's painting is, itself, a reflection on the role of the artist in crafting history and identity, with clothing leveraged as one of the markers of the subject's cultural status. Whether we know the subject of the Morimura reperformance as Princess Margarita, "The Infanta," or the anime-character-sounding "Princess A," the clothing and the stylization of oil painting suggest

to us that this is someone noble, important, history-worthy. By aggressively cropping in, Morimura's restaging radically foregrounds the way that, even more than three hundred years later, both the specific clothing and artistic style are still serviceable as markers of identity and valuation. Yet, the restaging refuses to settle on an erasure of Morimura, stranding us in an uneasy vantage where we have to grapple with the representational tropes that construe certain people and art as historically valuable and certain people and art as "other."

These questions of cultural exchange and gaze are not academic by any means. Returning to our question of what is or isn't a cosplay photograph, how does it affect our decision and subsequent reading if the hypothetical dressed-up Sid Vicious subject is identified as Japanese or as British? In Tokyo or just outside

Chicago? If he (or she) is photographed on the street or at an anime convention? What if it is an image of Arashi (the punk character from *Paradise Kiss*) cosplaying as Sid Vicious?

Whichever of these images we identify as "cosplay photography," all of their multilayered visual performances and contexts resonate through the vast structure of visual communication attached to cosplay photography. This includes our role as viewers. Whether your hair is sprayed blue, whether you hold a worn camera, whether you are looking at images of cosplayers in a museum or on your phone, cosplay photography— maybe "cosplay photographies" is a better term—destabilizes our usual perspectives, letting us glimpse our active, intertwined relationships with the images that haunt our media-saturated lives.

Yasumasa Morimura
Daughter of Art History (Princess A)
1990

[1] Taco Hidde Baker, *The Photograph That Took the Place of the Mountain: Essays and Other Writings on Photography and Art* (Amsterdam: Fw:Books, 2018).

[2] Henry Jenkins, "*Star Trek* Rerun, Reread, Rewritten: Fan Writing as Textual Poaching," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 5, no. 2 (1988): 85–107.

Exhibition Design

by David Gürçay-Morris, Professor of Theatre, Williams College

David Gürçay-Morris
Gallery Design for *Repro Japan: Technologies of Popular Visual Culture*
2021

Comics scholars in Japan and America speak about the importance of "the gutter"—the blank space between two panels in a manga or comic book; and "closure"—our ability to perceive a whole from an incomplete collection of parts. In *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud writes:

> Despite its unceremonious title, the gutter plays host to much of the magic and mystery that are at the very heart of comics! Here in the limbo of the gutter, human imagination takes two separate

images and transforms them into a single idea....Comics panels fracture both time and space, offering a jagged, staccato rhythm of unconnected moments. But closure allows us to connect these moments and mentally construct a continuous, unified reality.

I thought a lot about the gutter when designing *Repro Japan*'s gallery space, which is divided into different areas and panels that foreground one set of works at a time, but with spaces piercing the walls to fleetingly reveal other parts of the

exhibition. I was drawn to this design both because I am an avid fan of manga, anime, and Japanese video games, and because it is such an apt description of what I love most about these artistic media. Each depends upon the viewer's participation in the completion of the artwork, whether through the phenomenon of closure when reading a manga; the optical illusions known as "persistence of vision" and "beta movement" that contribute to our seeing rapidly changing still images as the smooth, continuous action of animation; or the necessity of player action and choice to the narrative of a video game. In other words, they all situate a gap or gutter at their center, as does the exhibition design itself.

As a designer for both theater and museums, my task is to arrange "things" (artworks, walls, actors, scenery) in space (theaters, galleries) experienced over time (acts of a play, the time spent traversing a room or reading a page of manga). You, the visitor, follow a sequence of works that is then interrupted—seemingly by happenstance?—by a glimpse through a gap in the wall of an object on the other side of the room. Your awareness of the accident of this visual adjacency draws you into the moment, granting you ownership of it: "*I* saw this, *I* happened to notice." The boundedness of the gap, its artificiality and intentionality, might subconsciously encourage you to speculate about what that juxtaposition could mean; "I must be on to something; that gap was there for a reason. Someone *wanted* me to see." It is important that the design not only provide multiple routes through the exhibition, but also create opportunities for inferring connections between the artworks—and telling a story about the making of Japanese pop culture—which the curators had not imagined. Each of us is simultaneously the detective piecing together clues and the writer of the detective story.

[1] Natsume Fusanosuke, "Komatopia," in *Mechademia 3: Limits of the Human*, ed. Frenchy Lunning (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 65–72.

[2] Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: William Morrow, 1993), 66–67.

Images List

Cover:
Nishimura Satoshi (b. Japan, 1964) and Shimazaki Nanako, directors
Animation cel for *Fighting Spirit* TV series, Episode 13
2000
Paint and toner on acetate
Museum purchase, Williams College Museum of Art
A.69.12.4

Utagawa Kunisada
b. Edo (present-day Tokyo), Japan 1786
d. Edo (present-day Tokyo), Japan 1865
Sumo Match between Shiranui Mitsuemon and Jimmaku Hisagoro
1859
Woodblock print
Museum purchase, Williams College Museum of Art

Inside Cover:
Eron Rauch
b. Los Angeles, California, United States, 1981
Centered Single Woman, Sci-Fi
from *The Neo-Japonisme Project*
2012
Collaged magazine images
Courtesy of Eron Rauch

Pg 2:
Kawase Hasui
b. Tokyo, Japan 1883
d. Tokyo, Japan 1957
Spring Evening at Kintai Bridge
1947 design. Edition from 1947–57
Woodblock print
Museum purchase, Williams College Museum of Art

Pg 3:
top:
Kusakabe Kimbei
b. Kōfu, Kai (present-day Yamanashi), Japan 1841
d. Ashiya, Hyōgo, Japan 1934
View of Kintai Bashi Bridge at Iwakuni
Late 19th century
Albumin aquatint
Museum purchase, Williams College Museum of Art

bottom:
Utagawa Hiroshige II
b. Edo (present-day Tokyo), Japan 1826
d. Yokohama, Japan 1869
Kintai Bridge at Iwakuni in Suo Province
from the series *One Hundred Famous Views in the Various Provinces*
1859
Woodblock print
Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Gift of the Friends
of Arthur B. Duel
1933.4.250
Photo: © President and Fellows of Harvard College

Pg 4:
Maker(s) not known to WCMA, after Kitagawa Utamaro
from the series *Seven Women Applying Make-up Using a Mirror*
20th-century[?] reprint of 1792–93 design
Woodblock print
Museum purchase, Williams College Museum of Art

Pg 5:
Okajima Kunitoshi, director
Animation cel from *Sakura Diaries* OVA

1997
Paint and toner on acetate. (Background reproduced by WCMA)
Museum purchase, Williams College Museum of Art

Pg 6:
top:
Maker(s) not known to WCMA
Animation cel from a *Fighting Spirit* series
Date unknown
Paint and toner on acetate
Museum purchase, Williams College Museum of Art

bottom:
Utagawa Kunisada
b. Edo (present-day Tokyo), Japan 1786
d. Edo (present-day Tokyo), Japan 1865
Sumo Match between Shiranui Mitsuemon and Jimmaku Hisagoro
1859
Woodblock print triptych
Museum purchase, Williams College Museum of Art

Pg 7:
Yasmin Saaka (pen name Sakai Minami)
b.1987, Oberlin, Ohio, United States
Detail from *Ren'ai Funare Joshi no LOVE GAME*
2018
Manga
Courtesy of Yasmin Saaka '09

Pg 8:
Iwata Sentarō
b. Tokyo, Japan 1901
d. 1974
Cool Breeze
1976
Woodblock print
Museum purchase, Williams College Museum of Art

Pg 9:
top:
Maker(s) not known to WCMA
Mie prefecture, Japan
Fabric stencil with *kasuri* (ikat dyed) well curb pattern
19th century
Astringent treated paper
MAK–Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, OR 3925 818
Photo: © MAK/Georg Mayer

right:
Itō Shinsui
b. Tokyo, Japan, 1898
d. Tokyo, Japan, 1972
Woman in a Chignon
1924
Woodblock print
Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Libertson
2011.236.3

Pg 10:
Maker(s) not known to WCMA
Akita region, Japan
Nishinomai Bon Odori Costume
Late Edo period (early to mid-19th century)
Silk crepe with stenciled designs
Museum purchase, Williams College Museum of Art

Pg 11:
Alexandra Weber
b.1985 United States
Ichihara Yūko from *xxxHolic*
2011
Cosplay costume
Courtesy of Diana Tolin and Alexandra Weber

Pg 12:
CLAMP (Ōkawa Nanase, b. Osaka, Japan, 1967; Igarashi Satsuki, b. Kyoto, Japan, 1969; Mokona, b. Kyoto, Japan, 1968; Nekoi Tsubaki, b. Kyoto, Japan, 1969)
xxxHolic
2008
Manga cover
Courtesy of Diana Tolin

Pg 14:
Felice Beato
b. Venice, Italy 1832 (naturalized British citizen)
d. Florence, Italy, 1909
Woman Using Cosmetic
from the album *Views of Japan*
1870–1879
Albumen print
Photography Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, b13951740

Pg 15:
top:
Utagawa Hiroshige I
b. Edo (present-day Tokyo), Japan 1797
d. Edo (present-day Tokyo), Japan 1858
Night View of Saruwaka-machi
from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*
1856
Woodblock print
Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Gift of the Friends of Arthur B. Duel
1933.4.154
Photo: © President and Fellows of Harvard College

bottom:
Maker(s) not known to WCMA
Untitled Street Scene
Late 19th century
Albumin aquatint mounted on double-sided album page
Museum purchase, Williams College Museum of Art

Pg 17:
left:
Elena Dorfman
b. Boston, Massachusetts, United States, 1965
Tree (*Tokyo Babylon*) from *Fandomania: Characters & Cosplay*
2007
Chromogenic print
Cosplayer: Bennett Cousins '06
Courtesy of Elena Dorfman

right:
Joseph Chi Lin
b. New York City, New York, United States, 1981
FFXIV Storyteller Bard by Malindachan (Malinda Mathis)
2019
Photograph
Courtesy of Joseph Chi Lin

Pg 19:
Eron Rauch
b. Los Angeles, California, United States, 1981
Paradise Kiss Cosplayers Preparing (Anime Central 2004, Rosemont, IL) from *Bridges of Desire*
2004
Photograph
Courtesy of Eron Rauch

Pg 20:
Yasumasa Morimura
b. Osaka, Japan, 1951
Daughter of Art History (Princess A), 1990
Color photograph, transparent medium
© Yasumasa Morimura; Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York.

Pg 21:
David Gürçay-Morris
b. Evanston, Illinois, United States, 1979
Gallery Design for *Repro Japan*
2021
Rendering of 3D model

Pg 25 and back cover:
Nishimura Satoshi (b. Japan, 1964) and Shimazaki Nanako, directors
Pencil sketch for *Fighting Spirit* TV series, Episode 13
2000
Pencil on paper
Museum purchase, Williams College Museum of Art
A.69.12.4

Curators

Christopher Bolton, Professor of Comparative and Japanese Literature, Williams College

Textile Patterns and Anime Cels:
Panalee Maskati '20

Cosplay:
Diana Tolin, World Cosplay Summit Alumna and Coordinator

Early Photography:
Wei (Maggie) Wu, MA '19

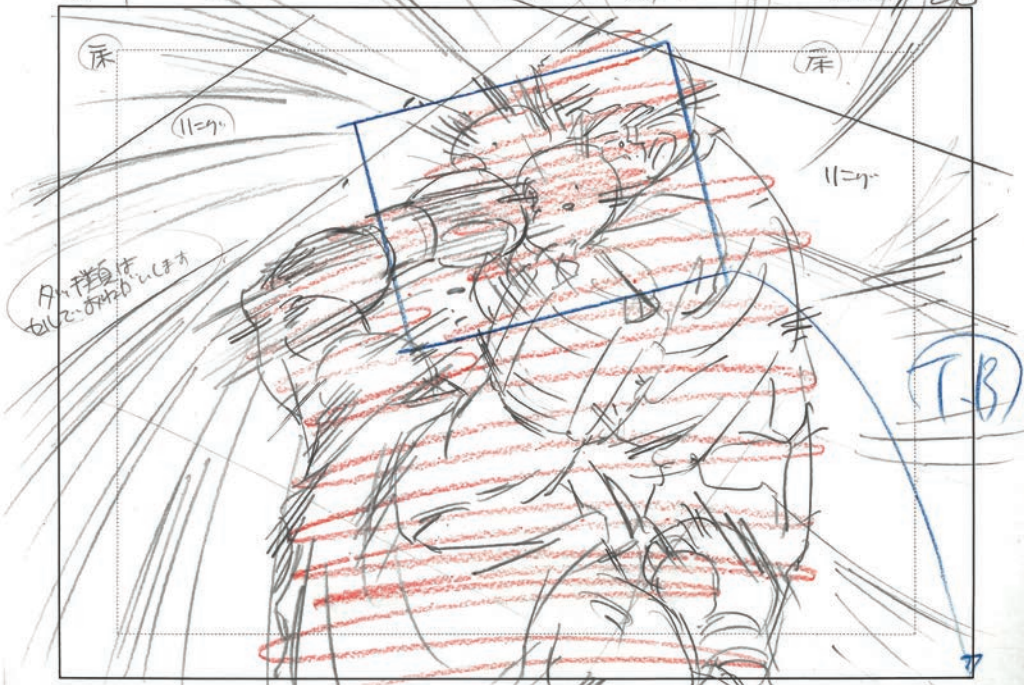Contemporary Photography:
Eron Rauch, Artist and Critic

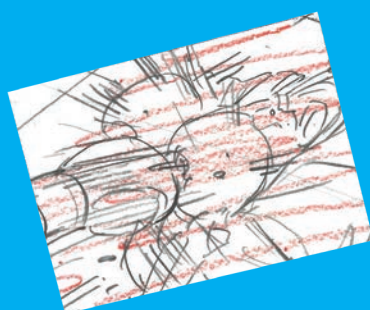Lisa Dorin, Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and Curator of Contemporary Art, WCMA

Gallery Design:
David Gürçay-Morris, Professor of Theatre, Williams College

Publication Design:
Christopher Swift

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