

A critical essay on ideas about asian aesthetics

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Asian aesthetics first surfaced in academic literature as a point of comparison for Western aesthetics, it was seen as the 'other' and was used to define what is Western aesthetics by providing what is not. This attitude towards Asian aesthetics proved detrimental to understanding Asian art as they were taken out of context (e. G. Traditions, religion) and evaluated using Western standards.

But that inefficient way of examining an aspect of a different culture is now considered improper. In fact, recent studies and literature approaches Asian aesthetics as a discussion all on its own? that is, not alongside Western aesthetics and its standards. We now come down to the main purpose of this essay, which is to provide working definitions for Asian aesthetics and discuss them in depth.

The central inquiry to be solved is "What is Asian aesthetics?" with 'Asian' encompassing the South, East, and Southeast Asian countries. Aesthetics, as Engineer (1961) presented, can be divided into aesthetic experience and aesthetic object. In simple terms, aesthetic experience is for 'appreciation', as in the experience which comes from art appreciation, while aesthetic object is for the creation', as in the object perceived as having aesthetic value.

These concepts are used subsequently as the basic structure of the discussion supporting the working definitions of Asian aesthetics to be presented. The first interpretation defines Asian aesthetics as 'a philosophy of purpose and art', purpose precedes art in the definition for it is purpose which drives Asian artists to produce works of art, and, in turn,

these produced works of art serves another purpose for the prospective observer or user of the said art.

An example is the Chinese tradition of landscape painting called Shan-Shui Hui which literally translates to 'Mountain Water Painting' (figure 1), where the artist sympathizes with the atmosphere nature emanates? he feels the spirit of the environment flowing from living nature and his inner nature responds to it in Figure 3 circularity' (Marching, 1992), and from there, the painting made will serve as a material for deep thought or contemplation, completing the purpose-purpose cycle in Asian art. But what constitutes Asian art in the first place?

When one refers to Asian art, he/ she often refers to the traditional art distinctly Asian, from Figure 4 which the components/essence of Asian art are/is derived from and used in Asian-inspired modern art (I. E. In print and media). It is important to note that objects in traditional Asian art are rarely appreciated as 'art objects' in themselves as they are often appreciated for/with the purpose they serve. This claim is supported by Massed, Gonzalez, Swan, & Anisette's (2008) study which shows that Asian art is "predominantly context-inclusive" (p. 1260).

This connotes that appreciating the art of Asian origin calls for an understanding of the context in which the object is made, and is to be used; it is not possible to understand an Asian art without context? for context is a characteristic attached to the artwork itself, removing it will result in an incomplete object, which when analyzed will yield either an incomplete interpretation at the very least, or an adverse one at worst. 5 Asian art is not

fundamentally made for the sake of beauty; the purpose of the object appears to be the first consideration in most Asian artworks.

Traditional Asian art, that is "artistic form and in a traditional medium" (Guillemot, 1998), object's purpose may range from spiritual/religious, to documenting life and habits of the people, to culture conservation (I. E. Preserving traditions, etc), up to functional Figure 6 tools for daily living. Of all the purposes, spiritual/religious purpose seems to be the most prevalent in Asian art. An example of art serving a spiritual/religious is the Indian sculptures of gods and goddesses (figure 2), which permeated even the realms of painting (figure 3), dance (figure 4), and even architecture (I. E. Temples, figure 5).

The second purpose of means of reminding people of the great examples of virtue in the golden ages of the past" (Cambric, 1995). China, as an example, has records of tomb Figure 7 6 paintings which serves as documents of the ancient past (figure 6). On the other hand, art serving as culture conservation is seen on rituals and festivals, and with the tools used in them. These rituals and festivals may seem frivolous with the development of rational thinking, but nice it is part of the culture, the community still does Figure 8 them; often following all the necessary procedures Figure 9 handed down from the previous generations (e. G. He psychodrama or 16 honors ritual of Indian temples) and using classic ritual accessories (e. G. Purchasing dippier a wick of light kept/waved before the holy symbol of god, figure 7). Lastly, the practical/functional purpose, which is the most underrated purpose of all since the artisans doing them does not necessarily know the aesthetic value of what they are doing (e. G. Malone, figure 8), and so is their <https://assignbuster.com/a-critical-essay-on-ideas-about-asian-aesthetics/>

proposed consumers (I. E. Their kin in the immunity); all they know is, they use those objects daily (especially in the olden times) that the 7 handiwork is often seen as a necessity and not as an artwork to be appreciated by itself.

Second Asian aesthetic interpretation relates it to the sensitivity to the context of an art object". Marching (1992) says, "... For the Asiatic mind wonder is the beginning of a sensitivity to things, and sensitivity to things is the most comprehensive way to be in the world and to make the world be in oneself". This idea of sensitivity to things is exhibited by both the artist and the observer, especially for the Chinese Shank-Sushi-Huh (figure 1) tradition. In the artist, it is rooted in their discipline of channeling nature into their work without representing it realistically or as is.

An artist includes his/her own vision and interpretation of the subject into his/her Figure 9 work, while the observer's role is to use the produced art as a point of reflection which guides them in contemplating about the world, the cosmos, and the plane of the Divine. As Marching (1992) stated, " philosophy was, in other words, the doctrine which, thanks to reason.... Opens man's way to Heaven", and since aesthetics is the 'philosophy of art', it can be deduced that in one way or another, aesthetic experience opens a man's way to Figure 12 Heaven through the arts.

This is especially true for the highly spiritual/religious way of life the Asians have. 8 The third, and last, definition is rooted in the Asian appreciation for the beauty of the unrefined ? " Asian aesthetics is concerned with nature". It deals with respecting, being inspired by, mimicking, and embodying nature in art. One fitting example for unrefined beauty is the Japanese aesthetic of

Wabi-Sabi (means 'rustic beauty and 'desolate beauty'), which celebrates the imperfection of things (e. . Mended ceramics, figure 9).

Another example is the constant nature theme presented in Japanese paintings (figure 10) and Chinese paintings (figure 11). Asian art also uses natural medium (e. G. Rice paper, animal-hair brushes used for Chinese painting and calligraphy, figure 12). This high regard for nature arises from the spiritual/religious purpose discussed earlier in the first definition; Asians believe in the interconnectivity of things, from the Divine, to the cosmos, to the plane of man. They Divine, either in presence of things or in the absence of it (I. E. Void/nothingness). This life is also embedded in the Chinese concept of yin and yang (figure 13).

In conclusion, the combination of all the three Figure 10 definitions discussed throughout the essay substantially represents everything about Asian aesthetics? " Asian aesthetics is a philosophy of purpose and art, mainly serving to aid the artist's and observer's sensitivity to the context of the object rather than the object itself. It is concerned with the interconnectedness of all beings to the cosmos and the Divine". Notes: Aesthetics is originally a concept produced by Western philosophy. Cited from Raja Dishwasher's *Sphinxes in Indian Art and Tradition* (2009).
References Cambric, E. (1995).