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Looking into Exhibitions: Mimicry, Japonisme and Intermediality of Art

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Introduction

With the support of the Graduate School of Tsuru University, we have conducted research into the relationship between literature and art in the East and the West in the 19th and 20th centuries. To carry out this project, we visited the following museums in London: Wallace Collection; Royal Academy of Arts (exhibitions: “Summer Exhibition 2016” and “David Hockney: 82 Portraits and 1 Still-life”); National Gallery (exhibition: “Painters’ Paintings: From Freud to Van Dyck”); National Portrait Gallery (exhibitions: “William Eggleston,” “BP Portrait Award 2016,” and “Black Chronicles: Photographic Portraits 1862-1948”); Tate Britain (exhibitions: “Painting with Light: Art and Photography from the Pre-Raphaelites to the Modern Age” and “Conceptual Art in Britain 1964-1979”); Tate Modern (exhibitions: “Georgia O’Keeffe” and “Bhupen Khakhar: You Can’t Please All”); the Red House built by Philip Webb for William Morris; Natural History Museum; Victoria & Albert Museum (exhibition: “Engineering the World: Ove Arup and the Philosophy of Total Design”); Science Museum; British Museum (exhibition: “Sunken Cities: Egypt’s Lost Worlds”); Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew; Courtauld Institute of Art (exhibition: “Georgiana Houghton: Spirit Drawings”); Guildhall Art Gallery (exhibition: “Great Fire 350 Years”); and Dulwich Picture Gallery. While Nakachi focused on Japonisme in art and visited the National Gallery and Museum of Decorative Art and Design in Oslo (exhibition: “Japanomania in the North, 1875-1918”), Chen explored the art legacy of C. R. Mackintosh, who evinced much Asian influence in his architectural and furniture designs, and visted GSA (Glasgow School of Art and the Mackintosh Building), the Lighthouse, the Willow Tea Rooms, and the Mackintosh House attached to the University of Glasgow’s famous Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, which has a fine (and possibly the largest) collection of J. M. Whistler. Chen also visited Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in the vicinity of University of Glasgow. The following are the results of our cooperative project in 2016.[1]

1 “Japonisme and Imitation: Edvard Munch / Vincent Van Gogh” was wiritten by Sachi Nakachi, and “Traversing Borders: Reflections on Tate Britain’s Exhibition ‘Painting with Light’ ” was by Min Chen.

Japonisme and Imitation: Edvard Munch / Vincent Van Gogh

Japonisme is a term referring to Western fascination with Japanese art and culture from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. As soon as Japan changed its policy of isolation and opened its ports to foreign countries in 1865, Japanese woodblock prints, decorative art, and fabrics flowed into European markets and created a “boom for Japonaiserie.”[2] According to Gabriel P. Weisberg, “Japanese art had become a fashionable mania”[3] by the time of the Paris 1867 Universal Exposition. Art critics such as Edmond de Goncourt and Philippe Burty and artists such as James McNeill Whistler, Édouard Manet, Jules Jacquemart, Félix Bracquemond, Edgar Degas and James Tissot were fascinated with Japanese art and started to collect it.[4] The term “Japonisme” was coined in 1872 in a series of articles published in both French and English journals.[5]

The significance of Japonisme lies in the fact that it did not end with a mere cultural boom but had become a great influential force in Western art over much of Europe and North America. Impressionist painters such as Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Vincent Van Gogh were interested in experimenting with Japanese ukiyo-e motifs and compositions in two dimensions. James Abbott McNeill Whistler, who is considered to be one of the most important figures in Japonisme, possessed numerous Oriental paintings. It is also notable that the pre-Raphaelite artists such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, his brother, William Michael Rossetti, and Edward Burne-Jones also admired Japanese art and used Oriental imagery in their works. In their works, Oriental imagery was often connected with the Western Medieval Ages, the chivalric period that they wanted to revive in their art. Further, most of the art and design reformists in England in this period were keen collectors of Japanese art objects. Japanese influence is clear in the works by William Morris, Christopher Dresser, Thomas Jeckyll and Bruce J. Talbert.[6]

Japonisme was an extensive phenomenon. Art Nouveau as well as the Symbolist movement also derived significant inspiration from Japanese art. The French glass makers such as Emile Gallé and the Daum brothers used Japanese symbols of nature, plants and animals.[7] Japonisme is also evident in the works of the Vienna Secession. Far Eastern clothes and silks presented at the Vienna international exhibition of 1873 inspired many artists. It is said that Gustav Klimt owned a fine collection of Japanese kimonos and *Nō* costumes, and modelled his own works on Japanese woodcuts and decorated his studio with Japanese scrolls.[8] In recent

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2 Endymion Wilkinson, *Japan Versus the West: Image and Reality* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), 111.

3 Gabriel P. Weisberg, “The Japonisme Phenomenon.” *Japanomania: In the Nordic Countries, 1875-1918* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2016), 15.

4 *Ibid*.

5 *Ibid*., 21.

6 Widar Halen, “The Anglo-Japanese Style and ‘The Great Wave of Japanese Influence,’” *Japano Mania*, 39.

7 Siegfried *Witchmann, Japonisme: The Japanese Influence on Western Art Since 1858.* Trans. Mary Whittall, James Ramsay, Helen Watanabe, Cornelius Cardew, and Susan Bruni (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 10.

8 *Ibid*., 208.

years, exhibitions of Japonisme were held in Prague and Scandinavian countries and they showed that the spread of Japonisme extended to Eastern Europe and Scandinavia.[9]

Although Scandinavia is often considered a land free of Orientalist/racist conceits because of its remoteness from the center of Europe, Orientalism and Japonisme were in vogue at the turn of the 20th century.[10] Since many Nordic artists stayed in Paris and absorbed the art and culture in Europe, it is not surprising to find Nordic Japonisme. In Nordic Japonisme, Karl Madsen (1855-1938), a Danish painter, art historian and friend of Siegfried Bing, who played a significant role in the promotion of Japonisme by publishing *Le Japon artistique*,[11] was a key person. He collected many Japanese paintings. He also published a book on Japanese paintings in 1885, and it was the first book on Japanese art in a Scandinavian language.[12] Madsen's book, highlighting Japanese artists' immersion in nature, is considered to have had a great influence on Nordic Japonisme.

One of the interesting features in the "Japanomania" exhibition held in Oslo in 2016 was the discovery of the compositional influence of ukiyo-e prints on Edvard Munch. Although extensive documentation showing Nikolai Astrup's enthusiasm for Japanese woodcuts has been found, the evidence to prove Munch's interest in Japanese art is not clear. But as pioneering artists in Norwegian graphic art, both should have been exposed to Japanese art, and it is assumed that Munch came into contact with Japanese art in the 1880s.[13] Of course, even if a familiarity with Japanese art on his part can be shown to have existed, it remains hard to explain how it had an influence on his art. Yet, as Trine Nordkvelle says, Munch's *Harpy* shows a striking compositional similarity with Hiroshige's print, encouraging us to speculate about a link between Munch's works and Japanese woodcuts (Fig.1 and 2).

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9 The exhibition titled "Japonisme in Czeche art" was held in the National Galley in Prague from May 16 to September 7 in 2014. Also, "Japanomania in the North 1877-1918" was held in Finland, Norway, and Denmark from 2016 to 2017.

10 Elisabeth Oxfeldt's *Nordic Orientalism: Paris and the Cosmopolitan Imagination, 1800-1900* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2005) is a useful material to understand Nordic Orientalism.

11 Weisberg, *Japanomania*, 35.

12 Malene Wagner, "Following the Japanese Trail: Karl Madsen and Arnold Krog—Danish Aspects of Nature in Pen and Porcelain, 1885-1900," *Japanomania*, 122.

13 Trine Nordkvelle, "A Hint of Japan: Japonisme in Edvard Munch's and Nikolai Astrup's Prints," Japanomania, 206.

[Fig.1]

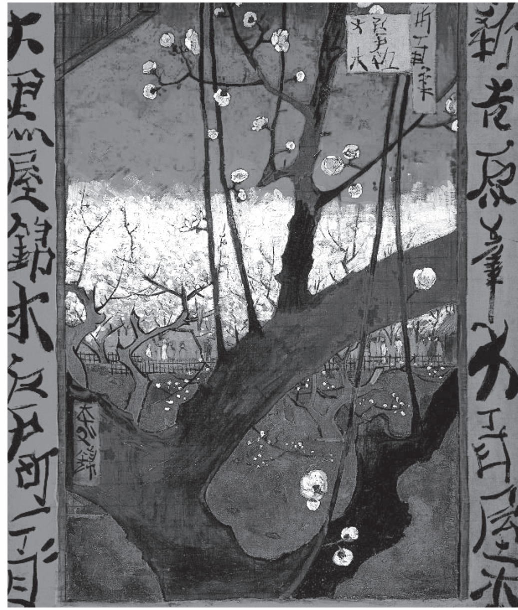
[Fig.2]

[Fig.1] Utagawa Hiroshige, *Eagle over Fukagawa* from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, 1856-58. Color woodcut. The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.
[Fig.2] Edvard Munch, *Harpy*. 1899. Lithogaph. The Munch Museum, Oslo.

The compositional likeness between Hiroshige's work and Munch's work reminds us of Vincent Van Gogh's copying of Japanese printmaking. Van Gogh's *Flowering Plum Orchard*, which was based on Utagawa Hiroshige's *The Plum Garden at Kemeido*, from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, is a famous example of the Western receptiveness to Japanese art (Fig.3 and 4). Van Gogh possessed a large number of Japanese woodcuts and tried to imitate them in his works.[14] In the case of Van Gogh, the fact that he got artistic inspiration from Japanese art is clear because he himself often mentioned his fascination with Japanese art. However, some artists did not mention their copying of Japanese art; therefore, there are possibilities that some Western artists were inspired by Japanese art and mimicked it without any acknowledgement.

14 Wichmann, 40.

[Fig.3]



[Fig.4]

[Fig.3] Utagawa Hiroshige, *The Plum Garden at Kemeido*, from the series of *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, 1857. Color woodcut. Aleneum Art Museum, Helsinki.

[Fig.4] Vincent van Gogh, *Flowering Plum Orchard* (after Hiroshige), 1887. Oil on canvas. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.

Ironically, the mid 19th century was the period when Victor Hugo and Charles Dickens started vigorous campaigns for the rights of European writers and artists.[15] In 1858 a congress entitled Literary and Artistic Property was held in Brussels and passed resolutions constituting an outline of a universal copyright law.[16] And in 1886, international copyright agreements were finally formed in the Bern convention. These agreements, however, were settled to protect the interest of European writers and artists as well as to expand "the new world market" in the United States. European artists paid attention to their own interests but not to those of others. It is possible to think that Europeans did not see Japan as a significant country during the period when the world was conceptually divided into the Old World (Europe) and the New World (America). Even in the 19th century, many Westerners still seemed to have regarded Japan as a fantasyland akin to the one represented in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Therefore, imitation of Japanese art might not have stirred any compunctions in the Western conscience.

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15 Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, "Introduction," *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (Durham: Duke UP, 1994), 10.

16 N. N. Feltes, "International Copyright: Structuring 'The Condition of Modernity' in British Publishing," *The Construction of Authorship*, 271.

The relations between artistic innovation, influence, and imitation, which formed the background of Japonisme, however, should be examined carefully, for the act of copying is not only seen in the adoption of Japanese art. To highlight this problem, it is also worthwhile to give attention to the relationship between photography and painting in the 19th century when photography was just emerging as an art form. Photography and painting have depended upon each other in the development of their own identities. Although a photograph is often treated "as a narrowly selective transparency" which "mirrors reality," "photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are."[17] Early photographers such as David Octavius Hill and Julia Margaret Cameron used the camera to obtain painterly images. In fact, paintings often served as precedents to photographs, as the recent Tate Britan's exhibition titled "Painting with Light: Art and Photography from the Pre-Raphaelites to the Modern Age" set out to demonstrate. Along with Japonisme, this also leads us to speculate upon the implications imitation has for artistic generation, meaning, and outcome.

Traversing Borders: Reflections on Tate Britain's Exhibition "Painting with Light"

From the old master Rembrandt to the pioneering modernist László Moholy-Nagy,[18] visual artists have never ceased thrilling us with their mastery of light, or rather, mimicry of the natural setting, so Tate Britain's summer show "Painting with Light: Art and Photography from the Pre-Raphaelites to the Modern Age" (11 May – 25 September 2016, London) might have caused heightened expectations for something bold and fun, rather than "cautious and academic" as art critic Alastair Sooke criticizes in his review.[19] However, in some sense, it is good news for those serious viewers, viewers who would like to approach the interplay between the canvas and the photographic print from a socio-historical perspective. Spanning over 75 years since the birth of the camera in 1837 and with nearly 200 works on display (for the first time paintings by John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, James Abbott McNeill Whistler side by side with early photographs by Julia Margaret Cameron and Alvin Langdon Coburn), this exhibition offered a compelling showcase where the engaged viewer could pick up *inter-textual* and *inter-cultural* elements alongside the intermediality between painting and photography.

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17 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Penguin,1977), 6-7.

18 The title of the exhibition is reminiscent of "László Moholy-Nagy: The Art of Light" (Berlin, 2011), presented 200-plus works by artist, from painting, photography and photograms to collages, films and graphic design.

19 Alastair Sooke, "Tate Britain's Exhibition on the Birth of Photography Needs More Flash," *The Telegraph* (9 May 2016).

Inter-Media

Curiously, the subtitle of the exhibition "Art and Photography from the Pre-Raphaelites to the Modern Age" puts photography on par with painting, covertly suggesting "dependence, rivalry, envy, [and] emulation"[20] between the two media. Although Walter Benjamin famously laments the loss of aura in a work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction,[21] he would not deny the fact that photography, etymologically, means to write or paint with light. So the two are essentially the same, with the aids of different tools. In fact, painters had been seeking measures to achieve photo-realistic effects long before the invention of the camera. David Hockney strongly speculates that the Dutch master Johannes Vermeer and many other painters from the 15th century onward relied on an optical device called *camera obscura*.[22] So it's not surprising at all that soon after the revolutionary advent of the camera, people began to paint from photographic sources. William Etty's *Self-portrait* (1844) is believed to be the first result of such a photography-painting process.

Perhaps there is no definite answer to the question of whether it's painting that unblocks its bottleneck by imitating photography or the other way around. Nevertheless, this exhibition addresses it as a two-way street. The exhibition starts with fabulous collaborations between the chemist Robert Adamson and the painter David Octavius Hill in the 1840s. The soft sepia photos of Edinburgh they produced imitated Joseph Mallord William Turner's romantic compositions from Carlton Hill. And the reverse influence seems more apparent for the Pre-Raphaelites, as John Everett Millais' friend William Bell Scott acknowledged, "the seed of the flower of Pre-Raphaelitism was photography." Photography became an intermediate that links artists – not just between photographers and painters/sculptors, but also within the painters' circle. In the exhibition, Roger Fenton was a perfect case in point. When studying painting in Paris, Fenton was influenced by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, and like Ingres, he was fascinated by life in the Near East, so in his London studio, he dressed his models in exotic costumes and used props such as Asian musical instruments and coffee pots to enhance the Oriental look. Fenton's *Nubian Water Carrier* (1858), one image of his Orientalist series, later caught the eye of Frederick Goodall, and the latter based his Orientalist fantasy painting *The Song of the Nubian Slave* (1863) on the photo. So in such visual translations or transmissions between photography and painting, the role of painter/photographer can be interchangeable. Imitation is mutual. Fenton was a painter and photographer. When his photography inspired his fellow painter to create a work of art on canvas, there must have been a certain homogeneity between the two.

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20 Jackie Wullschlager, "'Painting with Light' at Tate Britain Review," *Financial Times* (13 May 2016).

21 See Walter Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), later included in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflection* (New York: Schoken Books, 1969).

22 See David Hockney's *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of Old Masters* (London: Avery, 2006).

Sometimes, such ekphratic artistic encounters are staged and corrected. Goodall's painting *The Bow Net* (1886) is apparently based on a photo taken by Peter Emerson (Fig.5 and 6), but also different from the latter: the angle of view in the painting is higher than that in the photo, giving the viewer an omniscient sense – an angle of view that is difficult for a photographer to obtain. Equipped with an imaginary vantage point, the painting, in this case, can be seen as a kind of idealized outcome of the photo. And some can be seen as allusions, homages, or inspirational references to one another. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Proserpine* (1874) is a typical Pre-Raphaelite's *tableau* (i.e., a literary or historical subject), referring to Zeus's daughter in Greek mythology, and was later published as a photogravure in 1899, when Zaida Ben-Yusuf made her iconic photographic work *The Odor of Pomegranates* whose composition resembles that of Rossetti's painting of the same subject (Fig.7 and 8).

[Fig.5]

[Fig.6]

[Fig.5] Thomas Frederick Goodall, *The Bow Net*, 1886. Oil on canvas. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
[Fig.6] Peter Henry Emerson, *Setting the Bow-Net*, 1886. Platinum print. The Met, New York.

[Fig.7]

[Fig.8]

[Fig.7] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Proserpine*, 1874. Oil on canvas. Tate Britain, London.
[Fig.8] Zaida Ben-Yusuf, *The Odor of Pomegranates*, c. 1899. Platinum print. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

When preparing for his treatise *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853) in Venice around 1850, the English art critic John Ruskin expressed his amazement at the camera, a "noble" device capable of taking a picture "perfectly and faultlessly in half a minute," in contrast to days he would spend on a single watercolor of the same Venetian architecture.[23] This case is different from Goodall/Emerson's *Bow Net* in that the application of both media enables Ruskin to compare the details in a drawing and those in a photo for aesthetic and anthropological purposes.

Inter-"Texts"

Besides visual interactions, this exhibition also presents photographic works inspired by literary texts. As critic Richard Cork noted in his review, "the images produced by women photographers look especially impressive."[24] The pioneering photographer Julia Margaret

23 John Ruskin's "North-West Angle of St. Mark's, Venice" (both drawing and daguerreotype) was on view in the exhibition.
24 Richard Cork, "The Camera as Muse," *The Wall Street Journal* (May 31, 2016).

Cameron was one of them. Cameron was a great friend of poet Alfred Tennyson – actually their friendship was even featured in Virginia Woolf's 1923 play *Freshwater*. At Tennyson's request, Cameron once illustrated his *Idylls of the King* with photos imitating Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Displayed in this exhibition, *Call, I Follow, I Follow, Let Me Die* (Fig.9) can be seen as an epitome of this collaboration. It depicts Tennyson's dying heroine Elaine longing for the knight Lancelot:

> And in those days she made a little song,
> And called her song "The Song of Love and Death,"
> And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing.
>
> "Sweet is true love though given in vain, in vain;
> And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:
> I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.
>
> "Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
> Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
> O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.
>
> "Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
> Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
> I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.
>
> "I fain would follow love, if that could be;
> I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
> Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."[25]

Cameron's photographic *tableau* focuses on the head of Elaine (posed by the sitter Mary Hillier), showing her withdrawn facial features: head turned aside, eyes almost closed and lips slightly parted. The darkened background highlights the profile and, at the same time, obscures references to narrative, identity or historical context – which may well remind us of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix* (Fig.10), another probable source of inspiration for Cameron's photo – Cameron may have seen it when it was still a work in progress. Intended as a portrait of his wife Elizabeth Siddall, this painting was initially a visual translation of Dante Alighieri's poem *La Vita Nuova* ("Blessed Beatrice"), a story that Rossetti had long loved and

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25 Extracted from Alfred Tennyson's "Lancelot and Elaine" in *Idylls of the King* (London: Dover, 2004), 116.

then translated into English and published in *The Early Italian Poets* (1861). So, in a nutshell, what we see today in the print has actually gone through such an inter-"textual" metamorphic trajectory: poetry → painting + poetry → photography.

[Fig.9]

[Fig.10]

[Fig.9] Julia Margaret Cameron, *Call, I Follow, I Follow, Let Me Die,* 1867. Carbon print. National Media Museum, Bradford.
[Fig.10] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Beata Beatrix,* 1864-1870. Oil on canvas. Tate Britain, London.

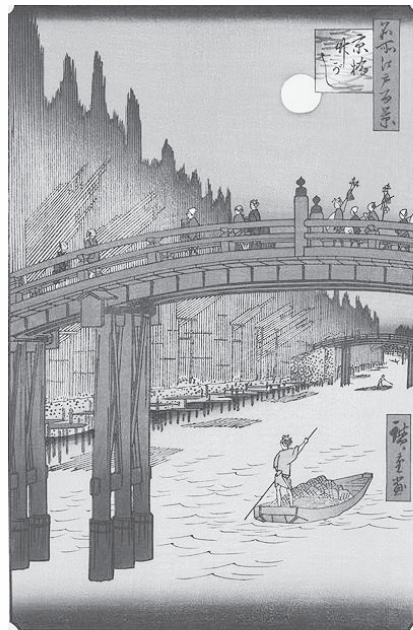
Inter-Cultures

The painting-photography interlocutory productivity is of course not confined to a singular culture. However, almost all reviewers of this exhibition have ignored Oriental influences on Western modern art. Photogravures rendered in a misty fashion, i.e., Peter Emerson's *The Bridge* (1895) and Alvin Langdon Coburn's *Nocturne, Blue and Silver: Battersea Reach* (c. 1905 or c. 1909), especially the latter, are considered as homages to James McNeill Whistler's "evil nocturnal tones" in the ethereal moonlit river views, *Nocturne: Blue and Silver — Cremorne Lights* and *Nocturne: Blue and Gold — Old Battersea Bridge*, which bid farewell to Pre-Raphaelite realism and take up a flattened silhouette form. Such treatment, in the eyes of art critic Jackie Wullschlager, owes "debts to the camera's flattening and cropping" and informs "fin-de-siècle pictorialist photography."[26] While it is possible for Whistler to adopt

26 Jackie Wullschlager, "'Painting with Light' at Tate Britain Review," *Financial Times* (13 May 2016).

a trendy photographic perspective, it is well known that the flattened forms of Japanese ukiyo-e woodblock prints, as part of the sweep of Japonisme at the time, was an important influence on Whistler’s developing style, reflected not only in the landscape paintings like “Nocturne”, but also in portraits like *Arrangement in Grey and Black No.1*, better known as *Whistler’s Mother* (1871). These masterpieces of tonality are exactly Whistler’s greatest contribution to modern art. And as a matter of fact, Coburn paid homage not just to Whistler. His photograhic portraits *Elsie ‘Toodles’ Thomas* (c. 1907-1908) show Elsie in a floral gown of a mid-19th century Chinese design. Coburn was interested in Chinese and Japanese culture, collecting historical and contemporary prints and objects d’art. It is documented that he photographed London’s Chinese quarter and “boasted that as a child he could eat with chopsticks as soon as he could hold a knife and fork.”[27] So when Coburn was determined to challenge Whistler’s paintings by virtue of the camera’s own merits, he was by extension about to challenge Hiroshige’s woodblock prints as well. To some extent, *Battersea Bridge* serves as a bridge across cultural borders and various artistic media.[28]

[Fig.11]



[Fig.12]

[Fig.11] James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne in Blue and Gold – Old Battersea Bridge,* 1872-1875. Oil on canvas. Tate Britain, London.

[Fig.12] Utagawa Hiroshige, *Bamboo Yards and Kyo Bridge (Kyobashi Takegashi)* from the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo,* 1857. Color woodcut. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.

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27 See exhibit description at this Tate Britain exhibition.

28 E.g., the abstract artist Frank Kupka (1871-1957) saw a connection between music and Whistler’s *Nocturne* paintings.

Similarly, in his painting *Three Figures: Pink and Grey* (Fig.13), Whistler intends to create atmosphere rather than narrative, focusing on the decorative features of Japanese accessories and setting. This is the only surviving canvas of six designs for the music room of Frederick Leyland. Among these interior designs in Anglo-Japanese style for the Leyland family, the Peacock Room (1876-1877) is now regarded one of the greatest surviving aesthetic interiors, which features Whistler's famous painting *The Princess from the Land of Porcelain*.

It is worth noting that also on display in the exhibition was an album of Japanese photographs collected by artist Edward Atkinson Hornel during his journey to Japan in 1893. On returning to Scotland, Hornel adopted a decorative style inspired by Japanese art.[29] The use of such flattened colorist tapestry-like forms also inspired photography, especially in terms of coloration. Photographer John Cimon Warburg demonstrated a strong interest in the decorative aspect of the photograph. By overexposing the plate, he managed to produce a paler palette (see Fig.14, *The Japanese Parasol*), mitigating the intensity of the autochrome colors, without the jarring juxtapositions of contrasting hues, typically found in Japanese ukiyo-e prints.

[Fig.13]

[Fig.14]

[Fig.13] James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Three Figures: Pink and Grey,* 1868–1878. Oil on canvas. Tate Britain, London.

[Fig.14] John Cimon Warburg, *The Japanese Parasol,* c. 1909. Autochrome print. National Media Museum, Bradford.

29 See Hornel's painting *Two Geishas* (1894).

Other parallel examples of Oriental influences include Edward Linley Sambourne's photograph *Hetty Pettigrew with a Japanese Fan* (1891) and Theodore Roussel's painting *The Reading Girl* (1886-1887). The kimono and the uncluttered asymmetrical composition in the latter reflect the artist's enthusiasm for Japanese design, encouraged by his contemporary James Abbott McNeill Whistler.

"Painting with Light," as its title suggests, is full of enlightening moments. The artistic sensibility in the veins of James Abbott McNeill Whistler, Alvin Langdon Coburn and many others presented in this grand exhibition at Tate Britain might strike as cliché on the surface, yet who could readily deny that such creative traversals between media, texts, and cultures would live on and continue to amaze and enlighten us? And like the "joltingly clear"[30] clues shown through the fuzziness in Whistler's dark *Battersea Bridge* and Warburg's quasi-color photographs, the historical worthiness of this exhibition lies exactly in its multi-faceted and multi-layered dimentionality to elucidate beauty and truth across borders.

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30 Words borrowed from the exhibition review by Matthew Collings, *Evening Standard* (10 May 2016).