Appropriations, Hip Hop, and the Edo Period: Rozeal's Crafted Worlds

A thesis submitted by

Aubrey E. Beam

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History & Museum Studies

Tufts University

May 2023

Adviser: Diana Martinez

© 2023, Aubrey E. Beam

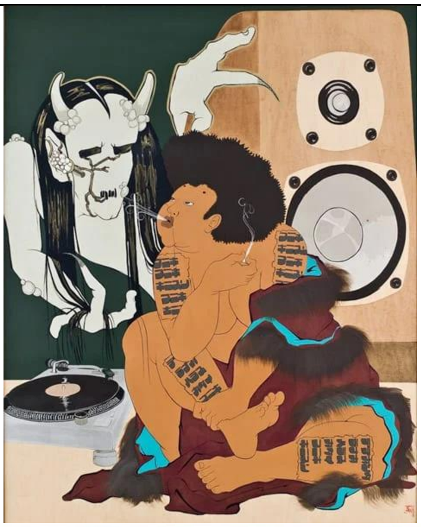
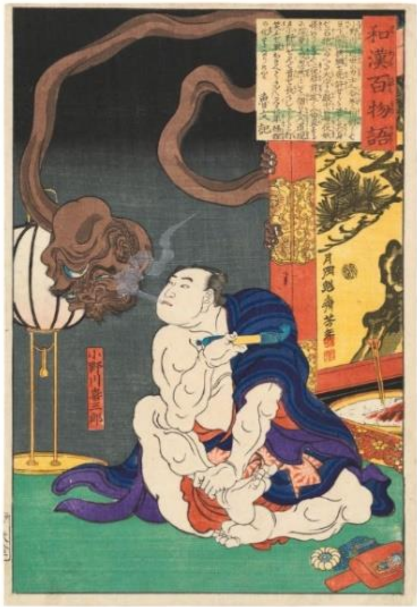
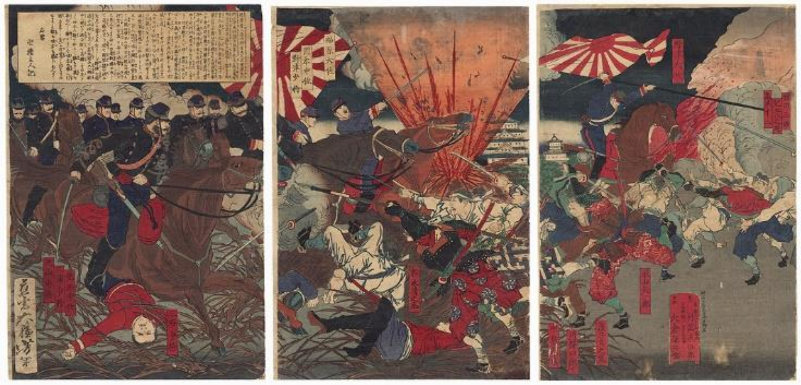
Abstract:

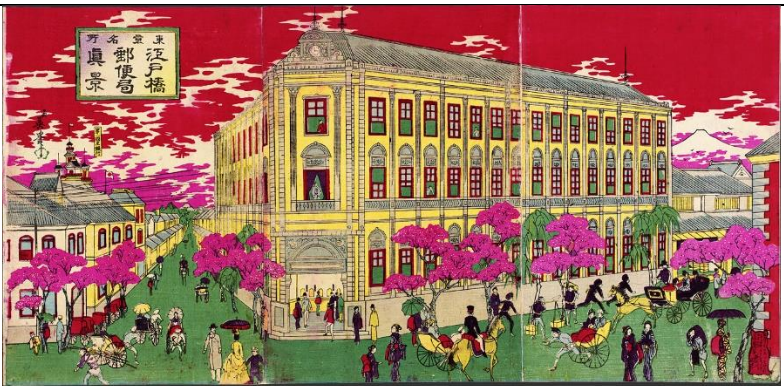
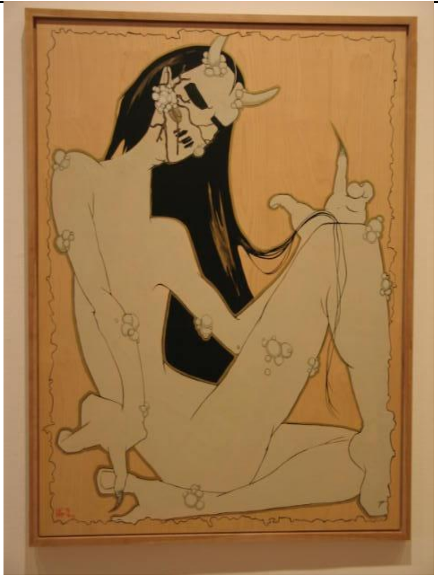
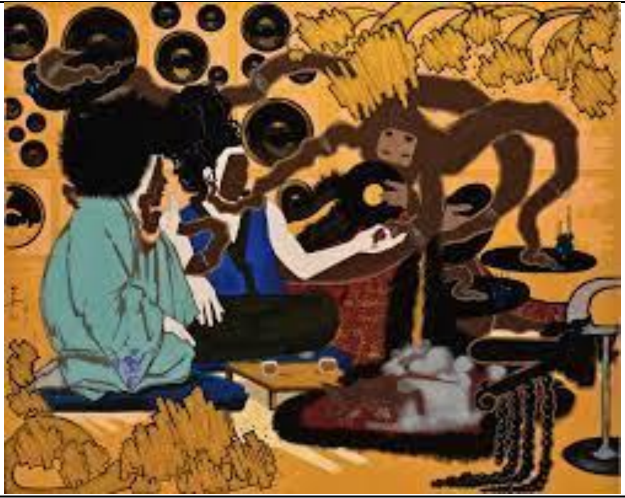
Rozeal (formally known as iona rozeal brown), a contemporary American painter, is known for her work that explores the overlaps between Japanese and Black culture. Despite the fact that there are numerous perceived differences between these two cultures, Rozeal shows that the sizeable gap separating these two groups is not as wide as one may think. Relying heavily on historical and visual analysis, this thesis explores ideas of cultural overlap, gender, and trauma as they appear in the artist's work. Each chapter covers one of Rozeal's artworks (*E.I.N. Intrusion (watch out for the big girls)* in Chapter 1, *amidst black flowers and honky tonk angels, sphynxes run amok—Millie S. Claus* in Chapter 2, and *El Oso Me Pregunto* in Chapter 3), spanning much of her career. This thesis will also provide one of the first in-depth looks into Rozeal's artistic achievements, an area of scholarship that has been understudied.

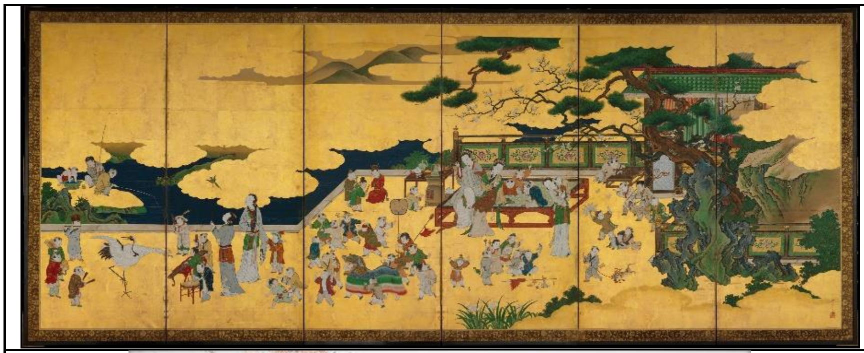
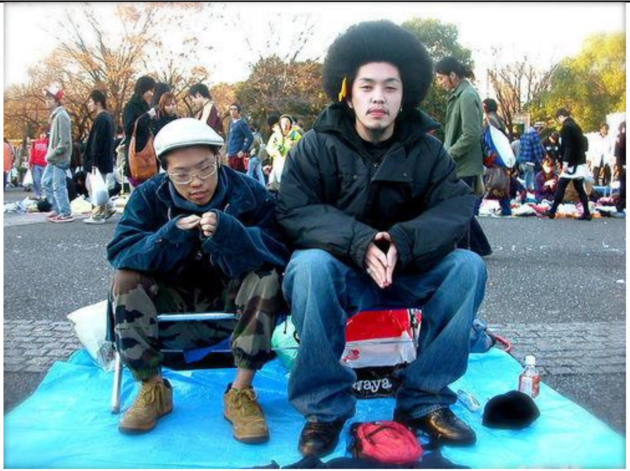
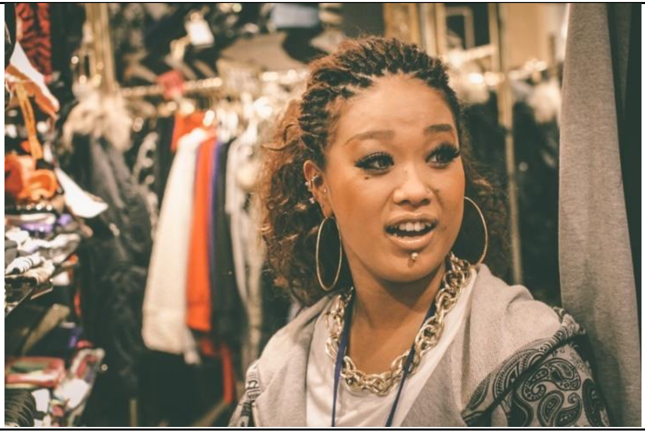
Table of Contents

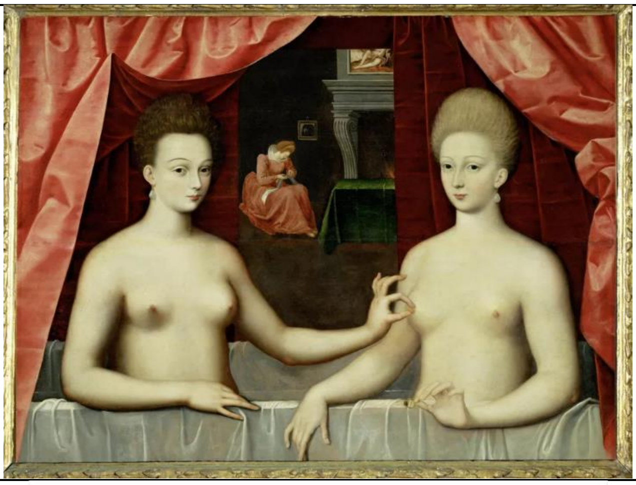
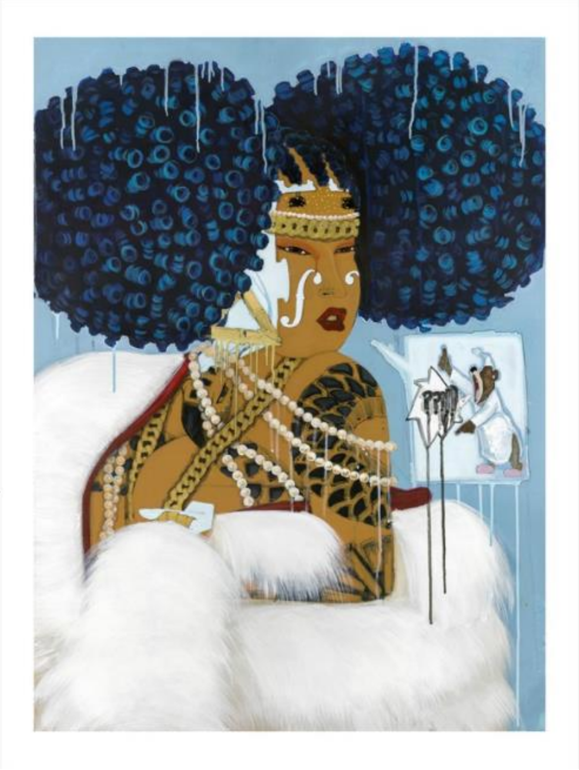
I. List of Figures
II. Introduction
III. Chapter 1: From Silks to Fur: Yoshitoshi in the 21st Century
IV. Chapter 2: Hip Hop in a Kabuki Theater: Connections Through Time
V. Chapter 3: On the Edges of Memory: References Known and Unknown
VI. Conclusion
VII. Bibliography

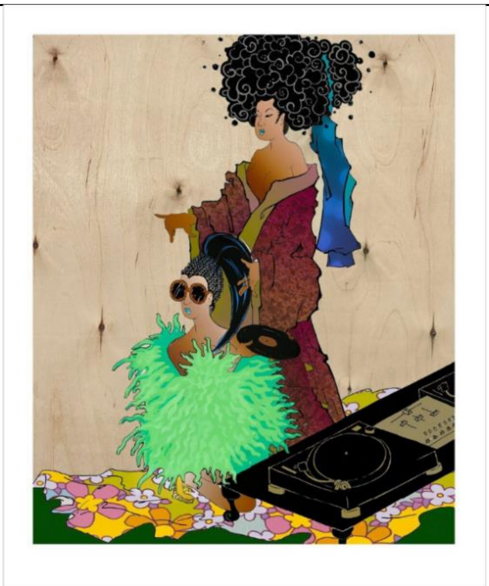
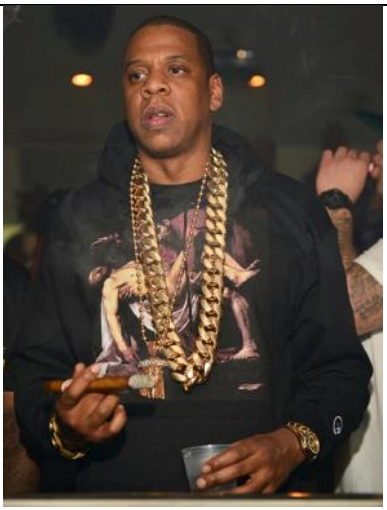
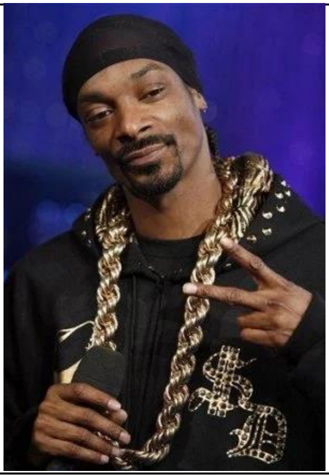
List of Figures

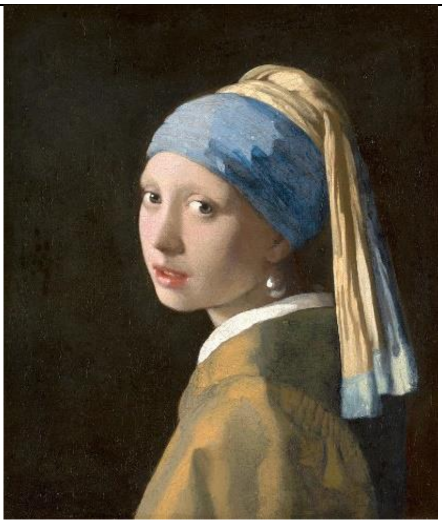
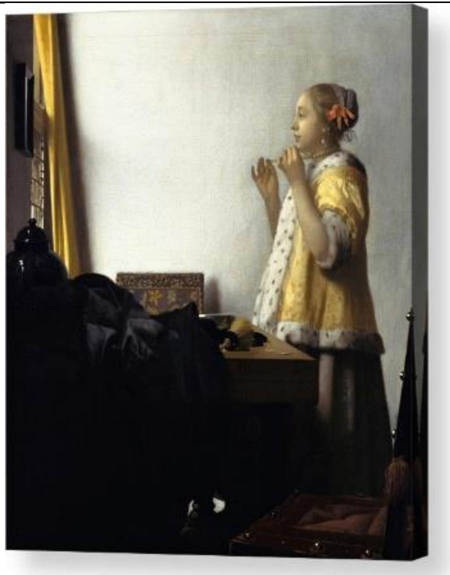
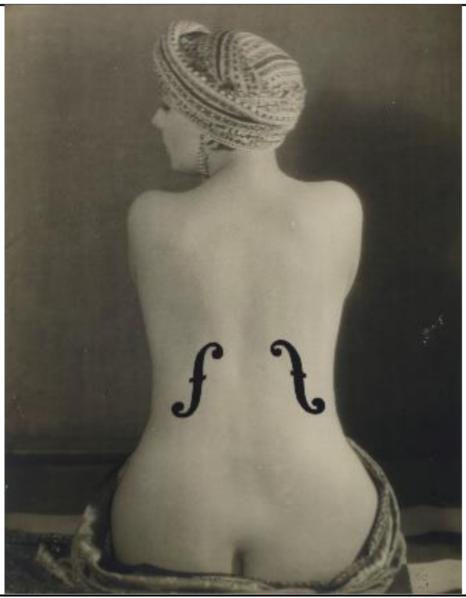
	**Figure 1:** *E.I.N. Intrusion (watch out for the big girls),* Rozeal, 2008, mixed media on framed panel
	**Figure 2:** *The Wrester Onogawa Kisaburo Blowing Smoke at a One-Eyed Monster,* Tsuioka Yoshitoshi, 1865, woodblock print
	**Figure 3:** *A Battle in the Satsuma Rebellion,* Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, 1877, color woodblock print on paper

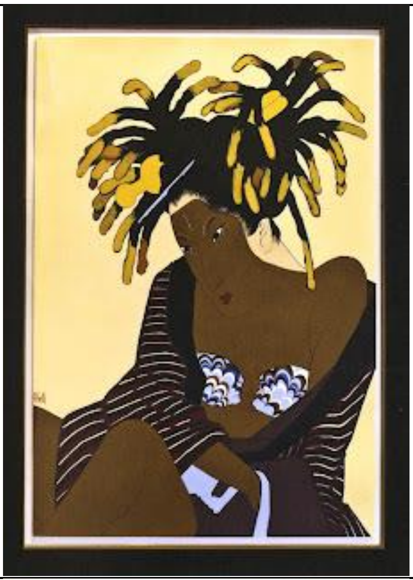
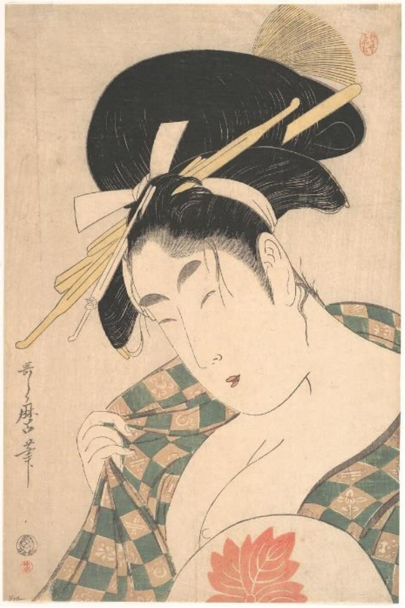
	**Figure 4:** *Famous Places in Tokyo: True View of the Post Office at Edobashi*. Kobayahi Ikuhide, 1889, Woodblock print
	**Figure 5:** *E.I.N.*,Rozeal, 2008, mixed media on framed panel
	**Figure 6:** *amidst black flowers and black honky tonk angels, sphynxes run amok—Millie S. Claus,* Rozeal, 2010, mixed media on panel

	**Figure 7:** *One Hundred Boys*, Kano Eino, 17th century, pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper
	**Figure 8:** Afro hairstyle in Japan
	**Figure 9:** Dreads in Japan

	**Figure 10:** *Gabrielle D'Estrees and One of Her Sisters, a*rtist unknown, 1954, oil paint on wood
	**Figure 11:** *El Oso Me Pregunto,* Rozeal, 2016, archival pigment print

	**Figure 12:** *…you opened my eyes man, thought i had a man, but how could i eye scan…*, Rozeal, 2008, one panel of a pigment print triptych
	**Figure 13:** Jay-Z wearing gold chains
	**Figure 14:** Snoop Dogg wearing gold chains

	**Figure 15:** *Girl with a Pearl Earring,* Johannes Vermeer, 1665, oil on canvas
	**Figure 16:** *Woman with a Pearl Necklace,* Johannes Vermeer, 1664, oil on canvas
	**Figure 17:** *Le Violon d'Ingres (Ingres's Violin),* Man Ray, 1924, gelatin silver print

	**Figure 18:** *a3 blackface #58*, Rozeal, 2003, acrylic on paper
	**Figure 19:** *Geisha*, Kitagawa Utamaro (1754-1806), date unknown, woodblock print; ink and color on paper

Introduction

From Commodore Perry’s visit to Japan in the nineteenth century, to the violent altercations in World War II, to the current moment of symbiotic media exchange, there have been countless moments of overlap between Japan and Western nations throughout history. And yet, despite the fact that individuals in Western nations have a fervent interest in Japanese culture and society (and vice versa), the perceived differences between Japan and the West is immense. However, as I show through the work of artist iona rozeal brown (or more commonly, Rozeal), a contemporary American painter, the sizeable gap that separates these two groups may not be as wide as one may think.

One concept that plays a large role in this investigation is the mutability of race. There has been a great deal of scholarly exploration in this area. For example, in her 2009 article, comparative literary theorist Beth Coleman analyzes the phrase, “race as technology.” Coleman moves away from the idea that race is only based on biology and argues for the addition of a social component. Through this addition, she shows how race can be liberated from, “an inherent position of abjection toward a greater expression of agency.”[1] Her definition creates a fluidity around the subject of race, allowing space for art such as Rozeal’s to further investigate the concept. Another example can be found in the work of Anne Anlin Cheng, a cultural theorist at Princeton University. Through her exploration of Josephine Baker, an African American performer, Cheng examines how race can be likened to an outfit that one wears, changing depending on the situation.[2] In her argument, race is likened to an aspect of performance, a trait that one can play into or exist outside of as needed. Many other scholars such as Franz Fanon,

---

[1] Coleman, Beth. “Race as Technology.” *Camera obscura (Durham, NC)* 24, no. 1 (2009): 177.

[2] Cheng, Anne Anlin. *Second Skin: Josephine Baker & the Modern Surface*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

W.E.B. Dubois, bell hooks (*Art on My Mind: Visual Politics),* Martin D. Harris (*Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation),* Lisa Farrington (Article: *Faith Ringgold's Slave Rape Series,* and Elizabeth Alexander (Article: *Coming Out Blackened and Whole),* also explore how identity is changed and commented on through history and art.[3] Using these scholars as the basis for my research, I explore how Rozeal provides commentary on race, gender, and identity through her work.

Paying special attention to her *afro-asian allegories* series, I highlight the fact that certain emotions, experiences, and epiphanies between Black women and Japanese women are identical even if the setting and time period differ. At the crux of Rozeal's work is a deep-rooted interest in Japanese history and culture. Her artwork examines the oeuvre of *ukiyo-e* [浮世絵] printmaker Yoshitoshi Tsukioka (1839-1892), the trend of the *ganguro* [ガングロ] fashion style, and the social status of Japanese sex works, known as courtesans.

Rozeal was born in Washington, DC in 1966, towards the end of the Civil Rights Movement.[4] Although many scholars attribute the end of the Civil Rights Movement to the passing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, race revolutions continued to pop up in cities around the United States, suggesting that the fight for equality was far from over.[5] This moment of heightened racial tension most likely influenced Rozeal's perception of identity and made her more aware of how race operates in a social sphere.

---

[3] hooks, bell. *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*. New York: The New Press, 1995. Print.; Harris, Michael D. *Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003. Print.; Lisa E. Farrington, Faith Ringgold, (Petaluma: Pomegranate Communications, Inc., 2004).; Alexander, Elizabeth. "'Coming Out Blackened and Whole': Fragmentation and Reintegration in Audre Lorde's Zami and The Cancer Journals." *American literary history* 6, no. 4 (1994): 695–715.

[4] Rowell, Charles H. (2015). "[Iona] Rozeal [Brown]". Callaloo. 34(4): 805–810.

[5] "Race Riots Of The 1960s." Encyclopedia.com. Accessed May 9, 2022.

Not much is known about Rozeal's upbringing, as the artist prefers to keep her private and public life separate. However, she has shared some information through interviews. She attended Kabuki and Noh theater performance as a child visiting Japan, which was her first exposure to Japanese culture.[6] Her parents were also educators while she was growing up. Her mother was a junior high math teacher, and her father, an academic advisor at the historically Black university, the University of District Columbia.[7]

Rozeal has received a number of educational degrees. Initially, she pursued a career in physiotherapy and attended the University of Maryland, graduating with a BS in Kinesiological Sciences in 1991. However, her interest waned in the subject, and she took classes in different areas at Montgomery County Community College beginning in 1995. It was only after this transitional and exploratory phase that she began her art career in earnest. She moved to New York and began her studies at Pratt Institute of Art in 1996. After she graduated from Pratt, she attended the San Francisco Art Institute in California and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine, receiving her BFA.[8] After this, Rozeal moved to New Haven, obtaining her MFA from Yale in 2002.[9]

It was during Rozeal's second undergraduate degree that she was exposed to *ganguro*. *Ganguro* was characterized by school-aged girls and young Japanese women "darkening their skin, bleaching their hair, and wearing brightly coloured extravagant outfits."[10] It was a popular style in the late 1990s and early 2000s in Tokyo's Shibuya and Ikebukuro areas.[11] A large part of the *ganguro* style—the part that bothered Rozeal the most—was the darkening of one’s skin, referred to as *barakku ni naru* [ブラックになる]. The translation of this would be ‘to become black,’ an almost direct comparison to blackface.[12] The girls and women who participated would darken their exposed skin (face, arms, and legs) while highlighting the area around their eyes. It should be noted that *ganguro* was never a widespread practice among Japanese people—it was practiced in very specific parts of Tokyo at a specific time.[13] And although some people still do dress in a *ganguro* fashion today, it is less prevalent than before. However, despite its fleeting popularity, it cannot be denied that *ganguro* left a lasting mark on Rozeal.

---

[6] Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown*. (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 77

[7] Gopnik, Blake. "Go East, Young Woman: Japan Called to Iona Rozeal Brown And She Answered". The Washington Post. Feb. 27, 2005.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Cooks, Bridget R. (18). *New-Now-Next: A Survey of Rising Talent*. International Review of African American Art, 39–45

[10] Powell, Linda S. "30 Americans: An Inspiration for Culturally Responsive Teaching." *National Art Education Association*. 65(5) (2012): 33-40.

[11] Moybray, Nicole. "Japanese Girls Choose Whiter Shade of Pale." The Guardian. 3 April 2004.

It is possible that the young Japanese people who fashioned themselves in *ganguro* were unfamiliar with the concept of blackface and its harm. Although the Japanese government and military committed their own atrocities against surrounding nations, they did not participate in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. As such, they may not have known of the many ways Black people were dehumanized. However, despite the fact that *ganguro* was meant to show interest in another culture, it remains the case that the fashion style can be easily linked to blackface.

It should come as no surprise then that Rozeal too viewed *ganguro* as a fetishization of Blackness, noting that it was, “pretty weird, and a little offensive.”[14] She even went so far as to say that the girls reminded her of, “the king of blackface performers,” Al Jolson.[15] Notably though, instead of writing off her discomfort with *ganguro,* Rozeal chose to explore it further through her art. Her subsequent travels to Japan, where she sought to learn more about Japanese visual culture, helped her form questions surrounding the global reconstruction of black identity.[16]

---

[12] Powell, Linda S. “30 Americans: An Inspiration for Culturally Responsive Teaching.” *National Art Education Association*. 65(5) (2012): 33-40.

[13] Moybray, Nicole. “Japanese Girls Choose Whiter Shade of Pale.” The Guardian. 3 April 2004.

[14] Genocchio, Benjamin. “ART; For Japanese Girls, Black is Beautiful.” The New York Times. April 4, 2004.

[15] Moss Arts Center, Virginia Tech. “All Access: Rozeal.” April 27, 2020.

Through her travels, she discovered that there was a thriving Hip Hop community in Japan, a relationship that she pulls from often when creating her imagined spaces.[17] By the 1980s, Hip Hop had spread nationwide and globally, its impact reverberating to every corner of the world, including Japan. A Hip Hop scene developed most dramatically in Tokyo, where one could hear Hip Hop music while shopping, and Club Harlem—the largest Hip Hop club in Japan, and one of the largest in Asia—gained popularity. However, despite Japanese people's enthusiasm for the new form of music (and the fact that today, it can be thought that the purest form of Hip Hop culture is most alive in Asian cultures), their expression of the craft was often regarded as inauthentic by American fans.[18] This was, in part, due to the language barrier between Japanese and English speakers and the lack of shared experience between the originators of Hip Hop culture and Japanese Hip Hop fans.[19]

While US Hip Hop provided a haven and new creative outlets for those on the fringes of society, Japanese Hip Hop seemed to be most focused on the individualization it allowed. Japanese people attributed Hip Hop culture not to a civil rights movement, but to expensive jewelry, fake dreads, and tan skin. It was not an extension of who they were, but, "a skin they slip into on the weekends."[20]

---

[16] Anderson, Crystal S. (2007). "The Afro-Asiatic Floating World: Post-Soul Implications of the Art of Iona Rozeal Brown". *African American Review*. 41(4): 655–665.

[17] Iglesias, Tasha & Travis Harris. "It's "Hip Hop," Not "hip-hop"". In the *Journal of Hip Hop Studies*, Volume 9, Issue 1. 2022. 124. Although many in the academic sphere would refer to Hip Hop as "hip-hop", there has been a recent push to have the word be spelled the same way as the culture outside of academia does.

[18] Fink, Rhiannon L., and ROBIN D. G. KELLEY. "Negotiating Ethnicity and Authenticity in Tokyo's Club Harlem." In *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, edited by Dipannita Basu and Sidney J. Lemelle, 200–207. Pluto Press, 2006.; Lai, Jason. "Why do Koreans love breakdancing?" BBC. Accessed 20 April 2023.

[19] Fink, Rhiannon L., and ROBIN D. G. KELLEY. "Negotiating Ethnicity and Authenticity in Tokyo's Club Harlem." In *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, edited by Dipannita Basu and Sidney J. Lemelle, 200–207. Pluto Press, 2006.

Rozeal could have approached her questions regarding appropriation between Black and Japanese culture with animosity. Noted in her essay contextualizing Rozeal's work, art historian Megan Lykins Reich, writes that, "hip hop is tied inextricably to the identity of contemporary black American culture," and as such, "(perceived) misappropriation by other cultures can be viewed as a personal affront on black Americans."[21] This quote explains how it would have been understandable for Rozeal to demonize *ganguro* and Japanese Hip Hop fans' expression of the movement.

However, I do not believe that she does. Instead of approaching her work from a place of resentment, Rozeal instead, "draws essential relationships between the… materialistic culture of hip hop and the…urban environment of the Edo period."[22] Although, at first glance, one could argue that her remixes (how she refers to her comparative work between the two cultures) contain appropriative elements, it is clear that she has familiarized herself with Japanese history and *ukiyo-e* imagery. She is not working from assumptions and stereotypes surrounding Japanese culture; instead, her work can almost be likened to reverential forms of appreciation for Japanese visual history.

In Japanese history, primarily between the Edo period from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, *ukiyo-e* or 'pictures of the floating world,' depicted the pleasures of urban dwellers, including brothel quarters and Kabuki theater.[23] The wood-block prints were relatively inexpensive to make as they were an example of mass production.[24] Although creating a print was a complicated process (which will be explored further in Chapter 3), it was possible for *ukiyo-e* prints to have thousands of copies. By putting *ukiyo-e* prints in circulation, different economic classes were able to own them, allowing for greater distribution along class lines. Rozeal was likely drawn to the artform due to its subject matter and its inherent ability to be appreciated by all, regardless of social status.

---

[20] Ibid.

[21] Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown*. (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 19

[22] Ibid.

[23] "Wood-block prints." Britannica. Accessed May 9, 2022.

Despite the fact that questions surrounding Black identity and gender have been visualized by artists since the seventeenth century, Rozeal's artwork provides a fresh perspective. By removing herself from a wholly American setting—that is the commentary around how Black people are treated on American soil—Rozeal is able to attain a level of freedom both in her artistic practice and in her approach. It is perhaps because she is working from such an unfamiliar perspective, one that has not been explored fully, that her works themselves are perceived as appropriations. This radical perspective could also be why she is understudied compared to her other Black contemporaries.

To delve into the questions that Rozeal's work poses—how do two seemingly disparate cultures overlap? What is gained through these overlaps? How do they allow for deeper understandings between the two cultures? —I will be focusing on three different works created by Rozeal from 2008 to 2016. Working chronologically, one can begin to see how Rozeal went from merely borrowing from Japanese history to creating her own mythology that goes beyond a Black/ Japanese binary.

Before beginning, it should be a noted that I am not a specialist in Japanese art, society, or culture of the Edo period. As such, there may be inconsistencies, mistranslations, or generalizations that I unknowingly make. Furthermore, I am not sure that Rozeal herself is a specialist in the matter either. Although she understands the culture, she may not be completely accurate in her depictions. This only compounds the possibilities of contradictions on my part.

---

[24] Ibid.

I would also like to note that Rozeal does not speak at-length concerning the meaning of her works. As such, this thesis will be largely speculative in nature, relying on visual analysis and the interviews and exhibitions that Rozeal has participated in.[25] However, I truly believe that there is meaning and importance in her work as it attempts to find and make connections between Japanese and Black culture.

Chapter 1 will look at the work, *E.I.N. Intrusion (watch out for the big girls)* and explore Rozeal's relationship with *ukiyo-e* printmaker Yoshitoshi. The chapter will look into how she remixed Yoshitoshi's work and how her changes allow for greater understanding of some contemporary Black women's lived experiences. Chapter 2 will highlight the next stage of Rozeal's career through the work, *amidst black flowers and honky tonk angels, sphyxnes run amok—Millie S. Claus*. Here, I will show how Rozeal seamlessly blends the lived experiences of Edo period merchants to the originators of Hip Hop, while also commenting on the roles of courtesans. Chapter 3 will look at perhaps her most ambitious and ambiguous work, *El Oso Me Pregunto*. Once again commenting on the experiences of women and continuing to rely on the *ukiyo-e* genre, Rozeal now adds in a psychological approach of what can happen when one's identity is forced to split and rupture.

---

[25] I will be borrowing extensively from the exhibition catalogue, *iona rozeal brown*, edited by Mary Christian and produced by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland. It is the only book that I could find that focuses exclusively on Rozeal while she was working on *afro-asiatic allegories*.

Through these works, one can see that conversations around Blackness do not only exist in places with large Black communities, or areas that have long histories concerning the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. In contrast, reverberations of the Black experience can be felt on a global scale.

Chapter 1: From Silks to Fur: Yoshitoshi in the 21st Century

Introduction

A black woman is shown sitting in a cross-legged position that hides some of her primarily nude body (Figure 1). On both her upper arms and her calves, heavily stylized characters appear as tattoos. The woman is shown smoking what could be a marijuana joint, evidenced by the smoke coming from the blunt and the vapors leaving her mouth. To her right is a large wooden speaker which, given the size of the subwoofer, would be perfect for songs with a heavy bass line. To her left is a turntable with a vinyl record. Above the record player and crawling out from behind the speaker, is what seems to be a demon. Not only does the creature have horns, but it also has three fingers on its hand, the middle of which is a clawed talon. Given the positioning of the creature, it is unclear whether the creature has a humanistic body behind the woman and speaker, or if the viewer is being shown the whole being. It seems to be the exact opposite of the black woman. Where she has brown skin, it is extremely pale, almost white. Where her hair is curly and done up in an afro, the monster's hair is pin-straight and thin enough that the viewer can see individual strands pooling around its hands. And where she is full-bodied and muscular, the creature seems to be extremely thin. The monster thus stands as the antithesis to the central figure, and the two seem to be at odds with one another. She glares angrily at it and blows smoke in its direction. The monster, in turn, seems to encroach more and more into her space, seemingly unaffected by her animosity.

This mixed media on panel piece, *E.I.N. Intrusion (watch out for the big girls),* was completed in 2008 and is the earliest piece of Rozeal's that this thesis will look at. Working in a similar manner to artists such as Kehinde Wiley or Yinka Shonibare, who reimagine art of the

Western canon to include black bodies, in *E.I.N. Intrusion*, Rozeal inserts the black female body into the Japanese *ukiyo-e* genre.[26] In this case, *E.I.N. Intrusion* is a remix of Edo Period *ukiyo-e* printmaker Yoshitoshi Tsukioka's *The Wrestler Onogawa Blowing Smoke at a One-Eyed Monster* (Figure 2).[27]

Although this chapter is only looking at one of Rozeal's remixes, she actually works intimately with many of Yoshitoshi's prints. In fact, she relied almost solely on Yoshitoshi's oeuvre for the earlier part of her career. The artist has not confirmed why she felt drawn to Yoshitoshi, but it is likely due to both his artistic technique and his life story. Her connection to Yoshitoshi is so foundational to her work that it could even be claimed that one of Rozeal's goals in her early career was to understand the printmaker's subjective version of Japan, rather than the country's actual history.

In this chapter, I will articulate how Rozeal has remixed Japanese history to be inclusive of the Black experience and postulate as to why she chose to express herself by reworking Yoshitoshi's print. To do this, I will begin by gaining a better understanding of Yoshitoshi and the work *The Wrestler Onogawa Blowing Smoke at a One-Eyed Monster*, before examining the changes that Rozeal chose to make when creating *E.I.N. Intrusion.* Through this, I hope to shed light on the beginnings of Rozeal's practice and create a starting point through which her work can be understood in subsequent chapters.

---

[26] Sargent, Antwaun. "Artist Titus Kaphar on His New Solo Show and Unarmed Black Men in America." Vice. 15 January 2015.; Glassman, Jessa. "Yinka Shonibare is Reclaiming the Art of the Oppressor." 34th Street. 5 October 2020.

[27] Stevenson, John, and Yoshitoshi Taiso. Yoshitoshi's One Hundred Aspects of the Moon. Leiden: Hotei Pub., 2001.

Yoshitoshi Tsukioka (or, from 1873 on, Yoshitoshi Taiso) [28]

Yoshitoshi was born in 1839 and grew up during the transitional phase between the Edo and Meiji periods.[29] It was a tumultuous number of years in Japanese history, as the nation suffered from economic instability and many citizens began to question the shogunate.[30] As a way to cope with this socioeconomic upheaval, Yoshitoshi turned to printmaking. It is believed that he produced his first work in 1853 at the age of fourteen, although the subject matter of said print is unknown. He continued to create under the tutelage of his master, Kuniyoshi Utagawa (1798–1861), who was also a print designer. After Kuniyoshi's death in 1861, Yoshitoshi continued to formalize his style, with *The Wrestler Onogawa Kisaburo Blowing Smoke at a One-Eyed Monster* being made in 1865. However, Patrick Drazen, an independent scholar, writes in, *A Gathering of Spirits: Japan's Ghost Story Tradition: From Folklore and Kabuki to Anime and Manga*, that it was reportedly difficult for the young Yoshitoshi to make a living off of his work in the face of newer, more modern forms of reproduction.[31]

However, Yoshitoshi's fortune changed in 1877 when he depicted the Satsuma Rebellion (Figure 3). The Rebellion, also known as the Seinan War, lasted nine months in 1877 and centered around building disputes between discontented samurai and the new imperial Meiji regime.[32] The Meiji period was a time when Japan became modernized in a number of ways, including militaristically. Up until this point in Japanese history, samurai had enjoyed high social status. With the advent of the Meiji period though, the swordsmen were phased out in favor of newer military technology, specifically flintlock guns. Although guns had been in Japan since the sixteenth century, the arrival of Commodore Perry and the forced opening of the nation brought the need for Japanese soldiers to carry modernized firearms. Some samurai, seeing that the world was changing without them, decided to revolt against the coming wave of modernity. Unfortunately or fortunately, the revolt failed, essentially ending the samurai class. [33]

---

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Marius B. Jansen and Gilbert Rozman write at length about this transition in their book, *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji*. In it, they complicate the notion that the transition from the Edo to Meiji periods was a seamless one and show the many areas--from central government to rural economy—that underwent great change during this period. Some of these large changes include the abolishment of domains in 1871, the de-prioritization of Buddhism, changes in military organizations, and changes in the educational system.

[31] Drazen, Patrick. *A Gathering of Spirits: Japan's Ghost Story Tradition: From Folklore and Kabuki to Anime and Manga*.iUniverse Publishing. 2007. Although this source has been criticized for being too focused on anime and manga, its inclusion of Japanese visual history is thorough.

[32] Buck, James H. "The Satsuma Rebellion of 1877. From Kagoshima Through the Siege of Kumamoto Castle." *Monumenta Nipponica* 28, no. 4 (1973): 427–46.

In his work, *A Battle in the Satsuma Rebellion*, Yoshitoshi delivers a grisly scene through three different triptych-style prints. Japanese characters appear on each panel of the piece without disturbing the main image, visible through the carnage by their bright red background. As Japanese people read from right to left, it is likely that the writing (and thus, the piece overall) was meant to be read from right to left. The right print features a number of samurai struggling to fight a Japanese soldier on horseback who is allied with the Meiji regime, Colonel Nozu. Nozu holds the flag that comes to symbolize Japan's modernist, imperialist ambitions, that of the Rising Red Sun. This singular altercation mirrors the tension that was felt at the beginning of the Meiji period—the push and pull between modernization and tradition. In the distance of the rightmost panel are Japanese buildings as well as plumes of smoke and blood that were caused by the carnage.

The samurai rush toward the center of the battlefield where other samurai are already confronting the Japanese Imperial Army soldiers. In the background of the center panel, a volcano erupts, possibly symbolizing the fervent passion that led the samurai to the battlefield in the first place. The leftmost panel seals the samurais' fate though. Through the right and central panels, Yoshitoshi has made it clear that the samurai are not evenly matched with the soldiers. The left panel though emphasizes the true might of the Imperial Army. A crush of Imperial soldiers arrive onto the scene, each carrying a musket and a saber and ready to charge forward. Yoshitoshi has depicted a valiant effort from the samurai, but clearly shows them at a loss.

---

[33] Martinez, Diana. "Japan Through the Looking Glass: From Meiji Era "Occidentalism" to Frank Lloyd Wright's "Organicism". FAH 08: Intro to Architecture. Class lecture at Tufts University, Somerville, MA, March 16, 2023.

A Battle in the Satsuma Rebellion is indicative of Yoshitoshi's style during this time. Many were disturbed but intrigued by the graphic nature of his prints and clamored for more. As such, Yoshitoshi continued to produce work that, "depicted the graphic violence, blood, and death of his surroundings, incorporating a dark element into the culture."[34] It is also likely that Yoshitoshi created the work as he sympathized with the samurai class. He too was against Japan's forced Westernization. In a moment when Japanese visual culture was introduced to photography, daguerreotypes, and lithography, Yoshitoshi chose to express himself through the traditional Japanese style of *ukiyo-e*.[35] Although he was not part of the revolt, he was unafraid to depict the Japanese samurai as sympathetic figures, fighting a losing battle with all of their might.

As if his compassionate, yet grotesque depiction of the Satsuma Rebellion was not enough, Yoshitoshi also showed his rejection of the Meiji era—and Western modernization—in other ways. He showed a vested interest in the supernatural and Japanese folklore, which was considered to be a form of resistance from the more scientifically-focused ideas proposed by the Meiji state.[36] And as Meiji-style woodblock prints (such as Kobayahi Ikuhide's *True View of the*

---

[34] Mozur, Nancy. "About the Artist: Tsukioka Yoshitoshi." *Psychological perspectives* 54, no. 4 (2011): 382–384. https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/doi/full/10.1080/00332925.2011.622625

[35] Ibid.

[36] Duggan, Kate. "Yoshitoshi Tsukioka's New Forms of Thirty Six Ghosts—Visual Tradition in Art as a Cultural Critique on Japan's Modernization." 2014.

Post Office at Edobashi (Figure 4), which featured Westernized buildings and bolder colors) became more popular, Yoshitoshi continued to create works within an Edo woodblock style.

Yoshitoshi died in 1892 at the age of fifty-three, in part due to his poor mental health. Both while he was alive and after his death, he was considered one of the most prominent *ukiyo-e* printmakers and the reverberations of his career are still felt to this today. For example, through his prolific career, and that of other printmakers, he helped lay the seeds for Japan's large print-based media, manga.[37]

Rozeal was likely touched by the works of Yoshitoshi and his story. There is also the fact that, given his long career, she would have had numerous works to remix. Although Rozeal remixed many of Yoshitoshi's prints, for the purposes of this chapter, I will focus on the research she conducted to make *E.I.N. Intrusion (watch out for the big girls).* In order to create the work, she most likely had a deep understanding of the composition, meaning, and relationships within *The Wrestler Onogawa Blowing Smoke at a One-Eyed Monster.* As a way to better understand the changes that Rozeal imposed, Yoshitoshi's 1865 work will now be looked at in greater detail. Although this work was created three years before the formal beginning of the Meiji period, it is likely that Yoshitoshi, was already being affected by the oncoming wave of modernization.

The Wrestler Onogawa Kisaburo Blowing Smoke at a One-Eyed Monster

Yoshitoshi's piece almost feels like a love song to the Edo period. The title of the work is rather self-explanatory. The person in the print is the *sumo* [相撲]wrestler Onogawa Kisaburo

---

[37] Drazen, Patrick. *A Gathering of Spirits: Japan's Ghost Story Tradition: From Folklore and Kabuki to Anime and Manga*.iUniverse Publishing. 2007.

(1758–1806) and he is blowing smoke at a monster. And yet, Yoshitoshi was meticulous in his creation of this print. Although the piece is rich with symbolism and interpretation, we will focus primarily on the two central figures and their relationship to one another—the wrestler and the monster.

Yoshitoshi was careful to place his work in a history that celebrated traditional Japanese customs. Although it may seem like the artist created a wholly imagined space, Onogawa Kisaburo was an eighteenth-century historical figure. In a chapter of the book, *Sport: The Development of Sport,* academic Harold Bolitho wrote that Onogawa, a *sumo* wrestler during the Edo period, was celebrated for being one of the first holders of the grand champion title in *sumo* wrestling. Onogawa was also credited for elevating *sumo* wrestling to the Japanese national sport that it is today.[38] Here then, almost one hundred years after Onogawa became the grand champion, Yoshitoshi has created an incredibly heroic depiction of the wrestler.

The Wrestler Onogawa Kisaburo Blowing Smoke at a One-Eyed Monster was part of Yositoshi’s *One Hundred Ghost Stories of China and Japan*, a collection of prints by the artist that was based on different literary tales. Yoshitoshi created the print by borrowing from the writing of Kanagaki Robun (1829-1841), one of his contemporaries. The story speaks about how Onogawa, one of two *sumo* champions of the time, was hired as a bodyguard at a warlord’s mansion. He was meant to protect the warlord from a ghost that appeared each night. During one of his nightly vigils, the monster appeared and Onogawa subdued him easily. The true identity of the monster turns out to be an old fox.[39]

---

[38] Bolitho, Harold. "Sumo and Popular Culture: The Tokugawa Period." In Sport: The Development of Sport. edited by Eric Dunning and Dominic Malcolm. 180-193. London: Routledge, 2003

[39] This translation was provided by Tufts University Associate Professor Emerita, History of Art and Architecture, Ikumi Kaminishi.

Despite the fact that the half-naked Onogawa is seated and most likely relaxing, his bulging arm and calf muscles emphasize his strength and power. In this way, Onogawa is shown as both at rest and primed for an attack, able to switch between the two at a moment's notice. Despite the fact that his opponent is a grotesque monster, Onogawa does not feel the need to stand to face it, nor does he seem surprised by its presence. In fact, it seems that blowing smoke from his pipe is enough to stun his foe. Through his depiction, Yoshitoshi reminds the Japanese populace of Onogawa's legacy.

Rather than historical events, Yoshitoshi's monster pulls from Japanese folklore. Although the English translation of Yoshitoshi's work describes the creature as a one-eyed monster, the creature clearly has three eyes. As such, it is more likely that the creature is a *rokurokubi* [ロクロクビ], an apparition that seems almost completely human except for the fact that its neck can stretch to impossible lengths.[40] Although the creature has three eyes, it is reminiscent of a bald, older man, one who has a large nose and facial hair. It is unclear when tales concerning the *rokurokubi* began, but they became more popular during the Edo period.[41] Around the time that Yoshitoshi was making, a popular theory was that when *rokurokubi* separated their head from their bodies, their souls were able to wander without being confined to a physical form.[42] It is possible then that this monster did not even mean to scare Onogawa—he was just wandering around. In contrast to the bulging muscles of Onogawa, the lines around the monster's face resemble wrinkles, making the creature seem old and tired. It is not primed for a fight, but instead seems to be doing its best to avoid one.

---

[40] 村上健司 編著. *日本妖怪大事典*. Kwai books. 角川書店. 2005, 356.

[41] 京極夏彦. "妖怪の形について". *妖怪の理 妖怪の檻*. 怪 BOOKS. 角川書店.2007, 386.

[42] 著者不詳. "曾呂利物語". In 高田衛 編・校注 (ed.). *江戸怪談集*. 岩波文庫. Vol. 中. 岩波書店. 1989, 13–15.

It is possible that the monster is meant to represent Yoshitoshi's feelings during this period of his life. His master had just died, and he himself was struggling to survive in the face of modernization. However, this image is not wholly depressing. It seems that Yoshitoshi has also created a savior in the figure of Onogawa. Here, Onogawa is a symbol of Japan's past, a moment in time when the nation knew peace. It almost seems as though, just as he can blow the *rokurokubi* away, so too could the wrestler blow away Japan's transitional phase. By celebrating Onogawa's strength, by returning to Japan's traditional roots, Yoshitoshi makes the argument that the past, not the future, will lead the country to salvation.

Both *E.I.N. Intrusion* and *Wrestler Onogawa Kisaburo Blowing Smoke at a One-Eyed Monster* share a number of similarities—from their composition to the explanatory titles—but it is their differences that are most apparent. Rozeal contemporizes Yoshitoshi's print—Onogawa has been replaced by a large black woman in a fur coat (who Rozeal refers to as a "big girl"), the *rokurokubi* has become a white demon, the pipe has become a joint, and the traditional Japanese furnishings of the lamp and folding screen have become symbols of contemporary music culture—a speaker and turn table. The Japanese characters that were put on the sides of Yoshitoshi's work now appear as stylized letters on the woman's skin, mimicking tattoos. Each of these changes, and what they symbolize, will be analyzed more closely in the following section.

Comparison

Onogawa to the Black Woman

The most noticeable difference would be that of the central figure. The heroic champion Onogawa, whose name has been recorded in the annals of history, has been replaced by a nameless and unknown Black woman. Although the figures are positioned the same—one hand on their leg as they smoke—it is their changes that take center stage. In Yoshitoshi's print, one could see the wrestler's rippling muscles. Here though, Rozeal emphasizes the woman's large breasts and fat rolls. While Onogawa's hair has been tied back away from his face, the woman wears her natural hair in an afro. The fine robes that drape across Onogawa's body has been replaced with a fur-laced robe on the woman. Onogawa's pipe, boldly colored and large, becomes a small joint that is almost lost within the woman's depiction. Their facial expressions are also different—whereas Onogawa seems composed when confronted with the *rokurobi*, this woman glares at the monster she faces. It is clear that the white creature is a threat. Rozeal's changes create a moment of dissonance when the viewer compares the two figures—mirror images of one another and yet, complete opposites.

However, it seems that Rozeal also meant for this figure to be celebrated. By putting the Black woman in Onogawa's position, she is making the statement that this woman is a remixed embodiment of him. Both are figures of power, evidenced by Onogawa's storied past and the title of Rozeal's piece reminding the viewer to, 'watch out' for the central figure. The woman, this 'big girl', is a hero in her own way. Similar to Onogawa, she is comfortable showing off her body and is able to confront her monster head on.

The baring of her body also comments on contemporary notions of body shaming. In many places around the world, people, particularly women, are shamed for being too big with many erroneously attributing body size to a, "presumed moral failing."[43] Where Onogawa found success for his size, this woman has likely been barred from success due to her size on numerous occasions. In *E.I.N. Intrusion* though, instead of being placed in a negative light, the woman is put in a position of power within the composition of the piece—like Onogawa, she is both brave and proud. Rozeal has created a new type of hero, one that is as strong as the wrestler himself.

Rokurokubi *to E.I.N.*

Perhaps the second largest difference in *E.I.N. Intrusion* was the change in monsters, from the *rokurokubi* to the white monster, E.I.N. Both creatures creep up on the central figures in an attempt to scare them. The monsters also serve as a contrast to their respective heroes. The thin, white E.I.N. seems to be the exact opposite of the larger Black woman, just as the weak, tired *rokurokubi* seems to share no commonalities with Onogawa.

Somewhat similar to the anecdotal and magical roots of the *rokurokubi*, E.I.N. is part of Rozeal's own created mythology. With the help of her mythology, Rozeal was able to work through her questions surrounding women and how they are treated in society. Doing this allowed her the creative space to make fantastical images that were still grounded in reality and focused on social commentary. [44]

E.I.N. is one of the villains in Rozeal's narratives. An acronym for the phrase, "everything I'm not," E.I.N. is meant to reference the, "ways in which consumer culture undercuts women's self-confidence."[45] As a preface to this idea, it is widely known that certain industries, such as the beauty industry, exist and make profit by telling people what is wrong with them. These industries prey on people's insecurities, convincing individuals that the only way they can be successful or more beautiful is through purchasing consumer goods.[46] When speaking about E.I.N., Rozeal states that the creature was once a beautiful woman herself. However, the woman was corrupted as her self-confidence became more and more dependent on material goods, until she eventually turned into E.I.N.[47] Although Rozeal does not clearly state what E.I.N.'s goals are, the creature is likely trying to make women feel insecure and uncomfortable with their bodies.

---

[43] "Fatphobia." Office of Equity, Vitality, and Inclusion, Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine, Boston Medical Center, and Boston University medical Group. *Glossary for Culture Transformation*. 2021

[44] Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown*. (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 19

[45] Ibid, 49

Unlike the *rokurokubi,* who was made to be a sympathetic character in Yoshitoshi's print, E.I.N. (Figure 5) is shown as a true villain. Despite the *rokurokubi's* long neck, it still has human elements. Four fingers peek out from behind the folding screen and the creature has pronounced eyebrows, a large nose, and ears. In contrast, E.I.N. has almost no human characteristics that the viewer would be able to empathize with. Instead of five fingers, she has three, with the middle appendage featuring a long, sharp talon. The earpiece on her right ear connects not only to her ear, but also to her eye sockets (her eyes seem to be missing) and what is left of her mouth. She is fully controlled by an unknown dark presence. Her skin is completely white, with no veins or evidence of life. Along her body are welts and boils that seem as though they are moments away from popping. The creature also sports horns, which may be a nod to Western depictions of the Christian devil. The most human part about her is her hair, which pools around her face in inky black waves. It is no wonder that the Black woman seems perturbed by its presence.

---

[46] Laham, Martha. *Made Up: How the Beauty Industry Manipulates Consumers, Preys on Women's Insecurities, and Promotes Unattainable Beauty Standards.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 2020.

[47] Ibid.

And yet, like Onogawa, the Black woman is able to keep the monster at bay with just her breath. She is not interested in the offerings of E.I.N., exhibiting a confidence that keeps her safe from the monster's thrall. Through the simple action of blowing smoke, the Black woman seems to be shoving E.I.N.'s provocations—about insecurity and consumerism—away. Despite her size, her race, or any other 'problem' that the wider society perceives from her, she does not believe that material goods are her saving grace. As such, E.I.N. exists in a similar space to the comparatively harmless *rokurokubi*—it has become little more than an insignificant annoyance.

Japanese furnishings to a DJ Set

However, it is not just the figures that Rozeal remixes, but also the figures' surroundings. In *The Wrestler Onogawa Kisaburo Blowing Smoke at a One-Eyed Monster,* Yoshitoshi seems determined to highlight furnishings from the Edo period. An *andon* [アンドン] lantern appears behind the *rokurokubi,* a folded screen and incense burner are shown to the right of the picture plane, and a necklace and a bag are shown at Onogawa's feet. The *andon* lantern was a popular light fixture during the Edo period that was made by stretching paper over a wooden frame.[48] To Onogawa's right is a beautiful and decorated folding screen, or *byobu* [屏風], as well as an incense burner. Although *byobu* had been around since the Nara period, they rose in popularity during the Heian period. By the time the Edo period began, *byobu* had become a common fixture in most upper- and middle-class dwellings. The folding screens could often be found in the homes of high-ranking officials and were meant to represent wealth and power. They were also likely to be made using gold leaf and depicting nature, as is the case for Onogawa's screen.[49] The incense burner, which found its way to Japan during the Asuka period, had also become a more commonplace item by the Edo period and was initially used to calm soldier's minds before they went to battle.[50] Although the significance behind the necklace and bag is unclear, it is possible that they were either meant to highlight Onogawa's accolades as a *sumo* wrestler or to assist him in battle. Through these furnishings, Yoshitoshi harkens back to aspects of Japan that were found at the height of the Edo period, simultaneously creating a dramatic backdrop as Onogawa prepares for battle and reminding viewers of a superior time in Japan's history.

---

[48] "Tourou" Japanese Architecture and Art Net Users System. Accessed November 16, 2022.

[49] McElhinney, David. "Byobu: 7 Things to Know About Japanese Folding Screens." Japan Objects. Accessed November 16, 2022.

Rozeal, on the other hand, has replaced the Edo furniture with a large subwoofer and a record player. However, Rozeal has chosen to only replace two of Yoshitoshi's furnishings, allowing more space for the woman. This choice could be due to the fact that Rozeal and Yoshitoshi had different goals in creating these works. As was discussed before, Yoshitoshi wanted to create a visual representation of Robun's story while Rozeal wanted to comment on the intense presence and pressure of material culture. By minimizing the picture plane in *E.I.N. Intrusion*, Rozeal is able to more clearly center the interaction between E.I.N. and the woman, showing their tense and negative relationship. In contrast, Yoshitoshi wanted his work to tell a story; although Onogawa is undoubtedly the central figure, the space around him is also important.

Rozeal's shift to music-producing objects allows the viewer to connect with her work in both an aural and visual sense. In Yoshitoshi's work, there was no sign of a musical instrument of any sort. It is likely that the room where Onogawa stayed was relatively quiet during his vigils. In contrast, Rozeal's piece seems to emit noise. The turntable seems to be playing a record as the woman confronts E.I.N. The added layer of music not only serves to modernize the woman's surroundings, but, I argue, also makes the figure more relatable to the viewer. Onogawa was not meant to be a figure that regular Japanese citizens could relate to; instead, he was a paradigm to strive toward, a level of perfection that could only exist through artistic representation. The Black woman, however, feels like a more realistic representation of a person. Like many other people in the modern age, she listens to music and indulges in recreational activities. As such, the Black woman becomes a relatable figure, with some viewers likely being able to see themselves in her.

---

[50] Morita, Kiyoko. *The Book of Incense: Enjoying the Traditional Art of Japanese Scents.* 1st ed.Tokyo; Kodansha International, 1992. 44.

Japanese Characters to Unreadable Language

In Yoshitoshi's piece, Japanese characters appear in many places throughout the piece—from the block text in the upper right-hand corner, to the shorter lines of text on the screen door, to the writing near the *andon*—in order to articulate Robun's story. However, in Rozeal's work, the text appears on the Black woman herself. On both her upper arms and her calves, stylized text has been tattooed on her. Rozeal reportedly created a pictorial language for her works based on a number system that corresponds to English letters.[51] Unfortunately, the cipher has not been released, and as such, it is unknown what is written on the woman's skin. As tattoos and their reputation in Japan will be examined more closely in Chapter 3, for now I will primarily focus on what is achieved by the presence of Rozeal's created language.

Language is one of the many ways that people are able to communicate with one another. And yet, it is highly specific. Although it is unknown how fluent in Japanese Rozeal was when she researched Yoshitoshi, she probably would have had difficulty translating the nineteenth-century characters on her own. It is possible she needed to rely on a dictionary or translator to understand what the words meant. As such, even though the writing was meant to convey meaning to the viewers, Rozeal was most likely unable to discern it without aid. However, the meaning behind Yoshitoshi's piece was still clear thanks to his title and his strong visual language. I believe that Rozeal is playing off this idea with *E.I.N. Intrusion*. She is fully capable of writing a story in a known language, but she chooses not to. Instead, she creates a frustrating moment for all viewers, where they try to read the language unaided and fail. As such, the viewer is forced to rely on the visual components of the piece to understand what is going on.

---

[51] Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown*. (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 21

Conclusion

Through these changes, Rozeal has created a work that, while harkening back to Japanese history, also comments on the realities of today. I am not making a judgment on whose work is more successful as the artists were working from two completely different cultures, time periods, and backgrounds. Their artistic goals also differed. Whereas Yoshitoshi was trying to rally a nation, Rozeal's aim was smaller, to remind people that they already possess the confidence that they are looking for.

However, it cannot be denied that Rozeal felt a strong connection to Yoshitoshi and his artwork. Through her changes, she has created a bold connection between Japan's past and Black women's present, showing that both cultures have heroes able to vanquish even the most daunting of foes. Even though the setting, time, and fears have changed, the strength of both Onogawa and the woman shine through in their compositions.

As stated before, changing historical images in order to rework an art canon is not a tactic used only by Rozeal. Many contemporary artists, from Titus Kaphar to Yinka Shonibare, have also been known to use additions or absences in order to change the narrative of older works.[52] However, perhaps the most prolific artist to use this technique is Kehinde Wiley.[53] A Black artist from the Los Angeles area, Wiley gained prominence for his oil paintings that inserted Black men into famous works from the Western canon, reworking what has commonly been considered 'good art' so that it did not only include white people.

Even though Rozeal is working with different identities, she is nevertheless borrowing this technique from other big names in the art industry. However, it cannot be denied that Rozeal's approach is unique. Perhaps this difference can be attributed to the fact that, at the core of Rozeal's work, she creates from a place of curiosity. The work of Kaphar, Shonibare, and Wiley share a common goal—to take power away from those who have enjoyed it in the past and give it to those who were often erased. There is an oppressor-oppressed relationship that all three men attempt to untangle with their work, using their art to dismantle the white supremacy that has been woven into the very fabric of America. Rozeal's work, on the other hand, does not seem to hold the same anger or righteousness. Instead of trying to right a wrong, it seems that her work is steeped in exploration.

From the outset, Rozeal was clear in her intentions. She was not trying to attack a culture, but to understand it. This difference in approach could be why she also chose to work within the *ukiyo-e* genre. While Wiley strived to reimagine history, he did not attempt to mimic the

---

[52] Sargent, Antwaun. "Artist Titus Kaphar on His New Solo Show and Unarmed Black Men in America." Vice. 15 January 2015; Glassman, Jessa. "Yinka Shonibare is Reclaiming the Art of the Oppressor." 34th Street. 5 October 2020.

[53] Cooperman, Kathryn. "Kehinde Wiley's Napoleon Portrait: A New language of Representation." The Female Gaze. Accessed 28 August 2020.

Renaissance/ Classical/ Baroque styles that he worked from. Instead, he creates his own style, featuring hyper realistic Black figures in front of abstract, oftentimes floral, backgrounds. Rozeal, on the other hand, strives to mirror the work of Yoshitoshi perfectly. *E.I.N. Intrusion* has the same flatness, muted colors, and style of an Edo period print. She was not trying to condemn Yoshitoshi and Japan's history, but to collaborate with it.

Reworking historical pieces is a necessary expansion of identity for artists and viewers alike. Creating a mythical space where Black women are likened to *sumo* wrestlers can increase the viewer's ability to emphasize with cultures outside of their own. In this way, Rozeal creates a duality that is not mutually exclusive; the realities of a black woman are individual and specific to them, *and* their experiences can mirror those of people long past, thousands of miles away. She continues this exploration in the following years of her career, a transition that will be analyzed through her 2010 work, *amidst black flowers and honky tonk angels, sphynxes run amok—Millie S. Claus.*

Chapter 2: Hip Hop in a Kabuki Theater: Connections Through Time

Introduction

The viewer peers into an intimate space (Figure 6). Two men wearing different styles of clothing, one with an afro and the other sporting dreads, sit around a low table enjoying drinks.[54] Although their skin is white, they each wear masks that make their faces brown in color, evocative of blackface. Surrounding the two men is what seems to be tree roots—brown stems weave their way throughout the scene, touching the people's hands, ears, and faces. The other figure in the image appears to be a sentient female sapling. Although the sapling also has a face and two different skin tones—a dark brown and a light grey—she does not appear to be masked. Instead, it seems as though the sapling has used makeup to make her face lighter. A closer look also reveals that the sapling has hands and feet that are almost hidden from view; despite her branches, the figure is more humanoid than she appears at first glance. There also seems to be an unspoken power dynamic between the three figures. The sapling holds two records in either of her hands as she offers them to the men, suggesting that the tree is subservient to them. On the floor, near the feet of the men and the sapling, lie two cats that seem to be fighting.

And yet, despite the setting of the mystical scene, there are some anachronisms which make it difficult to place when in history it is occurring. On the one hand, the image seems to situate itself in a historical Japanese setting, either the Edo or Meiji period. Rozeal, after studying Yoshitoshi's work, was probably interested in this transitional moment (as she, herself, worked in the transitional space between cultures) and thus, chose to create a somewhat homogenized historical event. However, there are also more contemporary aspects to the scene. Subwoofers hang on the walls of the yellow room and the sapling holds records in her hands, acting as both decoration and aural entertainment. The earliest known record player was created in the late nineteenth century and subwoofers became mainstream long after that, meaning that the technology visible is at least three-centuries newer than the time period where the figures presumably come from.[55]

---

[54] It is difficult to know with 100% certainty that the two figures are men. The figure on the right has crossed their robes right over left, a common way that Japanese women often wear their robes. The figure on the left holds their left hand up as if to cover their mouth while they laugh, which is a common practice for Japanese women in order to be polite. However, women were not known to frequent entertainment areas during this time and it unlikely that they would visit a courtesan, pointing to the idea that these could be men. As I believe that Rozeal was attempting to point out the exploitative nature of a courtesan's job, rather than making a commentary on the rights of Japanese women in the Edo period, I assume the figures are men.

The sapling clothes also serve to complicate the time period. She wears a red robe lined with fur that features a repeating phrase: "another one." One of the most significant decisions that came out of the Edo period regarding global affairs was their choice to limit interaction with the rest of the world from 1639 to 1853, known today as *Sakoku.* Although Japan maintained some connection with the world—Western thought and knowledge were still circulated—it exploded after Commodore Perry's visit.[56] As such, these Westernized elements could point to this image coming from the Meiji period when Japan had become more open. However, the catalogue book, *Iona Rozeal Brown,* edited by Mary Christian in 2010, states that Rozeal worked primarily from the Edo period, further complicating the time in Japanese history that she would have been pulling from.[57] Furthermore, even though the Japanese government had been in contact with English speaking countries, it is unlikely that English phrases had been worked into Japanese fashion.[58] Instead, the sapling's clothes seem to mirror a more contemporary style. In this way, the work seems to exist in its own contrived space.

---

[55] Richard, David. "History of Record Players (A Look at 100 Fascinating Years." Top Record Players. January 24, 2021.; "Tokugawa period." Britannica. Accessed May 9, 2022.

[56] Walworth, Arthur. Black Ships Off Japan: the Story of Commodore Perry's Expedition. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946, 5-6.

[57] Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown*. (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 19.

[58] Kako, Orsolya. "In Deep: The Isolation of Japan." Butterfield & Robinson.

This work, *amidst black flowers and honky tonk angels, sphynxes run amok—Millie S. Claus,* is the next piece that I will focus on as I explore Rozeal's oeuvre. Although not as closely connected to Yoshitoshi as *E.I.N. Intrusion* was, Rozeal did use one of his sketches that featured an escort when creating the work.[59] Completed in 2010, the *amidst black flowers* alludes to another shift in the artists' style—instead of inserting the Black body into historical Japanese works, she is now combining aspects from both cultures and her own mythology, creating a cultural mélange. The difficult transition between Edo and Meiji was the historical focus of Chapter 1. However, for this work, Rozeal seems more clearly focused on the Edo period, investigating and riffing off of its social structure. As such, to better understand the possible relationship between the two men in the image, the first part of this chapter will explore the origins of Hip Hop, the *shinōkōshō* [シノコショウ] system, and how Rozeal combined them.

Two Men

amidst black flowers, and honky tonk angels, sphynxes run amok—Millie S. Claus perfectly blends visual aspects of the Tokugawa shogunate and Hip Hop culture through the background elements and the two seated men. Through these components of the piece, Rozeal parallels the social conditions between the merchants of Edo and the disenfranchised people who created the American Hip Hop culture, while also commenting on the *ganguro* style.

Shinōkōshō [シノコショウ] *System*

Although discussed briefly in the last chapter, the Edo period was an important and long-standing point in Japanese history. The Edo, or Tokugawa, period began in 1603, when Tokugawa Ieyasu assumed the role of shogun after the death of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-

---

[59] Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown*. (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 85.

1598). With this shift in power, Tokugawa, hoping to strengthen his power, moved from Kyoto to Edo, and ushered in over two hundred and fifty years of national unity.[60]

One of the many changes that Tokugawa made was altering the social hierarchy of the working class. Bringing in Neo-Confucian ideology, the government created the *shinōkōshō* system to signify the social placement of their citizens.[61] *Shi*, represented the highest social class and was occupied by the samurai who earned their rank by fighting for the land and their lords. *Nō* referred to the farmers and peasants who produced food for the country. *Kō* stood for the artisans who created everyday materials that the people of Japan used to better themselves. And at the bottom were the merchants in the *shō* class. As the merchants did not create anything and worked with money, they were seen as "parasites in a society full of productive citizens."[62] Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728), a 1720s political writer, expressed the governments thought process saying, "The samurai and peasants have no means of subsistence besides their land. They are constant factors in government, and it is the duty and basic principle of government to see always to their well-being. Merchants, on the other hand, carry on an insignificant occupation…It should be of no concern of government if they ruin themselves."[63] This quote shows the negative perception that merchants worked through and their low status. The *shinōkōshō* system also reflects not only how highly the Tokugawa shogunate viewed those who worked for the country, but also how horribly they viewed money and trade.

However, although the *shinōkōshō* system continued throughout this time, some of the social dynamics within it began to change during the Edo period. The Edo period signified a moment of peace for the country, meaning that the role of the samurai changed from acting as hired soldiers, to being retainers, bureaucrats, or wanderers, depending on their personal dispositions. During this time, the merchant class also rose to more prominence and became *choin* [チョイン], simply meaning townspeople. Later in the Edo period, socializing with different classes also became a more common occurrence—samurai and merchants alike gathered to enjoy the company of courtesans or watch kabuki plays together.[64]

---

[60] "Tokugawa, or Edo, period." Britannica. Accessed May 9, 2022.

[61] Sheldon, Charles D. "Merchants and Society in Tokugawa Japan." *Modern Asian Studies* 17, no. 3 (1983): 477.

[62] Carey, Kate. "Class and Contradiction: Merchants and Expression of Wealth in the Tokugawa Period." *The Stacks History Undergraduate Journal* 1. May 13, 2011.

[63] Sheldon, Charles D. "Merchants and Society in Tokugawa Japan." *Modern Asian Studies* 17, no. 3 (1983): 478.

This change in status for merchants stemmed from the fact that they took measures to protect themselves upon realizing that the government would not assist them. They began working within the domestic sphere, ingratiating themselves with feudal rulers and organizing financial systems that helped the lords far more than the samurai retainers could. This plan worked well for the merchants. Samurai were prohibited from engaging in trade so merchants had an upper hand in both knowledge and necessity. However, this change in status was not a fast process; merchants and moneylenders worked tirelessly to exploit the system and raise their standard of living in the first hundred years of the Edo period, often at the cost of samurai's stipends. It was in this way that merchants assumed a tense working relationship with samurai, who recognized the importance of mercantile work, but also disliked their societal necessity.[65]

It should also be mentioned that merchants behaved differently in each of the three big cities, Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo. Kyoto merchants were associated with the fine items made in the city and emphasized their elevated understanding of culture over the merchants of Osaka and Edo. On the other hand, the merchants of Edo focused on power, and the merchants of Osaka focused primarily on making money.[66] Although merchants were seen as one large group in the eyes of the government, they were not a monolith—depending on location, each merchant had different issues and problems to overcome. It is probable that Rozeal learned about the merchants of the Edo period—their low status and historians' tendency to categorize them as one entity—and saw a mirrored existence in the lives of Black people. However, to better understand this connection, this paper will now turn to understanding the other key historical moment that *amidst black flowers* references, the rise of Hip Hop in America.

---

[64] Szczepanski, Kallie. "The Four-Tiered Class System of Feudal Japan." ThoughtCo. Updated on July 8, 2019.
[65] Sheldon, Charles D. "Merchants and Society in Tokugawa Japan." *Modern Asian Studies* 17, no. 3 (1983): 477–88.
[66] Ibid.

Hip Hop's Origin in the US

Hip Hop began as a cultural movement in the Bronx during the early 1970s. During this time, the Bronx was considered to be one of the worst neighborhoods in New York due to its impoverished community and gang violence.[67] Sparked by the need to speak out about oppressive conditions in the inner city, Hip Hop was started by the marginalized communities of the neighborhood. The genre is said to be a product of the African diaspora that, "combines music, dance, graphic art, oration, and fashion with a growing aesthetic leaning heavily on material objects and media." Began by Afrika Bambaataa, a former gang member himself, Hip Hop became a way for gang members and drug dealers to set aside their work and express themselves in a less violent and dangerous way.[68]

Emmett G. Price, a professor of music and African American studies at Northeastern University, and the author of the book *Hip Hop Culture*, describes the movement as, "a means and method of expression thriving on social commentary, political critique, economic analysis, religious exegesis, and street awareness while combating long-standing issues of racial prejudice, cultural persecution, and social, economic, and political disparities."[69] As such, it would be fair to assume that the transition to Hip Hop culture was not only a civil rights movement, but the natural successor to the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. It was another avenue through which Black people could air grievances concerning their treatment in the United States. However, while the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement both only lasted for a little over a decade, Hip Hop culture has grown and morphed into a global movement that has changed the music and entertainment industries.[70]

---

[67] PQ, Rory. "Hip Hop History: From the Streets to the Mainstream. Iconcollective. November 13, 2019.
[68] Price, Emmett George. *Hip Hop Culture*. Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
[69] Ibid.

In this way, and similar to the merchants of the Edo period, the citizens of the Bronx who began the Hip Hop movement were able to make a place for themselves in a society where none was given. Just as merchants found ways to navigate the *shinōkōshō* system, through Hip Hop, disenfranchised people were able to speak about the problems plaguing the Black community in a way that many could empathize with.

Rozeal's connection between Edo merchants and inner-city Bronx residents may seem extreme, but there is a throughline between them. They were left to their own devices without much or any governmental assistance. And yet, just as merchants were able to grow their wealth and assets to change how they were perceived, so too were historically underrepresented groups able to use music to raise their social status. Both groups, although separated through time and location, showed a resilience that changed their latitude. It is important to understand both the *shinōkōshō* system and Hip Hop in detail to better understand the two men that appear in *amidst black flowers and honky tonk angels, sphynxes run amok—Millie S. Claus.*

Relational Aspects Between the Two Men

amidst black flowers, and honky tonk angels, sphyxes run amok—Millie S. Claus takes place in a fused imagined space of a Kabuki theater and a Hip Hop club. The background is gold, similar to the one shown in *One Hundred Boys* (Figure 7), and yet there are graffiti elements on the top right and bottom left of the image. Graffiti, considered one of the four major elements of Hip Hop culture, allows people to express themselves not only through music, but also through art.[71] The bold blocks of color with a darker outline are reminiscent of graffiti and tagging words on buildings. And yet, no words are detectable, either in Japanese or in English. Instead, they sit as abstract forms, suggesting that graffiti, and by extension, Hip Hop culture, is a global phenomenon that is not limited by language. However, these "graffiti" moments may also be indicative of sound. They could be visual representations of the music that the subwoofers play. The subwoofers themselves may symbolize the growing popularity of Hip Hop in other places in the world during the 1980s and 1990s.

---

[70] Ibid.

The men themselves suggest a blurring of time periods. The man on the left seems to represent an Edo era Japanese merchant, as shown from the clothes that he wears to his sitting position. He is dressed in a blue kimono with an image of large purple grapes on his sleeve. Grapes were thought to symbolize abundance and bounty, perhaps showing the man's position as one of great wealth and prosperity.[72] He sits on his knees in *seiza*, a formal sitting position for Japanese people that developed during the Heian period.[73]

In contrast, the man on the right seems to represent the more modern style of a Hip Hop fan (Figure 8). Unless featuring a laborer or packhorse driver, much of the art from the Edo period does not show men with their arms and chest on display. And yet, this man does not seem bothered by his exposed skin. His clothes seem to suggest that he is from a different era, one in which showing skin in a public setting is normal. The way he sits is also different. Instead of sitting on his knees, he sits on his bottom with his legs crossed in front of him, similar to how people from Westernized societies often choose to seat themselves. The men seem to cross a temporal line—both are presumably Japanese, but from two different points along the timeline. And yet, their different interests can take place in the same place. Both seem content in the entertainment space, whether it be for more traditional Japanese theater or for Hip Hop.

---

[71] Price, Emmett George. *Hip Hop Culture*. Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
[72] "Grapevine." The Met. Accessed May 9. 2022.
[73] "How to Conquer Seiza, the Foreigner's Nightmare." Japanology. Accessed May 9, 2022.

Despite the varied temporality of their clothes though, the men also show evidence of the way Japanese Hip Hop fans show their love of the genre—through visual extravagance. For one, both men seem to be participating in *burakku ni naru*. The skin on their hands and around their face shows them to be quite pale, and yet their faces are a deep brown. They have donned a mask, suggesting that they were looking for a way to feel more accepted in this imagined space. Their hair also seems to point to wanting to 'become black'. The man on the left wears his hair in an afro, while the man on the right wears fake dreads that have been pulled into an up do. These hairstyles were not popular during the Edo period but continue to be worn by Japanese Hip Hop fans in the modern day, similar to the *ganguro* style (Figures 8 and 9).

And yet, even though one can recognize the historically Black hairstyles, Rozeal does not shy away from showing the viewer that these hairstyles do not match the men. For example, instead of sporting curly hair, the man on the left has straight hair that juts out of his scalp, almost mirroring the trim on the sapling's fur coat. Through this hair texture, one can understand that the afro is most likely fake, a simulacrum of what an afro would more normally look like.

However, despite these outwardly racialized elements, Rozeal has taken care in their depiction—the style mirrors that of an *ukiyo-e* print. The bright colors and boldly defined lines suggest the idea of reproducibility, a visual technique that Rozeal likely mastered when she was conducting her research into Yoshitoshi's work. In this way, Rozeal does not seem to show a hostility towards how Japanese people choose to embrace Hip Hop culture, but an acceptance of it.

This chapter will now turn to understanding the second social component of *amidst black flowers and honky tonk angels, sphynxes run amok—Millie S. Claus* by taking a closer look at the courtesan. Through this figure, Rozeal once again touches on aspects of Edo period society while simultaneously speaking about women's rights and their historic placement in society.

Sapling and Cats

The sapling, Kaede, is another figure that Rozeal made as part of her mythology. Similar to E.I.N., the saplings have a rich backstory and play an important part in her creation myth. Rozeal created the saplings as figures that existed, "in a metaphysical realm like heaven". When the saplings came of age, they would be sent to a facsimile of Earth where they were expected to carry out certain assignments, almost akin to religious missionaries. However, their journeys were not always easy. While on the quasi-earth, they would have to fight temptations that were introduced through Rozeal's host of villains. The goal of these villains was to make sure the saplings strayed from their rightful path, ensuring that their assignment failed. The saplings were not alone in this quest though.[74] Aiding them was the Council of Voices, a, "group of female oracles that mediate between the heavenly and earthly realms," who would help the saplings at key points in their journey.[75]

Rozeal states that saplings wear brown bodysuits, but their skin is actually gray. The artist did this to comment on the fact that, "bodies, like suits, are imperfect, randomly colored and sized vessels that temporarily hold the formless essence of one's soul."[76] Although referring to a person's skin-tone and body as 'random' may be thought of as demeaning, I do not think that Rozeal meant it that way. Instead, the artist may have been referring to the idea of genetics. People's skin tone and body shape, although impacted by the environment, are in large part formed through the traits that their parents pass on to them.[77] In this sense, one's skin tone and body can be thought of as 'random' as it is difficult to know which traits will be passed on ahead of time.And yet, Rozeal wanted to show that even though a sapling's bodysuit is superfluous, it is still tied to their identity. The artist stated in an interview that, "In Japan, I am hyperaware of my identity because I am surrounded by Japanese people who look very different from me."[78] Even though she recognized that, on a general level, she was not that different from Japanese people, her Blackness, her bodysuit, separated her from the people around her.

---

[74] Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown*. (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 19

[75] Ibid, 39

Each sapling also has a headdress with headphones that allows them to both communicate with enlightened beings and protect them from negative influences, such as E.I.N. In Kaede's case, the headdress has been removed, disconnecting her from the heavens and allowing her to be attacked and debased by the world around her. Rozeal states that, due in part to the absence of a positive male presence, Kaede has become a prostitute, using her head protrusions to entertain her male customers.[79]

In *amidst black flowers*, I argue that Kaede takes on the position of a high-level prostitute or courtesan, entertaining the two men and catering to their needs. Similar to the skin that Josephine Baker slips on when doing her performances, so too does Kaede slip into her performance as a courtesan for the two men.[80] Although the sapling has some key differences to a courtesan—she is not human and has much darker skin—they share quite a few similarities.

---

[76] Ibid, 43

[77] "Genetics". National Institute of General Medical Sciences. Accessed 29 April 2023.

[78] Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown*. (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 43.

[79] Ibid, 44.

Courtesans

Courtesans were often found in entertainment districts and were quite popular as they allowed men to give into their desires.[81] Although Rozeal does not delineate what kind of courtesan Kaede is meant to be, it is probable that she was meant to be a rather high-level courtesan given the fact that she is able to entertain the men with music.

Although largely unregulated (most entertainers outside of the *shinōkōshō* systems were), courtesans enjoyed a level of success and fame. The red-light district and brothels were enjoyed by many during the Edo period.[82] Courtesans were skilled entertainers, well-versed in singing, classical dance, music, and conversation. However, despite their celebrity status, the life of a courtesan was a grueling one that took away the autonomy of the young women who were part of it. Cecilia Segawa Seigle, Professor Emerita of Japanese Studies in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Pennsylvania, goes so far as to describe the process as a "near-slave system," a comparison that emphasizes the working conditions and treatment of the courtesans during this time.[83]

Many of the women who became courtesans had little choice in the matter, as they were either given to brothels or forced into them. Despite this, brothels were romanticized to a high degree. Some girls, whose mothers were courtesans, even grew up wanting to be courtesans themselves. They were dazzled by the idea of wearing beautiful dresses and being the subject of conversation. These young girls were not yet aware of the many trials that came with being a courtesan, the biggest and most disturbing of which was to work for men who made them uncomfortable.

---

[80] Cheng, Anne Anlin. *Second Skin: Josephine Baker & the Modern Surface*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

[81] Seigle, Cecilia Segawa. Yoshiwara : the Glittering World of the Japanese Courtesan. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993, xii.

[82] Szczepanski, Kallie. "The Four-Tiered Class System of Feudal Japan." ThoughtCo. Updated on July 8, 2019.

[83] Seigle, Cecilia Segawa. Yoshiwara : the Glittering World of the Japanese Courtesan. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993, ix

On top of having to sell their bodies, each courtesan was also tied to a contract that stayed with them throughout their career and allowed them to be bought by wealthy patrons. It was almost impossible for courestesans to escape the work, with some choosing instead to take their own life.[84] Thankfully, the notoriety of the legal brothel system was short-lived in the span of Japanese history, eventually being phased out as the *geisha* profession in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries rose to prominence.[85] However, that does not erase the fact that for close to two hundred years, many women were trapped in a system that they could not escape from. These women had very little autonomy, instead being forced to work for their brothels and the men that they served. They were equipped with many of the skills and education that could bolster them in society but given no avenues with which to better themselves.

This knowledge makes the image of Kaede in *amidst black flowers* all the more heartbreaking. It is likely that she is stuck in this work, with no feasible way to escape it. As such, it seems that Rozeal was apt to refer to the sapling as, "alone, miserable, and desperately in need of help."[86]

Kaede uses her protrusions to select and play music for her patrons, mimicking how a courtesan might play a traditional Japanese instrument, such as the *koto* [琴]. The traditional Japanese instrument has been replaced with speakers, vinyl records, and a turntable that appears on the right side of the image. Kaede's pose, make up, and clothes also mirror a courtesan's. She uses a record to hide her mouth similar to how a courtesan might use a traditional Japanese fan to do the same. In this case, it seems that the sapling is attempting to be coy as she allows one of the samurai to play with her roots, giving him some freedom with her body as she hides her thoughts and emotions. She is most likely attempting to hide her discomfort as the man lewdly grabs her. His hand mimics that of Gabrielle's sister in the highly sexualized piece, *Gabrielle D'Estrees and One of Her Sisters* from 1594 (Figure 10). Due to the half-naked women in the bathtub, as well as the clear pinching of Gabrielle's nipple, many have taken this piece to be highly erotic. The action is precise, yet abnormal. Rozeal most likely referenced this eroticized moment. However, unlike the relative calm that the two women display in *Gabrielle D'Estrees and One of Her Sisters,* Kaede seems deeply uncomfortable with the samurai's action.

---

[84] Ibid. 182.

[85] Acar, Adam. "Are Geisha Courtesans? Oiran vs. Geisha and Prostitute" Maikoya. 13 May 2021. This highlights the distinct differences between courtesans and *geisha*. Although the two terms would sometimes be conflated in Western text, it is important to note that courtesan did participate in sexual acts, while *geisha* did not.

[86] Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown*. (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 44.

The sapling also mirrors a courtesan through her makeup. Similar to how a courtesan might illuminate their face using *oshiroi* [おしろい], the white makeup that covers their face and neck, Kaede's actual face is gray. Courtesan used white makeup as they wanted to make sure that their patrons would see them. These women would not have been able to rely on the bright electrical light of modern times, instead only having candlelight to aid them.[87] As such, their makeup would call attention to their faces and their beauty.

However, although Rozeal mimicked the style of a courtesan, she may be making a commentary around colorism—a discriminatory practice that is prevalent among communities with darker-skinned people. Although colorism affects many cultural groups around the world, from India to China, this paper will focus on its nuances in the Black community. As with many of the prejudice's surrounding African Americans, colorism can be connected to the era of chattel slavery. The skin color of enslaved children would vary, depending on whether the African mother chose to procreate with an African man, or she was assaulted by her white slave owner. This practice continued for years and resulted in Black people having a range of skin tones, from those who are fair-skinned and those who are darker. As American society progressed past chattel slavery, people were stratified by the color of their skin, with lighter skinned people having more opportunity and freedom compared to their darker skinned counterparts. Although less outwardly shown, this stereotype has continued into the present day, with many people implicitly preferring lighter skinned people over darker skinned.[88] In the case of *amidst black flowers*, Kaede's selling point as a courtesan could be her lighter, gray skin that makes her more appealing to her patron.

---

[87] Prasso, Sheridan. *The Asian Mystique: Dragon Ladies, Geisha Girls, and Our Fantasies of the Exotic Orient.* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2006). 56

In terms of clothing, the courtesan's *kimono*[着物] has been contemporized and replaced with Kaede's fur coat. The typical patterns on a kimono—flowers, birds, or landscape features—and their symbolism have been replaced with the repeated phrase "another one." Although the first reference one may think of could be DJ Khaled's "another one!" from his song *How Many Times*, that song did not come out until 2015, five years after *amidst black flowers* was created.[89] A possible reading then could be that the sapling's "another one" is a reference to the amount of people that she has been forced to serve—a symbol of the never-ending work that she has been subjected to. In these ways, Rozeal has managed to create a throughline between the courtesans of the Edo period and Kaede.

Title

---

[88] "Take a Test." Project Implicit. Accessed 28 December 2022.

[89] Devin. "Video: DJ Khaled Feat. Chris Brown, Lil Wayne, & Big Sean – "How Many Times'. Rap-Up. 11 May 2015.

Rozeal is unafraid to bring up the issues of gender that plague the world, regardless of location. This is also evident in the first and last parts of her title for the piece, "amidst black flowers and honky tonk angels" and "Millie S. Claus". During the early to mid-2000s, Rozeal became increasingly interested in music and the titles of her pieces became references to certain musical artists or lyrics. In this case, "black flowers" refers to the 1993 song of the same name by Fishbone, an all-Black rock band. The band described the black flowers as people who became lost or misguided due to societal pressure.[90] Kaede is shown to be a black flower, an individual who has lost her way when she decided (or was forced) to become a courtesan.

The phrase "honky tonk angels" most likely comes from the collaborative country album by Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn, and Tammy Wynette that was released in 1993. [91] It was inspired by the 1952 song, "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels," by Kitty Wells which shamed married men for cheating on their wives with other women.[92] Rozeal has made it clear that she has very little agency in her life. The men made the conscious decision to visit her, and she is merely doing her job. As such she would be considered a honky tonk angel who would have been shamed for her line of work.

"Millie S. Claus" most likely refers to the 1991 song *Millie Pulled a Pistol on Santa* by De La Soul in which Millie, who was physically and sexually abused by her father, eventually killed him while he was at work as a mall Santa.[93] The title is written to be a quote from Millie herself, creating two different effects. Through the title, Rozeal gives Millie a platform to explain herself, which she did not have previously, as the song's lyrics were written from a man's perspective. The title also highlights the fact that many women and girls are abused by the very people who are meant to take care of them; although fictional, Millie is one of many victims. In this case, Kaede who grew up with an abusive caretaker, can only dream of one day getting revenge on the person who ruined her life.[94] The title is as much an outlet for the sapling as it is for Millie.

---

[90] "Fishbone – Black Flowers." Genius. Accessed 28 December 2022.
[91] "Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette – Honky Tonk Angels." Discogs. Accessed 28 December 2022.
[92] "Kitty Wells – It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels." Genius. Accessed 28 December 2022
[93] "De La Soul - Millie Pulled a Pistol on Santa." Genius. Accessed 28 December 2022.

For this work, Rozeal chose songs from what could be considered the golden period of Hip Hop, the early 1990s. However, her choice in songs may also highlight a time in American history when the Black experience was especially fraught—the 1992 Los Angeles race riots. Although brought about by the unnecessary force used in the arrest of Rodney King, the riots that took place disproportionately attacked Koreatown and the Korean American Community that lived there. The racism that undergirded both attacks became a deep wound for both the Black and Korean American communities.[95] By no means am I trying to say that all Asian Americans share the same lived experience by bringing up Korean Americans in this discussion—I merely use this to show that Rozeal may have been referencing another time when tensions between African Americans and Asian Americans were high.

Although Rozeal makes poignant references to the status of courtesans and women, her title and composition direct the viewer's eyes to the bottom of the image. The phrase "sphynxes run amok" likely refers to the sphynx cat that lies at the sapling's feet, unaware and uncaring of the complicated proceedings that happen above. Instead, the cat is focused on the crumbs of food that the men must have dropped throughout their stay. The only force keeping the cat from eating the food remains is the larger, fluffy cat that bites its tail.

---

[94] Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown*. (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 44.
[95] Dillon, Elizabeth Maddock & Sarah Connell. "LA Riots Impact on the Korean American Community." Northeastern University, Department of English, Literature and Digital Diversity. Accessed 28 December 2022.

Here, we see a cycle of repeating events. Just as Kaede's caretaker failed her, because of her work as a courtesan, she fails to be a good caretaker herself. The cat—which could be an animalistic representation of a small child—is left to fend for itself as Kaede is incapable of giving it the attention it needs. If it weren't for the fluffy cat coming to the sphynx cat's aid, the curious kitten would be forced to fend for itself in a world that is not kind to it. In this way, Rozeal has created a scene that represents the generational problems that can come about when people do not have the capacity to nurture the future generation.

Conclusion

Although the tension between the African American and Japanese Hip Hop scenes is apparent, the conversations that stem from these disagreements are largely productive, allowing for deeper cultural understanding. For example, in a chapter of the book, *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, Rhiannon Fink explains why Japanese fans show their enthusiasm for Hip Hop in such a different way. She writes, "…most of the kids don't have the language or the cultural context to understand so much of Hip Hop—the issues of racial separation, isolation, class/income stratification, social (dis)enfranchisement—they tend to go for the access road that's open to them and are heavily dependent on appearance."[96] Fink goes on to write that this lack of understanding can go both ways. Just as Japanese people do not understand the nuance of Hip Hop, so too do many African Americans misunderstand Japanese popular culture, such as anime. Also, it is disingenuous to both minority cultural groups to paint them as a monolith—many Japanese Hip Hop fans *do* try to understand the underlying layers of racial tension and not all African Americans are outraged by how Japanese people engage with Hip Hop.[97]

---

[96] Fink, Rhiannon L., and ROBIN D. G. KELLEY. "Negotiating Ethnicity and Authenticity in Tokyo's Club Harlem." In *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, edited by Dipannita Basu and Sidney J. Lemelle, 200–207. Pluto Press, 2006.

Fink's article was released in 2006, so it is highly likely that sentiments around this subject have changed. However, Fink shows that, despite the friction between the two cultures, some Black Hip Hop fans have tried to understand and accept how Japanese people express their love for the genre. Part of this difference in reception may be due to the fact that, as was stated before, there is not a power differential between the two groups. In the United States, anti-Black racism will always be tied to the power differential between Black people and white people—white people enjoyed an almost incomprehensible amount of power at the expense of Black labor. As the relationship between Japanese Hip Hop fans and Black Americans is not tied to a violent and exploitative history, it makes sense that the two groups would bear little ill will towards each other.

amidst black flowers was created around the same time as the article in 2010, so it is possible that Rozeal felt similarly to Fink on the assimilation of Hip Hop culture even while being deeply uncomfortable by the *ganguro* style. That is, although it was messy, Hip Hop's rise as a global phenomenon proved it was possible for two disparate cultures to appreciate one another.

amidst black flowers and honky tonk angels, sphynxes run amok—Millie S. Claus is emblematic of the next step of Rozeal's career. Her respect for Japanese culture and history remains even as her work can seem somewhat appropriative. No longer is she reimaging the work of old *ukiyo-e* masters; instead, she is now creating her own story that combines the complicated history and past of Japan and Black America to form a continuous feedback loop.

---

[97] Ibid.

However, perhaps her most ambitious combination of cultures can be seen in the next work that this thesis looks at, *El Oso Me Pregunto*.

Chapter 3: On the Edges of Memory: References Known and Unknown

Introduction

A black woman is shown looking back at the viewer in a very close shot (Figure 11). Her natural hair has been done up in braids on her scalp before turning into the afro puff hairstyle. Although the majority of her skin is brown, there are some areas—her hands, her face and her neck—that seem to have been painted a light blue. These areas are incongruent with the rest of the piece, as they do not follow the curves of the central figure's body. Across her back and arms is a large tattoo of a snake that seems to slither across her body with the head appearing at the nape of her neck. Although mostly nude, she wears a pearl necklace and gold chains around her neck, referencing both the elegance and high-class status that is synonymous with pearls in Western culture and the gold chains that are a large visual indicator of Black fashion. She also wears a white fur coat whose texture seems to be quite soft. To the right of the woman is a text box that shows a bear in pajamas yelling at her. Almost in spite of the bear's cozy dress, he seems to be furious with the woman—not a dangerous figure, but not a comforting one either. The artist also seems to be playing with the background and foreground of the piece. Although the woman is the central figure of the work, the blue background seems to bleed into her; the color spills onto both her hair and her coat. The text box also seems to drip, making it unclear what her position and relation to the other elements in the piece is.

The last artwork of Rozeal's that this thesis will look at is one of her latest creations, *El Oso Me Pregunto*. Completed in 2016, this print deviates the most from her initial curiosity and discomfort surrounding the *ganguro* style. Unlike *E.I.N. Intrusion (watch out for the big girls)* (Figure 1) and *amidst black flowers and honky tonk angels, sphyxes run amok—Millie S. Claus*

(Figure 6), which contained many disparate but clear references to Black and Japanese culture, *El Oso Me Pregunto's* references are more ambiguous in nature. Although the piece continues to explore the relationship between Black and Japanese culture, Rozeal seems to have also added references from the Western world. As such, additions such as the Spanish title and pearl necklaces confuse the viewer and make them wonder—why did Rozeal create this? What point was she trying to get across?

Although the information surrounding Rozeal's career is sparse, thanks to previous exhibitions, there is at least some scholarly work surrounding her *afro-asiatic allegories* series. Many of Rozeal's pieces that reside in museum collections span the period of her career between the early 2000s and 2010. As such, there is more information available regarding her earlier works than her later ones, making *El Oso Me Pregunto* especially difficult to parse. As was stated in the introduction, the artist is also quite private, meaning that she has yet to speak about her inspiration and rationale surrounding this piece. The dearth of information is rather restrictive for a historical analysis; however, it also allows for a rather open-ended visual analysis.

Although there are many possible readings of the work, this thesis will attempt to look at *El Oso Me Pregunto* as an extension of Rozeal's earlier work instead of a stark departure from it. Unlike many of her other archival pigment prints, such as the *you opened my eyes man, thought i had a man, but how could i eye scan* series from 2008, which featured vibrant color and digitized shading, *El Oso Me Pregunto* is more similar in style to her earlier works (Figure 12). From the coloring of the woman's skin to the detail on her fur coat, the figure seems to be the next in a sequence of Rozeal's women who are put in difficult and dangerous positions because of the men they serve and the society that they are a part of.

To strengthen my argument of *El Oso Me Pregunto* being an extension of her earlier oeuvre, I will mine the rich referential landscape of *El Oso Me Pregunto* to better understand each element found on the woman's body. This examination should, in turn, allow the reader to understand the piece from a point of view that centers the intersection between race and psychology, similar to Rozeals works in the *afro-asiatic allegories* series.

That being said, I would be remiss to not address the many differences between *El Oso Me Pregunto* and the works examined in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis. Perhaps the most subtle difference is the change in medium. Instead of creating a work that could be described as, "mixed media," *El Oso Me Pregunto*, of which there are thirty-three copies, is an archival pigment print that was printed at different sizes. Eight are larger in size, 40 inches x 30 inches, and have the addition of a hand-applied gold leaf overlay by the artist. It is difficult to see where the gold leaf is applied through digital reproductions, but videos show that the gold leaf was applied to the chains that the woman wears.[98] Additionally, Rozeal made twenty-five smaller versions of the work (24 inches x 18 inches) that omit the gold leaf element.[99] Although it is unclear why Rozeal chose to make 33 copies exactly, this choice, and the process of printmaking as it relates to woodblock printing, will be further uncovered in the following section.

Printmaking

By making *El Oso Me Pregunto* a print, Rozeal has created a different connection between herself and Yoshitoshi—one that is not focused on the subject matter of the art, but the medium. As was discussed in Chapter 1, woodblock prints allowed for a sort of democratization of art. No longer was it only accessible to those who could afford one-off masterpieces; instead, many people were able to own pieces for a low price thanks to the inherent reproducibility of the medium. Rozeal uses this concept, that of supply and demand, in both *El Oso Me Pregunto* and her other prints. If, instead, Rozeal had chosen to make *El Oso Me Pregunto* a single mixed media work, as she had done previously, that singular piece would be worth much more than any of her thirty-three prints. By slightly increasing the number of prints available, she has managed to ever-so-slightly lower the cost of her works while also ensuring that she can continue to make a living off her art. For example, because Rozeal chose to make the work a print, smaller museums, such as the University of Nebraska's Sheldon Museum of Art, were able to purchase and collect her work.[100]

---

[98] Moss Arts Center, Virginia Tech. "All Access: Rozeal." April 27, 2020.
[99] "Rozeal-El Oso Me Pregunto" Artsy. Accessed 13 January 2023

The print medium also changes the subject matter that Rozeal works with. In the singular pieces of *E.I.N. Intrusion* and *amidst black flowers,* Rozeal was able to be extremely specific in her references and allusions. I believe that through those works, she felt a freedom to remix Yoshitoshi's work and center blackface in a way that may have been uncomfortable for certain viewers. Her goal with them was not necessarily to create an image that many could empathize with, but to make a space where she could process her thoughts concerning *ganguro*. *El Oso Me Pregunto,* on the other hand, has a much more open-ended argument, paradoxically making it more digestible to a general audience. Different people might pick out and notice different elements of the work, but it allows an audience to remain engaged and curious. This openendedness is most likely an element of craft that *ukiyo-e* painters had to be mindful of when creating their works as well.

---

[100] "From Lace to Chains: The Making of a Print." Sheldon Art Museum. 2018.

There's no denying, however, that there is still a large difference in access between owning an *ukiyo-e* print in the Edo period and owning one of Rozeal's prints in the present day. For one, there is the fact that there could hypothetically be thousands of *ukiyo-e* prints made from one design. In contrast, Rozeal and many contemporary printmakers limit the number they make.

Without in-depth knowledge of Edo period reproduction principles and a clear understanding of why Rozeal chose to make thirty-three copies of *El Oso Me Pregunto*, it is unclear why this difference in reproduction occurred. One possible reason that Walter Benjamin proposes in his essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," is that as technology advanced in the Western world, reproducing certain media became easier, changing how that art was viewed and valued.[101] As such, the idea of producing multiple copies of a work became a lesser art form in the Western world. To combat this idea while also continuing to work in the medium, printmakers may have chosen to decrease the number of prints they made. The change in reproducibility may not only be due to technological advancement though, but also to changes in Western society and thought. For example, French philosopher Charles Batteaux introduced the concept of "high" and "low" art in the eighteenth-century. Batteaux created an arbitrary stratification between different mediums and styles of production, resulting in painting and sculpture being valued higher than prints and craft work. [102] Again, the lesser value that was equated with printmaking may be why Rozeal, and other modern printmakers, chose to produce smaller batches. Although it is almost impossible to ascertain whether these changes in reproduction are due to temporal factors or not, *El Oso Me Pregunto* invites the viewer to think about how and why printmaking has changed in the last few hundred years.

---

[101] Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations*. (New York: Schocken Books, 1969)

[102] Fisher, John A. "High Art Versus Low Art." In *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 474.

Alongside these differences in number and accessibility of prints, there is also a distinct difference in the printmaking processes. *Ukiyo-e* prints relied on a number of skilled craftsmen—a publisher, artist, carver, and printer—to bring the artwork to life. The publisher acted as the manager of the project, commissioning the artist and making sure that they had the necessary materials to create the work. The artist would design the print, select the colors, and work closely with the carver to bring their design to life. The carver acted as the woodworker, pasting the drawing onto a block of wood, and carving into it to attain the negative version of the original print. The printer (or more often, a production line of printers) would then be in charge of pressing the blocks onto paper to create prints. The printmaking process was fine-tuned, and although it required a lot of time and energy, the prints themselves were still relatively cheap, with the price of a print being equal to, "a double helping of noodles."[103]

An archival pigment print, in comparison, is created in a much less time-consuming way and is emblematic of the mechanized, efficient, and highly accurate production of the 21st century. As the name suggests, archival pigment prints are long-lasting and high-quality, with the ability to serve as an archive if need be. It is created using a digital image, inkjet printer, and pigment-based ink. Although it is a print, the method of printing focuses more on individual pieces that are meant to last rather than producing a large quantity of work.[104] This may be another reason why Rozeal chose to make so few copies of *El Oso Me Pregunto*. With archival pigment prints, she could have a small number of pieces that could extend past her lifetime even if they were not in the care of a museum.

---

[103] Salter, Rebecca. *Japanese Woodblock Printing.* (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 11; MacGregor, Niel. "Mass Production, Mass Persuasion (1780 – 1914), Hokusai's The Great Wave" BBC. 13 October 2010. 6

Despite the varied conditions within which Rozeal created *El Oso Me Pregunto*, there were still a number of ways that she was able to pay homage to *ukiyo-e* painters such as Yoshitoshi. Although the medium served as a key difference between this work and the pieces captured in the previous two chapters, this paper will now turn to understanding how the central figure relates to the large black woman and Kaede. Similar to these women, the central figure is both literally and figuratively the center of the piece. As such, Rozeal is able to comment on the current milieu in which women exist.

Central Figure

Although this paper will attempt to share a cohesive list and analysis of each of the woman's referential elements, it is likely that a few may be skipped or analyzed incorrectly. However, as this is one of the first papers of scholarly focus on the work, I hope that this chapter will act as a jumping off point for future analysis. To create a semblance of order, this paper will begin analyzing the central figure from top to bottom.

Hair

---

[104] McCarty, Michael. "What is an Archival Pigment Print?" Tribeca Printworks. 10 February 2021.

Beginning with the figure's hair, the woman seems to have styled her naturally curly hair into two different hairstyles that are currently popular within the Black community. The hair closest to her scalp has been braided, while the rest has been twisted into afro puffs. [105] When compared to the afro worn by the man in *kimono* in *amidst black flowers*, there is a clear distinction between the hairstyles. Whereas his hair seemed to have a straight texture that was painted pure black, this woman's afro has life. One can make out the individual coils and curls while the different hues of blue show an attention to detail that was lacking in the samurai's hairstyle. Where his was shown to be one-dimensional, this woman's hair has volume and is a central part of both her and the work.

The central figure's eyebrows also have a distinct shape, similar to Kaede's in *amongst black flowers.* Here, Rozeal seems to make a direct reference to her sapling mythology, perhaps saying that this woman is an evolved form of a sapling. She no longer needs a bodysuit and the elaborate headdress to protect her. Instead, it seems that her natural hair and skin tone are on full display.

Despite the fact that the viewer cannot see the woman's ears, she wears at least one triangular bamboo earring. Bamboo earrings became a favored fashion choice for Black women in the 1980s and were popularized by artists such as Salt-N-Pepa, MC Lyte, and Roxanne Shante.[106] Bamboo is also important to Japanese craftsmanship and many areas of historical life, from militaristic to spiritual.[107] Said to symbolize, "flexibility, resilience, and uprightness," the bamboo may represent the woman's inner strength. [108] In this way, the bamboo earring is most likely both a nod to the woman's Blackness and to Japanese culture.

---

[105] Davis-Sivasothy, Audrey. *The Science of Transitioning: A Complete Guide to Hair Care for Transitioners and New Naturals*. (Texas: SAJA Publishing Company. 22 December 2015), 306

[106] Solomon, Jadriena. "A History of The Black Woman's "Ghetto Fabulous" Statement Accessory: The Bamboo Earring." 21nintey. 31 January 2022.

[107] Bess, Nancy Moore., and Bibi. Wein. Bamboo in Japan. 1st ed. Tokyo ;: Kodansha International, 2001. This specifically looks at bamboo in Japan and its uses and symbolism.

Face

Directly under the woman's eyebrows, one sees the beginning of a gold chain that is wrapped around the woman's head before trailing down her back. She wears her pearl necklace in a similar fashion, with part of the band sitting just above her thicker gold chains. Here, it seems that Rozeal is pulling from two different points in history.

The gold chains are items often representative of the mid-90s and early 2000s Black rappers and Hip Hop artists such as Jay-Z and Snoop Dogg (Figures 13 and 14). Although many in American society consider it poor form to wear such extravagant signs of wealth, a 2018 article from the American Institute for Economic Research offers the perspective that it is actually a savvy economic practice.

Throughout America's history, Black people have been given less leniency and opportunity in the country, often leading them to be distrustful of those in power. The article begins by making the claim that, because rap and Hip Hop were born from "gangster culture," the people in those professions could be dealing with a high degree of legal risk. The article then goes on to offer an explanation why this would make rappers and Hip Hop artists choose to wear their wealth, saying, "In the tradition of American policing and corrections, the police have no trouble freezing your bank assets, taking your car, and even surrounding and confiscating your home. When you are arrested, however, what you have on your person is given back to you later."[109] Thus, by wearing the chains and other expensive accessories, an individual would be able to retain their wealth even if they did have a run-in with the law.

---

[108] Ibid, 18

Although I find this source problematic—it lumps professions such as rapper and Hip Hop artists with illegal jobs such as drug dealer and pimp—it nevertheless offers an explanation as to how gold chains were considered a fashion symbol for the Black community.

However, the gold chains are not the only jewelry that the woman dons. Alongside the chains, the woman wears a pearl necklace. Pearls have been an important signifier of wealth and power in Western culture since ancient Greece. Commonly worn by Western nobility and aristocracy from the fifteenth century to the twentieth, pearls were often featured in famous works such as Vermeer's *Girl with the Pearl Earring* and his *Woman with a Pearl Necklace* (Figures 15 and 16). [110] However, the pearls may also harken back to the long pearl necklaces that women wore in the 1920s during the Jazz Age, a moment when Black people had more power and agency than ever before, but at the cost of their music and fashion being appropriated.[111] Whatever moment in time Rozeal borrows from, it seems that the pearls are steeped in Western culture.

The figure wears both, putting both historical Western fashion and contemporary Black fashion in conversation with one another. She, being a Black woman, is influenced by both her Blackness and society's whiteness. However, the jewelry seems to act as both a source of pride and a possible source of constriction. The pearl necklace and gold chain act as a circlet around her forehead, almost as though she is a proud summation of two very different and distinct cultures. In the same way though, these long pieces circle her body, almost as though they chain her down. For as much as she displays a state of calm, it is impossible to determine where the chains start and end or why they fall in the way they do. It becomes unclear whether she is in control of these chains, or whether they are in control of her. Rozeal complicates what an object is in *El Oso Me Pregunto* and makes the viewer wonder whether the woman is wearing the finery, or the other way around.

---

[109] Tucker, Jeffrey A. "Why Drug Dealers, Rappers, and Pimps Wear Their Wealth." American Institute for Economic Research. 14 February 2018.
[110] Dirlam, Dona M. Elise B. Misiorowski, and Sally A. Thomas. "Pearl Fashion Through the Ages." Gemological Institute of America. 1985, 63, 67.
[111] Barlow, William. "Black Music on Radio During the Jazz Age." *African American Review* 29, no. 2 (1995): 325–28.

Furthering this idea of objectification, one also notices the f-shaped holes that appear on the woman's cheeks. Although these mirror the holes found on a violin, it is possible that Rozeal was referencing a famous Western work by Man Ray, *Le Violin d'Ingres* or *Ingres Violin* (Figure 17). In this photograph, completed in 1924, the viewer sees a naked woman, Kiki, from behind. Her skin is smooth and untouched except for two f-holes that appear on the center of her back. By doing so, Man Ray, "altered what was originally a classical nude," and simultaneously created a work that held, "a tension between objectification and appreciation of the female form."[112] The woman seems shy as she turns back toward the camera, almost as though she is asking the viewer what they think of the change to her body and her transformation from human to musical instrument.

Similarly, I believe that the f-holes on the woman's face in *El Oso Me Pregunto* seem to mark her as an object that can be used and discarded at the viewer's whim. However, unlike *Le Violin d'Ingres,* this woman does not seem to be afraid of this objectification, but embraces it head on. She is shown in an unnatural pose, her neck craning to a painful degree, in order to see her face from a three-quarter view. Despite this, she seems unfazed by the awkward position and instead looks at the viewer with a calm demeanor.

---

[112] "Le Violon d'Ingres (Ingres's Violin). Getty Museum. Accessed January 16, 2023.

Unlike Kiki, who wore nothing but a turban and some earrings for her depiction, Rozeal has further complicated the classical nude figure. The figure in *El Oso Me Pregunto* is not an untouched canvas waiting to be molded like Kiki was in *Le Violin d'Ingres*, but instead touts an individuality in her depiction. She chooses to have her hair out, wear many different types of jewelry, and proudly show her tattoo. Thus, it seems that if she is to be an instrument, she is not one that is easily played. Between both the f-holes and the circlet, it is clear that even as this woman is twisted and constricted to fit into different societal niches, she still strives to retain her personhood.

Body

The woman's body is perhaps the most difficult aspect to parse as there is so much going on. Although the necklaces have been discussed in the previous section, there are still a number of references to uncover. Most noticeable is the snake tattoo that slithers along the woman's shoulder and back. Similar to the bamboo earring, this could be another instance through which Rozeal is connecting Western and Japanese culture. In Westernized societies, tattoos, although once harshly judged, have become more acceptable in recent years. In America alone, over a third of the population is said to have at least one tattoo, an increased number from years past.[113]

However, unlike in Westernized societies, even though thoughts around tattoos are shifting in Japan, they are still rather contentious. In the early 1700s, tattoos were used as punishment for those who had committed non-violent crime. Although they gained some slight popularity with the lower and working class during the late Edo period, they were fully banned in 1872 by the Japanese government. The ban was enacted due to the beginning of the Meiji period and the government's subsequent yearning to be seen as 'civilized' in the eyes of Western nations.[114] Even though change is happening, it is moving at a snail's pace. In her New York Times article from 2022, Hikari Hida wrote that, "Many beaches, hot spring resorts and gyms [still] do not admit people with tattoos," as they are associated with organized crime, specifically the yakuza.[115]

---

[113] Wise, Jason. "Tattoo Statistics 2023: Industry, Regret, Removal & Artist Facts." Earthweb. Last Updated 7 April 2023.

The yakuza play an important role in understanding why tattoos are still considered taboo in Japan. Involved with many criminal activities—including prostitution and racketeering—the yakuza have existed in Japanese culture for hundreds of years and consider themselves the keepers of older Japanese community and society. However, despite their criminal backgrounds, yakuza are also quite helpful members of society, assisting those who need help and protecting people when necessary. It is these actions that keep them from being completely outcast from society.[116] And yet, understandably, many do not want to share any connection with the criminal group, making tattoos largely frowned upon.

However, it seems that the meaning behind yakuza members' tattoos and Westernized tattoos share some commonalities. In a BBC article following the experience of visual artist, Anton Kusters, who embedded himself within the yakuza for two years, he described the idea that tattoos donned by yakuza members are meant to symbolize a scene or moment from that person's life. Kusters wrote that one person had a tattoo of a, "koi swimming upstream, which signifie[d] a strong will and the power to overcome something."[117] It is clear then that, similar to countries like America, tattoos are an outward representation of the self and are symbols of pride for the person who have them.

---

[114] Moore, Madison. "From Punishment to Pride: a brief history of Japanese tattoos." Antithesis Journal. 23 October 2020.

[115] Hida, Hikari. "Shifting Norms on Tattoos in Japan." The New York Times. 23 April 2022.

[116] Virk, Kameron. "Tattoos in Japan: Why they're so tied to the yakuza." BBC. 21 September 2019.

Looking at the woman's tattoo in *El Oso Me Pregunto,* the snake is most likely meant to represent an aspect of her life and history. According to *The Tattoo Encyclopedia: A Guide to Choosing Your Tattoo* by Terisa Green, snake tattoos have many meanings. They can represent life due to their ability to shed their skin and take on new forms, as well as death, since venomous snakes are able to kill with a single bite. They also change meaning depending on the culture that they come from, symbolizing the underworld for some cultures.[118] In this case, Rozeal may be trying to signal to the viewer that some aspect of the woman has been killed and then reborn. Perhaps working in tandem with the bamboo earring, the snake tattoo could represent that the woman overcame adversity and is now better for it. Perhaps she has figured out how to maintain her individuality even while she is made to be an object.

The woman also wears a white fur coat that is lined with red fabric. Although the fur coat could be further reference to the luxury objects that Black people use as a way to maintain their wealth, I believe that it is actually a return to Rozeal's earlier works. In both *E.I.N Intrusion (watch out for the big girls)* and *amidst black flowers and honky tonk angels, sphynxes run amok—Millie S. Claus,* the black woman and Kaede wear robes that have fur on them. The color of the fur changes in each of them—from brown to black to white—but the quick, thin lines and seemingly fluffy texture are consistent in each work. As such, Rozeal is making a visual connection between her older works from her *afro asian allegories* series and *El Oso Me Pregunto*.

---

[117] Ibid

[118] Green, Terisa. *The Tattoo Encyclopedia: A Guide to Choosing Your Tattoo.* (New York: Fireside, 2003), 220.

However, there are aspects of the woman's body that serve to confuse the viewer. A round circular area of skin that may resemble a breast block the visuals of both the snake tattoo and the gold chain. This addition is particularly confusing as the woman seems to be showing the viewer her back. Light blue paint also appears on the woman's body, visible between her braids and eyebrow, around her neck, as the f-shaped holes, and just below the breast area. Although it is unclear why Rozeal would include these elements, it serves to take away parts of the woman's personhood. She has no visible neck and her body does not seem to resemble that of a human. Even as her face, hair, and tattoo signal to the viewer that we are looking at a Black woman, the paint confuses this reading and shows her as an object. The central figure is somehow both object and person at the same time.

Although the woman is the largest and most noticeable part of *El Oso Me Pregunto,* Rozeal also paid close attention to the background elements—that is, the solid background color that seems to be melting and the angry bear in pajamas. With this in mind, the paper will now turn to unraveling the area surrounding the central figure. As with the figure, the strength of *El Oso Me Pregunto's* background lies in its ambiguities. As so little is known about this work, the analysis below is one that is heavily girded by visual analysis.

Background Elements

The title of the piece, *El Oso Me Pregunto,* means 'the bear asked me' when translated from Spanish to English. The use of past tense suggests that the central figure is relaying a story back to the viewer. The bear in question is shown to her right, strengthening the argument that the viewer is learning of a past event. Although the bear has been given a visual form, the animal appears in a text box, only given life because the woman is speaking about it. But the piece should not be taken fully at face value. It is possible that "the bear" that the woman refers to may not be a bear at all. Instead, (and more probable) she is recounting her experience with a person who she sees as a bear.

Adding more confusion to the scene is the ambiguous nature of what the bear asked the central figure. Without more information, it is impossible to ascertain their conversation. However, given the angry nature of the bear, it is likely that it was a negative conversation. One possibility is that the bear is trying to further objectify the woman. The color of the text box matches that of the blue paint on the woman's body, one of the aspects that served to undermine the visualization of her personhood. Perhaps, then, the bear is an outward extension of the objectification that the woman attempts to fight.

If the bear was working to tear down the woman's self-esteem though, it is possible that its pajamas are her way of not letting the animal's words affect her. If the conversation was a bad experience for the woman, then the cartoonish pajamas work as a way to make the bear, and thus its words, less scary. Although the bear is likely a reference to a specific show—one that exists on the edges of the viewer's memory—the nightgown and cap along with the pink slippers, are reminiscent of the cartoons from the 1960s and 1970s. Perhaps then, the person who asked the woman the rude, troubling question was much older than her.

And yet, despite the woman's best efforts to compartmentalize the conversation, she must have been deeply affected. This is evidenced by the drips that occur throughout the piece. The drips can be seen everywhere—the background color drips into and off of the woman's afro puff, her bamboo earring and pearl necklaces seem to be drip off of her body, and the bear's text box melts before the viewer's eyes. Perhaps the easiest to miss is the small drip of the woman's eye makeup. It falls from the inner crease of her eye, partially marring the f-hole on her face and making it seem as though she is crying. Even though she seems unaffected on the surface, when one analyzes the piece further, they see that the conversation has shaken her, and most likely, made her question her place in the world. How much is she her own person and how much does she exist for the enjoyment and benefit of others? The burden of holding everything together has proven to be too much, and the viewer watches as her self-view falls apart.

In this way, Rozeal seems to be making a statement on how women, particularly Black women, are meant to navigate the world, constantly questioning their place in it. Even when they seem confident and composed, one question, one rude encounter, can be enough to break them. This woman and the Black woman in *E.I.N. Intrusion (watch out for the big girls)* are two sides of the same coin. Whereas the Black woman in *E.I.N. Intrusion* confidently blows smoke at a demon, this woman struggles to fight her own inner demons. Both aspects are real experiences for women—sometimes they can put on a brave face, and other times, they cannot. In this way, Rozeal has revealed another aspect of a person's psyche—the confusing and desperate moment of breakage, when it feels like all is lost.

Conclusion

Unlike *E.I.N Intrusion (watch out for the big girls)* and *amidst black flowers and honky tonk angels, sphynxes run amok—Millie S. Claus, El Oso Me Pregunto* is not solely focused on the Black-Japanese cultural remixing, but on how these cultural overlaps can negatively and positively affect a person. However, it is still tied to Rozeal’s earlier work through its commentary on gender and the way history and society affect women. As such, *El Oso Me Pregunto,* in many ways, can be thought of as the culmination of Rozeal’s earlier research. She has moved beyond questioning ideas of appropriation vs. appreciation and is instead focused on understanding what it means to navigate oneself through an interwoven and complicated world.

Conclusion

This thesis attempted to tackle the issues surrounding identity, race, and gender that Rozeal highlighted through her work. However, the goal of this thesis was not to provide in-depth analysis into any one part of Rozeal's career, but to provide a broad overview of this relatively unknown artist. My hope is that this is only a starting point for future research concerning Rozeal.

One area that I believe deserves more attention is Rozeal's self-made mythology. This thesis was only able to focus on two aspects of the mythos—E.I.N. and Kaede—but Rozeal has a host of other deities, villains, and heroes that lend themselves to the reading of her other work. A paper focused solely on mythology would also allow for deeper connections to Japanese folklore while simultaneously highlighting more of Rozeal's non-Japanese, non-Black influences, such as J.R.R. Tolkien's, *The Lord of the Rings.*[119] Other papers focused more heavily on only one area of her work—race, class, gender—instead of all three, will also progress the scholarship around Rozeal.

In order to fully highlight the evolution of Rozeal's work though, there is one more period of the artist's life that deserves attention. Although this thesis began by looking at *E.I.N. Intrusion (watch out for the big girls)*, that was not the first work done by the artist. Rozeal's earliest works predate the formal beginning of her *afro-asian allegories* series by a few years. Her initial study of *ganguro* can be found in her *blackface* series, a series of studies that show one or two figures participating in *ganguro* behind a monochromatic background. She worked on the series soon after her return from Japan. As I believe that the *blackface* series is tantamount to understand Rozeal's career, this thesis will now turn to one of the works, *a*^{3} *blackface #58*. (Figure 18).

---

[119] Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown.* (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 21

The image depicts a courtesan who is participating in *ganguro*. Although the majority of her body has been painted to be darker, the areas around her hairline and ears show her true skin color to be much lighter. She sports dreadlocks that have pulled into an elaborate up do with the help of a two-pronged *kanzashi* [かんざし], a hair ornament that came into wider use during the Edo period with the introduction of more complicated hairstyles.[120] However, instead of an ornamental tip, the end of the *kanzashi* is an afro comb, a seamless fusion between Japanese and Black culture that highlights in both cultures the experience of maintaining a hairstyle. The woman's participation in *ganguro* is somewhat reminiscent of the shrewdness that Cheng teases out of Josephine Baker's performances as well—the central figure is playing a part and she will use every opportunity available to her to play the part well.[121]

The woman also has many facial features, such as her oval-shaped face, her long, thin nose, and her small lips that mimic the characteristics of a courtesan from an *ukiyo-e* print. When compared to a print of a courtesan from Edo period *ukiyo-e* painter, Utamaro (1754-1806), one can see the similarities in both figures' faces (Figure 19). The woman's dress in *a*^{3} *blackface #58* also feature a combination of both Japanese and Black qualities. She wears a striped kimono that has been opened, revealing her bare skin and strapless bikini top.

a^3 *blackface #58,* although eye-catching and thought provoking, is arguably much more simplistic compared to the other works explored in this thesis. Although Rozeal's signature style is already in affect—the woman is, "simultaneously a nineteenth-century Japanese courtesan and a twenty-first-century hip hop "honey"' and she makes a pertinent connection between the fetishization between both courtesans and honeys—there does not seem to be much more to the work.[122] The types of references (historical, mythological, psychological) that Rozeal chooses to use are less in number when compared to her later works. As such, her interaction with Japanese culture feels more surface level. As it was an earlier work, it is likely that Rozeal had not yet figured out how she wanted to engage with *ganguro*. Despite its sharp commentary on gender and class, *a^3 blackface #58*, somewhat simply, depicts a woman who has darkened her skin and is now sharing her new look with the viewer.

---

[120] Sherrow, Victoria (2006). *Encyclopedia of hair : a cultural history*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press. pp. 221–222.

[121] Cheng, Anne Anlin. *Second Skin: Josephine Baker & the Modern Surface*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

And yet, although the references are more simplistic, the work itself still speaks to Rozeal's artistic practice and craft. Even though the work is not a print, it is clear that Rozeal was already studying and practicing the *ukiyo-e* style. The delicate linework, flat picture plane, and the woman's pose could all be seen as references to Edo period portrayals of courtesans. Even with a cursory glance, the work borrows from a Japanese visual language. And yet, with its bold color palette and choice to depict the woman's imperfections (for example, one can see the fat rolls under her armpits), Rozeal creates an artwork that seems to fit into the American contemporary art world. In this way, it seems that Rozeal wanted to perfect her technique before attempting bolder, more dramatic subject matter.

When *a^3 blackface #58* is looked at alongside the other works in this thesis, the trajectory and changes found in Rozeal's work seem akin to one working through a traumatic event. As was stated before, Rozeal was disturbed to see young Japanese people engaging in *ganguro* so openly, to the point that she became morbidly curious about the practice. Most people from the United States and other Western civilizations know that the Black identity is not a style that can simply be taken off at the end of the day, and to pretend otherwise is degrading. So, to see people acting as though Blackness was a fashion to be worn was understandably a difficult concept to comprehend, especially for someone as socially and racially conscious as Rozeal.

---

[122] Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown*. (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 19

The questions raised by this thesis surrounding ideas of cultural overlap are likely some of the same ones that Rozeal asked herself when she began working on both the *blackface* and the *afro-asiatic allegories* series. At first, it seems that her overall reaction to *ganguro* is shock. As was stated in the introduction, her discomfort with *ganguro* stemmed from the fact that it was too close to American anti-Black discrimination practices. The United States society's ties to minstrelsy and Black hate made *ganguro* even more problematic and troubling for her. In this way, witnessing *ganguro* created a disconnect for her—the Japanese fashion style traumatized her because it reminded her of an issue that originated in America. She needed an outlet to process and figure out this uncomfortable connection, and she found one through her art. Just looking at *a*^{3} *blackface #58*, it seems likely that Rozeal was attempting to mimic her sensations and feelings upon seeing *ganguro.* With its clear focus on blackface, the piece is simultaneously a document of what the artist witnessed in Japan, as well as a reference to a dehumanizing practice that is still prevalent in some area of the United States.[123]

E.I.N. Intrusion (watch out for the big girls) shows a deeper understanding of Japanese history. It may be that Rozeal, upon seeing *ganguro*, became focused on lifting up and celebrating Black women. She wanted to counteract the negativity she perceived by creating a positive representation. Thus, she created a hero who could push back against societal pressure. At the same time, she also seems to have grown enamored with Japanese history and culture. She studied

---

[123] Badger, Emily and Quoctrung Bui. "Few Americans Say They've Worn Blackface. But Many Have Seen It." The New York Times. 10 February 2019. It seems that in particular, white people, those who lean conservatively politically, and those without college degrees were more likely to see blackface as acceptable.

Yoshitoshi and the Edo period endlessly in order to produce her work. The inclusion of her mythology also complicates the piece, allowing for a more complex reading of the work. As such, *E.I.N. Intrusion* seems to connect contemporary Black culture more strongly to Japanese history than *a*^{3} *blackface #58* while also creating a solid foundation for Rozeal to continue cross-cultural observations.

Through *amidst black flowers honky tonk angels, sphynxes run amok—Millie S. Claus,* Rozeal has returned to her portrayal of *ganguro* through the samurai. However, it is no longer the center of the piece. The inclusion, but decentering of *ganguro* indicates that Rozeal may no longer be as disturbed by the practice. Instead, she is more focused on her remixes and trying to find the overlaps between Black culture, Japanese culture, and their overlaps. It is possible that, by this point in her career, *ganguro* had become another avenue to explore rather than a source of pain for Rozeal.

By the time she creates *El Oso Me Pregunto, ganguro* seems to have become an afterthought for Rozeal. Although the center woman is still being objectified for her Blackness, it is not because she is darkening her skin, but because society is trying to lighten it. Although *El Oso Me Pregunto* is connected to Japanese history and culture, it does not seem to tie as overtly to Japanese culture. This change suggests a waning interest in Japanese visual history for the artist. However, it may also show a waning interest in *ganguro*. No longer is Rozeal plagued by derivatives of blackface. Instead, her work seems focused on understanding not only what is gained when cultures overlap, but also what is lost.

Rozeal's works are equal parts referential and random, containing elements that are simultaneously unknown and extremely familiar, and borrowing from both the past and present. She reminds the viewer of the larger world—although the core of her work in the *afro-asiatic* *allegories* are entrenched in ideas of racism and the history of enslaved peoples, she reminds the viewer that they cannot only look at a problem from their own individual perspective. Oftentimes, it is important for people to look past their initial thoughts to be able to make progress. It was only by working through her discomfort that Rozeal was able to create her most well-known works, and eventually attain a form of peace.

Bibliography

村上健司 編著. *日本妖怪大事典*. Kwai books. 角川書店. 2005. p. 356.

京極夏彦. "妖怪の形について". *妖怪の理 妖怪の檻*. 怪 BOOKS. 角川書店.2007. p. 386.

著者不詳. "曾呂利物語". In 高田衛 編・校注 (ed.). *江戸怪談集*. 岩波文庫. Vol. 中. 岩波書店. 1989. p. 13–15.

“De La Soul - Millie Pulled a Pistol on Santa.” Genius. Accessed 28 December 2022. https://genius.com/De-la-soul-millie-pulled-a-pistol-on-santa-lyrics

“Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette – Honky Tonk Angels.” Discogs. Accessed 28 December 2022. https://www.discogs.com/master/460975-Dolly-Parton-Loretta-Lynn-Tammy-Wynette-Honky-Tonk-Angels

“Fatphobia.” Office of Equity, Vitality, and Inclusion, Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine, Boston Medical Center, and Boston University medical Group. *Glossary for Culture Transformation*. 2021 https://www.bmc.org/glossary-culture-transformation/fatphobia#:~:text=Noun,highly%20stigmatized%20in%20Western%20Culture.

“Fishbone – Black Flowers.” Genius. Accessed 28 December 2022. https://genius.com/Fishbone-black-flowers-lyrics

“From Lace to Chains: The Making of a Print.” Sheldon Art Museum. 2018. https://sheldonartmuseum.org/exhibitions/from-lace-to-chains-the-making-of-a-print

“Genetics”. National Institute of General Medical Sciences. Accessed 29 April 2023. https://nigms.nih.gov/education/fact-sheets/Pages/genetics.aspx

“Grapevine.” The Met. Accessed May 9. 2022. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/55304

“How to Conquer Seiza, the Foreigner’s Nightmare.” Japanology. Accessed May 9, 2022. https://japanology.org/2016/07/how-to-conquer-seiza-the-foreigners-nightmare/#:~:text=What's%20important%20to%20remember%20is,can%20use%20practice%20in%20humility.

“Japanese Culture.” Cultural Atlas. Accessed May 9, 2022. https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/japanese-culture/japanese-culture-core-concepts

“Kitty Wells – It Wasn’t God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels.” Genius. Accessed 28 December 2022

“Komaruya Fans – Japanese Fan Makers.” Japan House, London. Accessed 27 December 2022. https://www.japanhouselondon.uk/discover/komaruya-fans/

“Le Violon d’Ingres (Ingres’s Violin). Getty Museum. Accessed January 16, 2023. https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/104E4A

“Race Riots Of The 1960s.” Encyclopedia.com. Accessed May 9, 2022. https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/race-riots-1960s

“Rozeal-El Oso Me Pregunto” Artsy. Accessed 13 January 2023. https://www.artsy.net/artwork/rozeal-el-oso-me-pregunto

“Take a Test.” Project Implicit. Accessed 28 December 2022. https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/Study?tid=-1

“Tokugawa, or Edo, period.” Britannica. Accessed May 9, 2022. https://www.britannica.com/art/Japanese-art/Tokugawa-or-Edo-period

"Tokugawa period." Britannica. Accessed May 9, 2022. https://www.britannica.com/event/Tokugawa-period

"Tourou" Japanese Architecture and Art Net Users System. Accessed November 16, 2022. https://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/deta/t/tourou.htm

"Wood-block prints." Britannica. Accessed May 9, 2022. https://www.britannica.com/art/Japanese-art/Wood-block-prints

Acar, Adam. "Are Geisha Courtesans? Oiran vs. Geisha and Prostitute" Maikoya. 13 May 2021. https://mai-ko.com/travel/culture-in-japan/geisha/are-geisha-courtesans-geisha-vs-oiran-tayu/.

Alexander, Elizabeth. "'Coming Out Blackened and Whole': Fragmentation and Reintegration in Audre Lorde's Zami and The Cancer Journals." *American literary history* 6, no. 4 (1994): 695–715.

Anderson, Crystal S. (2007). "The Afro-Asiatic Floating World: Post-Soul Implications of the Art of Iona Rozeal Brown". African American Review. 41(4): 655–665. https://doi.org/10.2307/25426983

Badger, Emily and Quoctrung Bui. "Few Americans Say They've Worn Blackface. But Many Have Seen It." The New York Times. 10 February 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/02/10/upshot/few-american-have-worn-blackface-many-seen-it.html .

Barlow, William. "Black Music on Radio During the Jazz Age." *African American Review* 29, no. 2 (1995): 325–28. https://doi.org/10.2307/3042311.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations.* ed. Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn, from the 1935 essay. (New York: Schocken Books, 1969) https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/benjamin.pdf

Bess, Nancy Moore., and Bibi. Wein. *Bamboo in Japan*. 1st ed. Tokyo ;: Kodansha International, 2001.

Bolitho, Harold. "Sumo and Popular Culture: The Tokugawa Period." In Sport: The Development of Sport. edited by Eric Dunning and Dominic Malcolm. 180-193. London: Routledge, 2003 https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=TqyCioQFv6cC&oi=fnd&pg=PA180&dq=the+wrestler+onogawa+kisaburo&ots=vK5OTBzq2x&sig=JnzhbpjBq1d1HDgKBfZRNRFGmYA#v=onepage&q=kisaburo&f=false

Buck, James H. "The Satsuma Rebellion of 1877. From Kagoshima Through the Siege of Kumamoto Castle." *Monumenta Nipponica* 28, no. 4 (1973): 427–46. https://doi.org/10.2307/2383560. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2383560#metadata_info_tab_contents

Carey, Kate. "Class and Contradiction: Merchants and Expression of Wealth in the Tokugawa Period." *The Stacks History Undergraduate Journal* 1. May 13, 2011. https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/handle/1773/47828?show=full.

Cheng, Anne Anlin. *Second Skin: Josephine Baker & the Modern Surface*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Christian, Mary. *Iona Rozeal Brown.* (Ostfildern, Germany: Haatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 19. Published following the exhibition *iona rozeal brown: all falls down* and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland.

Coleman, Beth. "Race as Technology." *Camera obscura (Durham, NC)* 24, no. 1 (2009): 177–207. https://doi.org/10.1215/02705346-2008-018

Cooks, Bridget R. (18). *New-Now-Next: A Survey of Rising Talent.* International Review of African American Art. pp. 39–45. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0sn8m88w

Cooperman, Kathryn. "Kehinde Wiley's Napoleon Portrait: A New language of Representation." The Female Gaze. Accessed 28 August 2020. https://thefemalegaze.org/2020/08/28/kehinde-wileys-napoleon-portrait-a-new-language-of-representation/

Davis-Sivasothy, Audrey. *The Science of Transitioning: A Complete Guide to Hair Care for Transitioners and New Naturals*. (Texas: SAJA Publishing Company. 22 December 2015)

Devin. "Video: DJ Khaled Feat. Chris Brown, Lil Wayne, & Big Sean – "How Many Times'. Rap-Up. 11 May 2015. https://www.rap-up.com/2015/05/11/video-dj-khaled-chris-brown-lil-wayne-big-sean-how-many-times/

Dillon, Elizabeth Maddock & Sarah Connell. "LA Riots Impact on the Korean American Community." Northeastern University, Department of English, Literature and Digital Diversity. Accessed 28 December 2022. https://litdigitaldiversity.northeastern.edu/3819-2/

Dirlam, Dona M. Elise B. Misiorowski, and Sally A. Thomas. "Pearl Fashion Through the Ages." Gemological Institute of America. 1985, 63, 67. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/66815217/f6a9db03a9821eaae6dea026eccc9ef4407f-libre.pdf?1620087738=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DPearl_Fashion_Through_the_Ages.pdf&Expires=1681842694&Signature=apY2QBDmvlcZfwoPa4RJtbcr4amwyiBZTlz656wX27N6xQD-VfNTyhevXSJbdriRcQiwXBNc239WBHFTDRlANTOkls17YvM~zKI49wzt-7dePTl-D8blKeUuo24FVwxoAodvxaTLgqdBYtaZnrvgoWBUzT9X~hBIsPL4lftL~D70dUVj57cVywih~fVJCnrs257BJIIMWMGFGihVs47swc-l5SkF1DpDx6~AkCZ-~uCb9y1FnjW-3wYask0uwXpvcS5mIe5E5xpzPrjYeV3kTLfLANzNTG4jbaBsj4XapEarmuHQ4YUdcsdk3JZhiu0Kpj9bCcIzAR39ecn42qreGA__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

Drazen, Patrick. *A Gathering of Spirits: Japan's Ghost Story Tradition: From Folklore and Kabuki to Anime and Manga*.iUniverse Publishing. 2007. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=nnkSCqG8L4YC&oi=fnd&pg=PP6&dq=Yoshitoshi%27s+%27One+Hundred+Ghost+Stories+of+China+and+Japan&ots=ujBcRVurvF&sig=mcu8ftAcpNPD4kOwUCviv1JwXws#v=onepage&q=Yoshitoshi's%20'One%20Hundred%20Ghost%20Stories%20of%20China%20and%20Japan&f=false

Duggan, Kate. "Yoshitoshi Tsukioka's New Forms of Thirty Six Ghosts—Visual Tradition in Art as a Cultural Critique on Japan's Modernization." 2014. https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/uresposters/101/

Farrington, Lisa E., *Faith Ringgold*, (Petaluma: Pomegranate Communications, Inc., 2004).

Fink, Rhiannon L., and ROBIN D. G. KELLEY. "Negotiating Ethnicity and Authenticity in Tokyo's Club Harlem." In *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, edited by Dipannita Basu and Sidney J. Lemelle, 200–207. Pluto Press, 2006. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt18mbd22.18.

Fisher, John A. "High Art Versus Low Art." In *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics.* ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 474. https://spot.colorado.edu/~jafisher/OnLine%20papers/High%20Low%20Art%20Ch%2046.pdf

Gallagher, John. *Geisha: A Unique World of Tradition, Elegance, and Art,* London: PRC Publishing Ltd., 2003.

Genocchio, Benjamin. "ART; For Japanese Girls, Black is Beautiful." The New York Times. April 4, 2004. https://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/04/arts/art-for-japanese-girls-black-is-beautiful.html

Glassman, Jessa. "Yinka Shonibare is Reclaiming the Art of the Oppressor." 34th Street. 5 October 2020. https://www.34st.com/article/2020/10/yinkashonibare-swing-after-frangonard-sculpture-france-colonialsm-racism

Gopnik, Blake. "Go East, Young Woman: Japan Called to Iona Rozeal Brown And She Answered". The Washington Post. Feb. 27, 2005. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/style/2005/02/27/go-east-young-woman/ca281424-db23-4386-b84a-6274b747b47f/

Green, Terisa. *The Tattoo Encyclopedia: A Guide to Choosing Your Tattoo.* (New York: Fireside, 2003), 220. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=b8cFF3o-Ij4C&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=symbolism+of+snake+tattoo&ots=fC5k052YaI&sig=NE72YVDB3EwA9iL6v58wyN3ZxTo#v=onepage&q=snake&f=false

Harris, Michael D. *Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003. Print.

Hida, Hikari. "Shifting Norms on Tattoos in Japan." The New York Times. 23 April 2022. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/04/23/world/asia/japan-tattoo-norms.html#:~:text=Japan%20has%20a%20longstanding%20taboo,prohibit%20applicants%20who%20are%20inked.

hooks, bell. *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*. New York: The New Press, 1995. Print.

Iglesias, Tasha & Travis Harris. "It's "Hip Hop," Not "hip-hop"". In the *Journal of Hip Hop Studies,* Volume 9, Issue 1. 2022. https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1216&context=jhhs.

JANSEN, MARIUS B., and GILBERT ROZMAN, eds. *Japan in Transition: From Tokugawa to Meiji*. Princeton University Press, 1986. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7ztkvk.

Kako, Orsolya. "In Deep: The Isolation of Japan." Butterfield & Robinson. https://www.butterfield.com/get-inspired/in-deep-the-isolation-of-japan

Laham, Martha. *Made Up: How the Beauty Industry Manipulates Consumers, Preys on Women's Insecurities, and Promotes Unattainable Beauty Standards.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 2020. https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781538138052/Made-Up-How-the-Beauty-Industry-Manipulates-Consumers-Preys-on-Womens-Insecurities-and-Promotes-Unattainable-Beauty-Standards

Lai, Jason. "Why do Koreans love breakdancing?" BBC. Accessed 20 April 2023. https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20180308-why-do-koreans-love-breakdancing

MacGregor, Niel. "Mass Production, Mass Persuasion (1780 – 1914), Hokusai's The Great Wave" BBC. 13 October 2010. https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b00v72n6

Martinez, Diana. "Japan Through the Looking Glass: From Meiji Era "Occidentalism" to Frank Lloyd Wright's "Organicism". FAH 08: Intro to Architecture. Class lecture at Tufts University, Somerville, MA, March 16, 2023.

McCarty, Michael. "What is an Archival Pigment Print?" Tribeca Printworks. 10 February 2021. https://www.tribecaprintworks.com/what-is-archival-pigment-print

McElhinney, David. "Byobu: 7 Things to Know About Japanese Folding Screens." Japan Objects. Accessed November 16, 2022. https://japanobjects.com/features/byobu

Moore, Madison. "From Punishment to Pride: a brief history of Japanese tattoos." Antithesis Journal. 23 October 2020. https://www.antithesisjournal.com.au/blog/2020/10/22/from-punishment-to-pride-a-brief-history-of-japanese-tattoos#:~:text=During%20the%20Edo%20Period%20(1603,tattooing%20was%20introduced%20in%201872.

Morita, Kiyoko. *The Book of Incense: Enjoying the Traditional Art of Japanese Scents.* 1st ed.Tokyo; Kodansha International, 1992.

Moss Arts Center, Virginia Tech. "All Access: Rozeal." April 27, 2020. https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1VDKB_enUS949US949&sxsrf=AJOqlzXsR6CMImAL05zPMORAXOEf8Vlp2w:1678658867936&q=rozeal+el+oso+me+pregunto&tbm=vid&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj8wJbMs9f9AhV4E1kFHdgoB1oQ0pQJegQIBxAB&biw=767&bih=736&dpr=1.25#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:f4ca347e,vid:DFNXq8TCveY

Moybray, Nicole. "Japanese Girls Choose Whiter Shade of Pale." The Guardian. 3 April 2004. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/apr/04/japan.nicolemowbray

Mozur, Nancy. "About the Artist: Tsukioka Yoshitoshi." *Psychological perspectives* 54, no. 4 (2011): 382–384. https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/doi/full/10.1080/00332925.2011.622625

Powell, Linda S. "30 Americans: An Inspiration for Culturally Responsive Teaching." *National Art Education Association.* 65(5) (2012): 33-40. https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2012.11519190

PQ, Rory. "Hip Hop History: From the Streets to the Mainstream. Iconcollective. November 13, 2019. https://iconcollective.edu/hip-hop-history/

Prasso, Sheridan. *The Asian Mystique: Dragon Ladies, Geisha Girls, and Our Fantasies of the Exotic Orient.* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2006).

Price, Emmett George. *Hip Hop Culture*. Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2006. https://books.google.com/books/about/Hip_Hop_Culture.html?id=Q84TiHcqDqcC

Richard, David. "History of Record Players (A Look at 100 Fascinating Years." Top Record Players. January 24, 2021. https://toprecordplayers.com/history-of-record-players/

Rowell, Charles H. (2015). "[Iona] Rozeal [Brown]". Callaloo. 34(4): 805–810. http://doi.org/10.1353/cal.2015.0128

Salter, Rebecca. *Japanese Woodblock Printing.* (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 11 https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=WqmzsLn9ww0C&oi=fnd&pg=PA6&dq=japanese+woodblock+printmaking&ots=eUZzNGXYEf&sig=7Vs9gH2wsSCBOi-74u1fUtH31BM#v=onepage&q=japanese%20woodblock%20printmaking&f=false

Sargent, Antwaun. "Artist Titus Kaphar on His New Solo Show and Unarmed Black Men in America." Vice. 15 January 2015. https://www.vice.com/en/article/wd4mb9/titus-kaphar-on-his-new-solo-show-and-unarmed-black-men-in-america-111

Seigle, Cecilia Segawa. Yoshiwara : the Glittering World of the Japanese Courtesan. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993.

Sheldon, Charles D. "Merchants and Society in Tokugawa Japan." *Modern Asian Studies* 17, no. 3 (1983): 477–88. http://www.jstor.org/stable/312302.

Sherrow, Victoria (2006). *Encyclopedia of hair : a cultural history*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press. pp. 221–222. https://books.google.com/books?id=9Z6vCGbf66YC&pg=PA14&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false

Solomon, Jadriena. “A History of The Black Woman’s “Ghetto Fabulous” Statement Accessory: The Bamboo Earring.” 21nintey. 31 January 2022. https://21ninety.com/a-history-of-the-black-womans-ghetto-fabulous-statement-accessory-the-bamboo-earring

Stevenson, John, and Yoshitoshi Taiso. Yoshitoshi’s One Hundred Aspects of the Moon. Leiden: Hotei Pub., 2001.

Szczepanski, Kallie. “The Four-Tiered Class System of Feudal Japan.” ThoughtCo. Updated on July 8, 2019. https://www.thoughtco.com/four-tiered-class-system-feudal-japan-195582

Tucker, Jeffrey A. “Why Drug Dealers, Rappers, and Pimps Wear Their Wealth.” American Institute for Economic Research. 14 February 2018. https://www.aier.org/article/why-drug-dealers-rappers-and-pimps-wear-their-wealth/

Virk, Kameron. “Tattoos in Japan: Why they’re so tied to the yakuza.” BBC. 21 September 2019. https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-49768799

Walworth, Arthur. Black Ships Off Japan : the Story of Commodore Perry’s Expedition. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946.

Wise, Jason. “Tattoo Statistics 2023: Industry, Regret, Removal & Artist Facts.” Earthweb. Last Updated 7 April 2023. https://earthweb.com/tattoo-statistics/