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An Anthropological Study of Cultural Eating Habits in
Metalwork and Alternative Material

A Thesis in

Artistry

by

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Abstract

Via aesthetics and physical interaction, my goal is to enhance the viewer and user experience on my interpretation of cultural habits and mannerisms.

This thesis work will be expressed through a series of metalsmithing and alternative material exploration.

I will interview people from several diverging cultures and from those interviews I will try and portray an aspect of that culture which can be best understood through picking up an object and directly performing that cultures' ritual.

A list of my intended countries of interest:

American

1. North America
2. Korean
3. Netherlands
4. Saudi Arabia
5. Russia
6. Cameroon
7. Germany

1. Japan
2. China
3. S. Africa
4. Malaysia
5. India
6. Chile
7. Norway
8. Australia
9. Morocco
10. Spain

My expected outcome is to help the user experience a foreign cultural through a cultural perspective in which they might not have otherwise been able to experience, had they not interacted with my work. I ultimately hope to stimulate cultural awareness and respect for cultures that are different from our own.

Introduction

When I entered my degree program as an undergraduate student my original intended study was ceramics; it was not until my second year that I switched my major and became a metals student. There were foreigners in the metals department and I wanted to know more about their culture, food, and social interactions. Interestingly enough, since my change of study, I have been able to meet craftsmen and artists from all over the world.

One of the professors at my American University was Mexican, my first metals internship was at a company owned by a Syrian man, my corporate position was led by a Bulgarian woman, I worked under the famous German goldsmith, Barbara Heinrich, and finally, I came to South Korea for my graduate study. My decision to switch my major ten years ago has allowed me to hear many stories of many different men and women. It was my work with metal which introduced me to a global community and stimulate the focus of my thesis – cultural awareness.

I have personal interest in this topic because I think most people have misunderstandings about people, food, and mannerisms that are different from their own. Due to this special experience living, studying, and surviving abroad, I want to combine my own personal cultural awareness and acceptance into a cumulative body of work.

Countries of interest and their cultural ritual, etiquette, or mannerism.

<u>Interviewee</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Cultural r,e,m</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
	North America	Hunting of food Honoring the dead	Even in present day native Americans hunt their meat in the wild not purchase from store What type of rituals?
김미선	Korea	Drinking culture	Proper receiving and pouring of alcohol
J. Stamhuis	Holland	Cookie Tin	Proper etiquette as a guest in D. house
R. Alyoshina	Russia	Easter traditions	Painting of eggs, eating cake etc.
Yesser	S. Arabia	Separation of m & w Wedding ceremony	Explain
M. Takam	Cameroon	Body language	Explain
Daniel	Chile	Children	Relationship between mother and son
유효비	China	Superstitions	What kinds and why
B. Heinrich	Germany	Discipline	Teacher student relationship
J. Creswick	Australia	Health care	Standard of living

Sources and Artists

Vik Muniz- Brazilian born Brooklyn based

He was born in Brazil and moved to the United States in 1984. Since then he has been working as a multi-media artist utilizing atypical materials such as chocolate, dust, and diamonds and reinterprets work from mass culture or media.

“If you have a little bit more knowledge about cultures, you recognize that those cultures don’t come to you in their raw form – they have to be unpackaged somehow.” Global Art, pg 53

He identifies himself as an American and his Brazilian heritage can be seen through his work, however it is very personal. Growing up under a dictatorship during the 60’s and 70’s people were afraid to speak their minds. His generation is careful about the validity of what they hear and see.

Coming from a poor Brazilian family he was not formally educated in art. He now funds a school called, Center Spatial Vik Muniz for inner city youth.

Vik believes in order for something to be real you must rely on non visual communication. For example on bank notes we need to have magnetic strips on bank cards, and if not these things can be easily recreated.

“Everything has to carry information that you can’t see, because everything you can see can be replicated. I think for us to be able to survive in a post-document society, we will have to rely on discernment, on being educated about images.” Global Art, pg 54.

Globally artists come to new York and search for credentials. Once they’ve succeeded they return to their home country and inspire others to do the same.

“India, Mexico, and Japan are rich visual environments.” Global Art, pg 55. He feels however Brazilians are more stimulated by sound and spoken language. Due to history Brazilians are a bit behind other countries.

“Brazil was so thirsty!” Global Art, pg 55. “you can tell how thirsty they were for someone like Max Bill because he influenced every single artist. That says a lot about globalization.” Global Art, pg 55.



Al Weiwei Beijing

Within the past twenty years China has grown economically and has started the process of globalization. China has a long history of art as tradition so he feels china is the strongest country for art in the world.

“To be involved with art is normal, is natural here.” Global Art, pg 81.

“People still think art is the highest form of expression that can be created by humans. Very much unlike in the West when parents think their children have failed because they want to become artists!” Global Art, pg 81.

He feels that cultures should be different from one another in order for them to exchange ideas and communicate. And originality is challenging what is already established but looking at it from a new perspective.

“I think differences and chance are the main theme of this time.” Global Art, pg 82

Al Weiwei believes change is inevitable. And through change we are able to realize different perspectives of our humanity. He thinks as it is the age of technology, that there are exciting things that will happen to fit our new needs as modern humans.

“But although here in China there is a lot of creativity and people are really hungry and they just want to give something away...” Pg 83.

“ “Father” in this case is not just a physical being; it is important to relate yourself to a certain position that has a significance for you-you have to recognize your own position and conditions, the relation to your reality and who you are, where you come from.” Pg 83.

Political activist and open about the Chinese government’s stance on democracy and human rights.

Perhaps much of his work has been influenced by his upbringing in communist China.



Sunflower seeds at the Tate Modern 100,000,000 porcelain hand made seeds. “Seeds grow...The crowd will have its way, eventually.”

Neo Rauch Leipzig Germany

