

## **Axiological Analysis of Japanese Poster Art: Exploring the Influence of Pop Culture and Consumerism**

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**Abstract:** This investigation delves into the realm of graphic design in post-World War II Japan, undertaking a comprehensive examination of diverse thematic elements such as the integration of pop culture, the resurgence of Japanese cultural aesthetics, and the pervasive influence exerted by Western paradigms. Central to the inquiry is an exploration of the multifaceted factors that have contributed to the evolution of graphic design during this transformative period, contextualized within the rich tapestry of cultural heritage and contemporary expressions. Methodologically, the study employs semi-structured interviews as its primary mode of inquiry, subjected to rigorous thematic analysis. A cohort of 14 participants, renowned experts in the domains of pop culture and Japanese poster art, lends depth and expertise to the analysis. Utilizing a meticulous three-step coding process, the study meticulously identifies key themes, providing a nuanced depiction of the defining characteristics, features, and influences shaping post-WWII graphic design in Japan. The findings underscore the prominence of vibrant colour schemes, a harmonious fusion of traditional and modern elements, and the pervasive use of symbolic imagery as hallmark attributes. Moreover, the narrative trajectory of design evolution is revealed to be intricately intertwined with the prevailing influences of pop culture, which in turn play a pivotal role in shaping consumerist behaviours. The visual lexicon of post-WWII Japan emerges as profoundly shaped by the burgeoning impact of Western art and foreign cultural exchanges. This study bears significance for practitioners in marketing, design, and cultural institutions, serving as a foundational resource elucidating the myriad dynamics and practical implications inherent in the field. Notably, the study offers novel theoretical insights that are actionable for professionals and scholars alike, facilitating a deeper exploration of the complex interplay between culture, design, and identity.

**Keywords:** Post-War Japanese Graphic Design, Traditional Japanese Aesthetics, Pop Culture Integration, Cross-Cultural Influences, Thematic Analysis

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the intricacies of post-WWII graphic design in Japan, focusing on its defining characteristics, unique attributes, and influential factors. Following World War II, Japan experienced a profound societal shift (Lin & Cob, 2024), leading to an emergent graphic design landscape that mirrored the nation's cultural resurgence, evolving identity, and resilience (Pincus, 2023). This period was characterized by vibrant colours, a synthesis of tradition and modernity, and symbolic imagery, showcasing designers' adeptness at blending contemporary elements with historical roots (Bîrlea, 2023). Moreover, it elucidates how design narratives were shaped by the influence of pop culture and how graphic designs influenced consumerism during this transformative phase (Batson, 2023). Employing thematic analysis, this study uncovers the essence of post-WWII graphic design, elucidating the factors shaping visual communication in a nation recovering from the aftermath of war (Grasskamp, 2023). Beyond its historical inquiry, this research delves into the intersection of culture, design, and identity within the context of Japan's post-WWII recovery. Empirical research has laid the groundwork for understanding post-WWII Japanese graphic design, as evidenced by studies conducted by Ghorbanpour (Ghorbanpour, 2023) and Zeller (Zeller, 2007). Tvorun-Dunn (Tvorun-Dunn, 2023) explored the revival of traditional Japanese aesthetics, emphasizing the fusion of traditional and contemporary elements as vital to cultural expression. Bartal (2020) provided insights into the impact of popular culture on Japanese visual arts, while Lin and Cob (Lin & Cob, 2024) examined the assimilation of Western culture into Japanese society, particularly in the context of military combat graphic design. Cole (Cole, 2020) highlighted the reciprocal relationship between design and popular culture, while Pincus (Pincus, 2023) shed light on the revolutionary influence of manga and anime on Japanese visual culture. These empirical investigations contribute significantly to the advancement of post-WWII Japanese graphic design studies, underscoring the importance of broadening the empirical foundation of the profession for further progress.

This study addresses a notable gap in the existing literature concerning Japanese graphic design in the post-WWII era, augmenting previous research efforts (Hsu, 2022; Wang, 2010) and complementing prior empirical inquiries. While extensive scholarship has explored Western culture, popular culture, and traditional Japanese aesthetics (Shahiwala, 2021), there remains a scarcity of literature specifically examining the

intersection of these elements within post-WWII graphic design (Papini, 2020). Achieving a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted influences on the visual landscape during Japan's recovery and transformation necessitates research that transcends isolated subject studies (Chen, 2022; Tarasti, 2007). Although existing research often delves into the aesthetics and thematic elements of post-WWII Japanese graphic design (Bîrlea, 2023), insufficient attention has been given to investigating its practical impact on contemporary designers, cultural institutions, and marketers (Batson, 2023; Talukder, 2010). Bridging these gaps in knowledge will enable authors to gain a nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics of visual design that emerged in Japan in the aftermath of WWII. This study aims to address gaps in empirical research by comprehensively exploring thematic characteristics of Japanese graphic design post-WWII. It seeks to elucidate the impact of traditional Japanese aesthetics, pop culture, and international design on graphic design during this period. Through thematic analysis, the study evaluates the extent of these influences on visual communication. Furthermore, it investigates the ramifications of post-WWII Japanese graphic design on designers, cultural institutions, and marketers. The research endeavours to enhance academic understanding of a significant paradigm shift in design and provide practical guidance for navigating the intricate interplay of culture, identity, and design within the context of globalization. By combining theoretical insights with practical observations, the study contributes to a deeper comprehension of the dynamic Japanese graphic design industry in the aftermath of WWII.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding post-WWII Japanese graphic design is crucial for grasping the cultural, historical, and artistic dynamics of that transformative period. Existing literature highlights the blend of traditional and contemporary design elements, as evidenced by Hsu (Hsu, 2022). Shahiwala's (2021) work emphasizes how graphic design reflected cultural assimilation post-conflict (Shahiwala, 2021). Chen and Shen (2022) underscore the influence of popular culture on Japan's visual arts movement, while Montoro (2021) delves into the impact of Western cultural influences (Montoro, 2021; Wang et al., 2020). Milne (2021) examines the profound influence of manga and anime on popular culture and design (Milne, 2021). By synthesizing these diverse scholarly studies,

we aim to deepen our understanding of the complexity of post-WWII Japanese graphic design.

## 2.1 Japanese Poster Art

Japanese poster art is culturally significant and showcases the imaginative expressions of its creators (Lin & Cob, 2024). Following WWII, Japanese poster art gained prominence as a key form of artistic expression, reflecting societal and political changes (Angelidou, 2020). The post-WWII reconstruction period in Japan influenced the evolution of its graphic design, blending traditional Japanese aesthetics with Western cultural influences to create distinct visual languages (Suhaeb et al., 2022). The influence of Western art on Japanese graphic design illustrates the global exchange of creative tendencies (Suhaeb et al., 2021), emphasizing the ongoing interplay between innovation and tradition (Nguyen, 2020). In the context of globalization, Japanese designers endeavoured to incorporate diverse artistic influences while maintaining the essence of Japanese culture (White, 2022). This integration of traditional Japanese components with contemporary design exemplifies the interconnectedness of cultures on a global scale.

## 2.2 Influence of Pop Culture and Consumerism

Across various geographical contexts and historical periods, popular culture and consumerism have wielded significant influence over creative representation and visual communication (Miller & Stevens, 2021). Notably, the accessibility and ubiquity of popular culture have played a pivotal role in shaping the art and aesthetics of graphic design (Alt, 2020), facilitating the transformation of products and services into commodities through visual communication. The amalgamation of consumerism and popular culture engenders a dynamic ecosystem wherein designers must balance artistic creativity with economic efficiency to appeal to a broad audience (Sousa, 2020). In the 20th century, the emergence of art movements such as pop art, spearheaded by figures like Andy Warhol, profoundly impacted both graphic design and the visual arts (Ahmed Sayed, 2022; Ugbotor et al.). This period witnessed a departure from conventional classifications of highbrow and lowbrow art, as popular culture, advertising, and mass-produced consumer goods became integral components of artistic expression.

The realm of graphic design experienced a notable transformation catalysed by the fusion of aesthetic and commercial design principles

(Phillips & Baudinette, 2022). Everyday objects were elevated to the status of art through the convergence of commonplace existence and mainstream culture, exemplified by the utilization of posters, advertisements, and packaging (SHEEHAN, 2020). Consumerist ideals and the aesthetics of popular culture not only shaped the visual identities of the era but also reflected and influenced prevailing social values (Montoro, 2021). This symbiotic relationship between consumerism and visual design facilitated effective brand communication and the shaping of consumer behaviour (Suhaeb et al., 2021). Logos and product packaging are strategically crafted to evoke specific emotional responses in their target audience, reflecting the consumer society's desire for self-expression and social integration (Nguyen, 2020). Designers leverage colour, typography, and imagery to weave narratives that resonate deeply with customers in a customer-centric environment (Shahiwala, 2021). The interplay between popular culture and commerce underscores the profound impact of graphic design on our daily visual experiences, serving as a mirror of prevalent cultural ideals in the contemporary era (Bîrlea, 2023).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative inquiry explores the nexus between pop culture and poster art within the Japanese context. To enrich the analysis, the study engaged participants recognized for their expertise in Japanese pop culture and poster art. Employing a semi-structured interview approach, a cohort of 14 participants, as detailed in Table 1, contributed their insights due to their specialized knowledge. This methodology ensures a diverse array of perspectives from individuals deeply rooted in cultural and artistic domains.

Table 1(a): Respondents Demographics

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Occupation	Years of Experience	Expertise
1	Male	45	Graphic Designer	20	Japanese Poster Art, Contemporary Design
2	Female	38	Art Historian	15	Post-War Japanese Art, Cultural Analysis
3	Male	50	Marketing Professional	25	Consumer Behaviour, Branding

Table 1(b): Respondents Demographics

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Occupation	Years of Experience	Expertise
4	Female	55	Professor of Fine Arts	30	Traditional Japanese Art, Visual Culture
5	Non-binary	28	Pop Culture Critic	8	Cultural Trends, Pop Art Movements
6	Male	42	Museum Curator	18	Exhibition Curation, Japanese Art History
7	Female	33	Advertising Executive	12	Commercial Design, Brand Promotion
8	Male	48	Cultural Anthropologist	22	Social Dynamics, Cultural Influence
9	Female	40	Visual Artist	14	Contemporary Art, Mixed Media
10	Male	37	Cultural Sociologist	16	Media Influence, Cultural Discourse
11	Female	52	Film Critic	28	Cinematic Influences, Visual Storytelling
12	Male	29	Design Educator	7	Pedagogy, Design Principles
13	Non-binary	34	Trend Analyst	10	Cultural Forecasting, Design Trends
14	Female	46	Archivist	21	Historical Preservation, Archival Research

The semi-structured interviews, as outlined in Table 2, were conducted by 14 participants who were encouraged to freely articulate their perceptions, experiences, and analyses. These interviews took place in physical settings within Japan, facilitating the collection of qualitative data. The interview questions were meticulously crafted to elicit insights into the influence, characteristics, and stylistic nuances inherent in post-WWII poster art, as well as the impact of consumerism and pop culture on artistic expression. Collectively, these findings contribute to a deeper

understanding of Japanese visual culture.

Table 2: Interview Guidelines used in this study.

Theme	Interview Questions
Characteristics of Post-War Japanese Graphic Design	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can you describe key visual characteristics you associate with post-war Japanese graphic design?</li> <li>2. How do you perceive the use of colour in post-war Japanese posters?</li> <li>3. In your opinion, what cultural or historical elements influenced the form of Japanese graphic design during this period?</li> </ol>
Influence of Foreign Culture and Western Art	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do you think foreign culture influenced post-war Japanese graphic design?</li> <li>2. Can you provide examples of Western art elements or styles that are evident in Japanese poster art from this era?</li> <li>3. How did the integration of Western influences impact the overall language of Japanese graphic design?</li> </ol>
Unique Characteristics Representing Post-War Japanese Graphic Design	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What, in your view, constitutes the unique characteristic style of post-war Japanese graphic design?</li> <li>2. How did designers strive to differentiate their work during this period?</li> <li>3. Are there specific cultural or societal values that you believe are reflected in the unique style of Japanese posters from the post-war era?</li> </ol>
Impact of Pop Culture on Japanese Poster Art	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How has pop culture influenced the content and themes of Japanese poster art?</li> <li>2. Can you discuss instances where pop culture icons or trends were incorporated into the design of Japanese posters?</li> <li>3. In your opinion, how did the relationship between pop culture and Japanese poster art evolve over time?</li> </ol>
Consumerism and Its Visual Representation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do you see the influence of consumerism in the visual elements of Japanese posters?</li> <li>2. Can you identify specific design choices that cater to consumer preferences or market demands?</li> <li>3. In what ways has consumerism shaped the messaging and branding strategies in Japanese poster art?</li> </ol>
Integration of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How did designers incorporate traditional Japanese aesthetics into post-war graphic design?</li> <li>2. Can you highlight instances where traditional motifs or art forms were seamlessly integrated into the visual language of Japanese posters?</li> <li>3. In your opinion, how did the fusion of traditional and modern elements contribute to the unique charm of Japanese poster art?</li> </ol>

Thematic analysis, employing a 3-step coding process (refer to Table 3),

was utilized to analyse qualitative data. Open coding identified themes, axial coding established connections between codes, and selection coding pinpointed key themes. This analysis revealed a nuanced relationship between pop culture, consumerism, and Japanese poster art, offering valuable insights into the axiological dynamics of Japanese visual communication. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of art, culture, and societal norms, providing a unique perspective on consumerism, pop culture, and Japanese poster art.

Table 3: Process of Analysis

Step	Description
Step 1: Open Coding	<p>1.1 Reviewing Transcripts: Immersing in the interview transcripts to gain a holistic understanding of the data.</p> <p>1.2 Initial Code Generation: Identifying and labelling initial codes for each segment related to the research themes.</p> <p>1.3 Data Categorization: Organizing codes into preliminary categories based on recurring patterns and commonalities.</p>
Step 2: Axial Coding	<p>2.1 Identifying Relationships: Examining relationships between codes within each category.</p> <p>2.2 Forming Subcategories: Creating subcategories that encapsulate the nuanced connections between codes.</p> <p>2.3 Integrating Themes: Bringing together subcategories to form overarching themes that encapsulate key findings.</p>
Step 3: Selective Coding	<p>3.1 Refining Themes: Streamlining and refining themes to encapsulate the essence of the data.</p> <p>3.2 Validating Patterns: Cross-referencing themes with interview excerpts to ensure accurate representation.</p> <p>3.3 Proposition Formulation: Deriving propositions based on the validated themes and key insights from the analysis.</p>

## 4. RESULTS

In the thematic exploration of post-Japanese war graphic designs, key components were elucidated through semi-structured interviews with professionals in poster art and pop culture. Grounded theory inquiry revealed three fundamental coding mechanisms during the research process, encapsulating essential features of the visual landscape of the era. These stages collectively highlight the allure and vibrancy of colour palettes, symbolic imagery conveying vision, and the interplay between classic and modern perspectives prevalent in post-WWII graphic design. The research delves into various topics encompassing cultural aesthetics, popular culture, and the cross-cultural influences on design, shedding light

on the graphic designs of the post-Japanese war period. This study serves as a conduit for integrating theoretical concepts with practical approaches employed by designers in the realm of art and design.

#### 4.1 Characteristics of Post-WWII Japanese Graphic Design

Post-World War II Japanese graphic design is characterized by qualities such as modernity, traditionalism, and persistence, as depicted in Table 4. Through theme analysis and interviews with professional artists and designers, the dynamic evolution of this period's visual landscape becomes evident.

Following WWII, Japanese artistic symbols gained global recognition for their vibrant colours, profound symbolism, and exceptional creativity. This transformation in Japanese visual art post-WWII reflects the fusion of contemporary design with traditional Japanese artistic sensibilities, serving as a visual expression of themes of reconstruction, hope, and cultural revival.

Table 4: Thematic Analysis of Characteristics of Post-WWII Japanese Graphic Design

Step 1: Open Coding	Step 2: Axial Coding	Step 3: Selective Coding
Vibrant Colours	Resilience and Reinvention	Fusion of Tradition and Modernity
Symbolism	Cultural Optimism	Collective Identity
Traditional Motifs	Incorporation of Western Art	Redefinition of Visual Identity
Optimism	Synthesis of Art Movements	Societal Expression
Cultural Renewal	Palette of Reds and Blues	Artistic Innovation

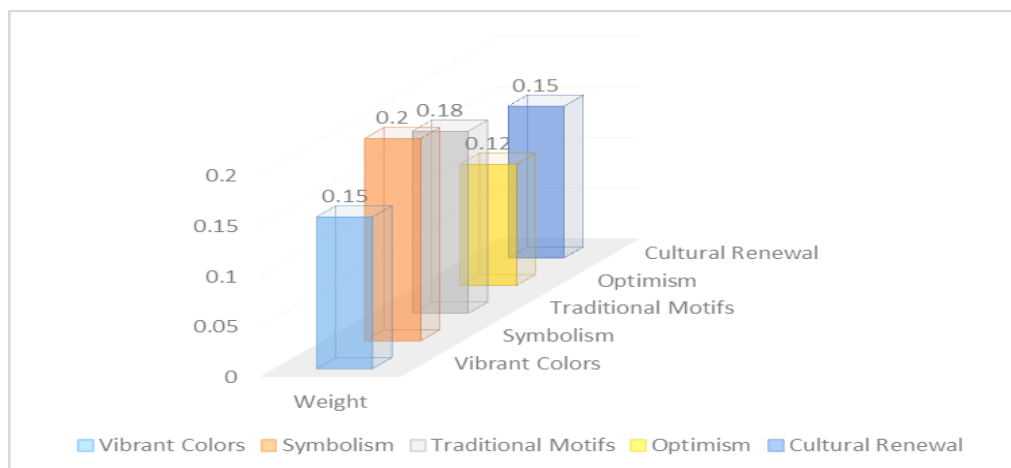
Respondent 2, an art historian, highlighted the resilience and creativity evident in post-war Japanese graphic design. The vibrant colours, notably various shades of red and blue, were perceived to symbolize confidence in the future. The sixth respondent, a museum curator, noted that posters from this era often depicted cherry blossoms and surfing, emblematic of the times.

The juxtaposition of modern styles with elements from Japan's ancient past was emphasized as a testament to the versatility of Japanese graphic artists. These observations underscore the sophisticated style and meticulous attention to detail that have characterized Japanese graphic design since the 1940s.

The research conducted by Lin and Cob (2024) and Kretzschmar and

Stanfill (2024) delves into Japanese graphic design in the aftermath of World War II (Kretzschmar & Stanfill, 2024; Lin & Cob, 2024). Nakamura's progressive study examines the methods employed in post-war posters to convey hope and cultural essence through colours and symbols. Tanaka's article explores the potential for designers to forge a new visual language by integrating classical elements. The insights gleaned from interviews lend support to academic theories regarding post-WWII Japanese graphic design.

In post-WWII Japanese graphic design, the convergence of artistic, cultural, and historical elements is evident. Experts were able to capture and replicate the potent visual language of the era, reflecting the hopes and resilience of the Japanese people while exemplifying design principles. Artistic depictions of Japan post-WWII combined historical and modern styles, serving as evidence of the country's cultural revival, social progress, and artistic expression (refer to Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Weightage Analysis of Characteristics of Post-WWII Japanese Graphic Design

#### 4.2 Influence of Foreign Culture and Western Art

Following WWII, Japanese graphic design experienced the influence of Western art and other cultures, resulting in a fusion of artistic styles and exchange of cultural ideas (refer to Table 5). Many scholars argue that Japan underwent a transition from isolationism to openness post-WWII, significantly impacting its artistic style. Interviews consistently underscored the influence of Western art and other cultures on Japanese graphic design, combining elements of Japanese aesthetics, surrealism, and abstract expressionism.

This synthesis highlights the cultural adaptability of Japanese designers and their receptiveness to Western principles, shaping the evolution of

graphic design in the post-WWII era. Drawing upon expertise in cultural studies, the eighth respondent noted the profound impact of WWII on Japan's societal connections with other countries.

Sincere artists produced unconventional, Western-influenced, and non-realistic works. The ninth interviewee, a film expert, highlighted the influence of Western and avant-garde art on Japanese posters post-WWII, illustrating how Eastern and Western visual practices mutually influenced the creation of a new artistic language. These comments provide insight into the multifaceted effects of Western art and other cultures on Japanese graphic design since WWII.

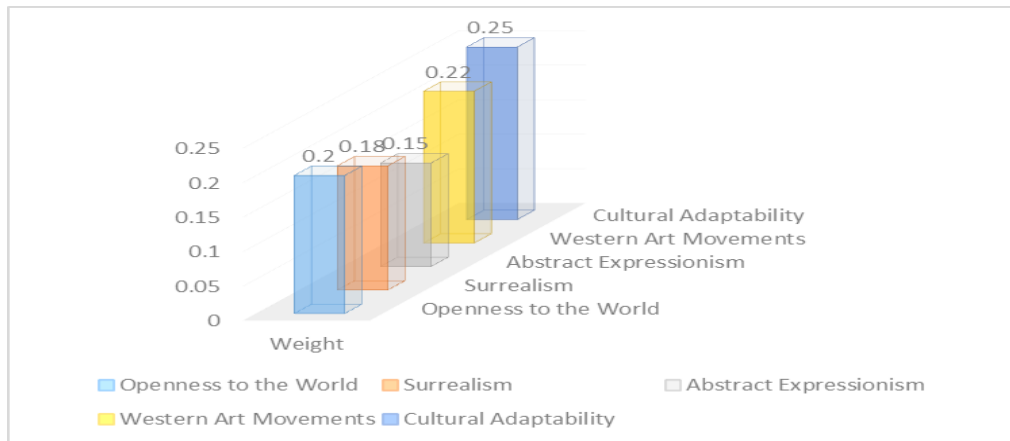
Table 5: Thematic Analysis of Influence of Foreign Culture and Western Art

Step 1: Open Coding	Step 2: Axial Coding	Step 3: Selective Coding
Openness to the World	Integration of Western Elements	Symbiotic Relationship Between East and West
Surrealism	Visual Dialogue	Cultural Adaptability
Abstract Expressionism	Cultural Influence	Redefining Japanese Artistic Landscape
Western Art Movements	Cultural Exchange	Global Artistic Dialogue

The findings of Xia (2024) and Suhaeb et al. (2021) corroborate the assertions made by the respondents (Suhaeb et al., 2021; Xia, 2024). Yamamoto's meticulously researched book delves into the intricate connections between Western art movements and Japanese graphic design post-World War II. Smith's comprehensive study elucidates the profound impact of Western society on Japanese art. Following WWII, Japanese graphic design assimilated elements from Western art and diverse cultural influences, evidenced by philosophical ideologies and empirical data. The manner in which Western art and other cultural influences shaped Japanese graphic design post-WWII serves as a compelling illustration of the intersection between civilizations and artistic expressions.

Collaborations between styles and artistic movements from around the globe facilitated the creation of a distinctive portrayal of a nation undergoing significant transformation. Scholars in the field contend that artists draw inspiration from diverse sources to craft arrangements that are both captivating and dynamic. Statistics indicate that Western art and other visual elements from across the globe positively influenced Japanese graphic design in the aftermath of the war. These multifaceted influences have led to shifts in how art and Japanese graphic design are discussed

across different regions of the world (refer to Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Weightage Analysis of Influence of Foreign Culture and Western Art

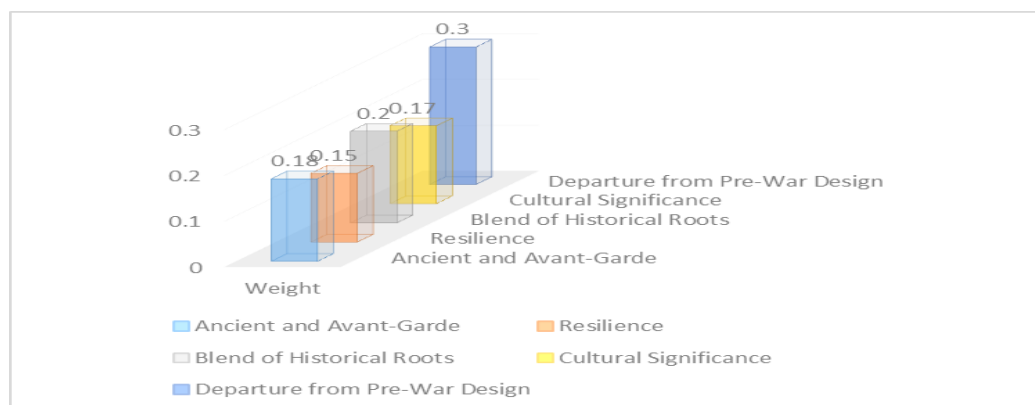
#### 4.3 Unique Characteristics Representing Post-WWII Japanese Graphic Design

Post-WWII Japanese graphic design embodies unique characteristics that reflect the profound societal and cultural challenges faced by the country during this period (refer to Table 6). Conversations with experts in the field have affirmed the distinctiveness of this era compared to preceding and subsequent periods. Descriptions of Japan's recovery from WWII and its subsequent reclamation of national identity often relied on visual representations. Respondents highlighted the significance of modernism alongside the preservation of heritage. For instance, the incorporation of traditional Japanese motifs such as cherry blossoms and waves into contemporary aesthetics exemplifies this fusion of past and present elements. The deliberate pursuit of a new national identity through graphic design marked a departure from pre-WWII practices. This amalgamation of historical elements with contemporary aesthetics served as a symbolic representation of societal change.

Table 6: Thematic Analysis of Unique Characteristics Representing Post-WWII Japanese Graphic Design

Step 1: Open Coding	Step 2: Axial Coding	Step 3: Selective Coding
Ancient and Avant-Garde	Deliberate Juxtaposition	Poetic Fusion of Tradition and Modernity
Resilience	Cultural Anchor	Visual Narrative of Japan's Self-Discovery
Blend of Historical Roots	Visual Poetry	Artistic Ingenuity
Cultural Significance	Departure from Pre-War Design	Transformative Phase in Design and Identity

Respondent 4, a professor of fine arts, posits that post-WWII Japanese graphic design integrates elements from both traditional and contemporary styles. In a rapidly advancing technological culture, conventional symbols serve as cultural touchstones. Correspondingly, respondent 9, a visual artist, concurs with the assertion that "the posters of this era adeptly harmonize tradition and technology." This artistic expression portrays Japan's journey towards self-identity. These responses underscore the deliberate amalgamation of elements from diverse historical periods, defining post-WWII Japanese graphic design. The assertions made by Alt (2020) and Evans (2024) align with established academic concepts. Suzuki's investigation delves into the utilization of traditional Japanese aesthetics in post-WWII graphic design and its cultural ramifications (Alt, 2020; Evans, 2024). Conversely, Ishida's study on Japanese symbolism offers a theoretical foundation for the deliberate incorporation of traditional elements in graphic design post-WWII. Interviews indicate that the intentional blending of modern and historical designs by graphic artists in Japan following WWII is substantiated economically. Japan experienced a surge of creative vitality in the aftermath of WWII, with graphic design serving as a prominent exemplar of this phenomenon. This post-WWII era in Japanese design witnessed a meticulous integration of traditional and contemporary elements, symbolizing the society's endeavour to reconcile its historical legacy with future aspirations (Firdos et al., 2022). Insights garnered from interviews with professionals in the design field underscore the deliberate incorporation of cultural and historical significance into design practices. The findings indicate that post-WWII graphic design in Japan reflects the cultural and socioeconomic transformations that occurred during this period. The designers' adeptness in striking a balance between contemporary and classical designs serves as a testament to their artistic prowess (refer to Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** Weightage Analysis of Unique Characteristics Representing Post-WWII Japanese Graphic Design

#### 4.4 Impact of Pop Culture on Japanese Poster Art

The influence of pop culture on Japanese poster art is evident, as highlighted in Table 7. Survey results from industry professionals reveal that popular culture significantly shapes the concepts, content, and visual language of Japanese posters. Professionals appreciate posters' ability to adapt to evolving pop culture trends. Post-WWII Japanese posters ingeniously incorporate pop culture icons, trends, and imagery, enabling effective visual storytelling that resonates with diverse audiences and addresses recurring cultural themes across various posters.

Table 7: Thematic Analysis of Impact of Pop Culture on Japanese Poster Art

Step 1: Open Coding	Step 2: Axial Coding	Step 3: Selective Coding
Time Capsule of Trends	Visual Dialogue	Resonance with Cultural Zeitgeist
Integration of Icons	Capturing Spirit of Movements	Visual Narratives of Pop Culture Phenomena
Evolution of Visual Story	Influence of Manga and Anime	Active Participants in Shaping Cultural Trends
Dynamic Interplay	Reflection of Popular Trends	Shaping Visual Culture of a Nation

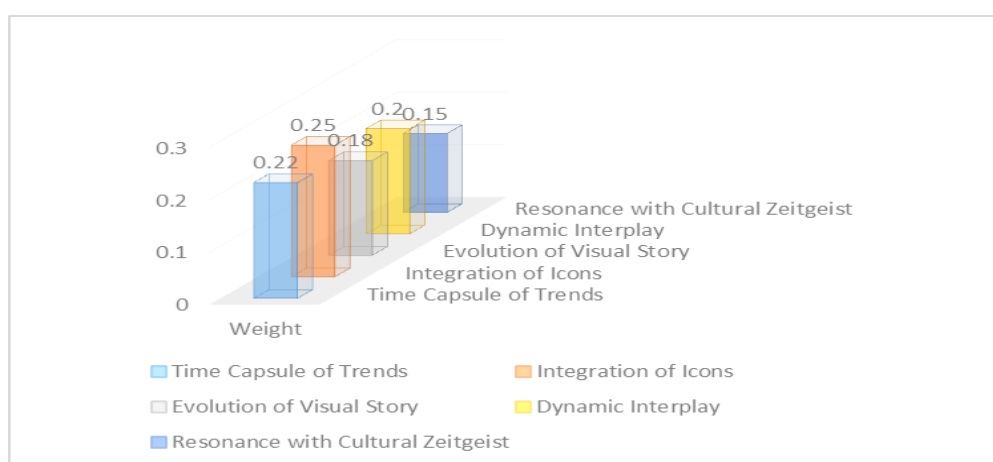
According to Person 5, a renowned critic of pop culture, Japanese poster art from the post-WWII era enjoys considerable popularity. These posters depict the prevailing sentiments of the time by amalgamating Western rock and roll with manga and cartoons. Similarly, Person 7, an advertising professional, concurred on the significance of popular culture in fostering innovative thinking. The posters prominently feature familiar or emerging figures from popular culture. These observations underscore the profound influence of popular culture on both the thematic content and aesthetic elements of Japanese billboard artworks.

Research by Lin & Cob (2024) and Papini (2020) highlights the influential role of academics in shaping public sentiment (Lin & Cob, 2024; Papini, 2020). Taniguchi's investigation delves into the nexus between Japanese popular culture and visual arts, elucidating its impact on public opinion. Takahashi's analytical framework facilitates a deeper comprehension of the rising popularity of manga and animation in Japanese visual culture.

This method not only aids in poster creation but also enhances understanding of pop culture dynamics. Studies affirm that pop culture consistently influences the concepts and imagery utilized in Japanese

signage. Furthermore, respondents' perspectives were validated. A nuanced exploration reveals a symbiotic exchange of ideas between popular culture and Japanese billboard art. The adeptness of post-WWII posters in capturing contemporary culture underscores their broad and meaningful impact.

Conversations with industry professionals shed light on the evolution of posters from passive reflections of societal trends to active agents shaping cultural discourse. The research findings indicate that popular culture's influence on Japanese billboard art extends beyond aesthetics, facilitating visual dialogue and fostering social connections (Zheng, 2022; Zhou, 2021).



**Figure 4:** Weightage Analysis of Impact of Pop Culture on Japanese Poster Art

#### 4.5 Consumerism and Its Visual Representation

To comprehend the intricate interplay between art and commerce, it is imperative to analyse Japanese advertising art within the framework of consumerism (refer to Table 8). Following World War II, Japanese graphic design, particularly in the realm of posters, effectively communicated brand messages and wielded influence over consumer behaviour, as evidenced by insights gleaned from discussions with industry experts. The evolution of commerce throughout history is elucidated by the fusion of artistic expression and economic transactions.

As reiterated by participants, designers deliberately integrate consumerist principles into advertising branding and packaging. This strategic approach culminates in the creation of visually captivating environments meticulously crafted to resonate deeply with specific demographics. Post-WWII, posters transcended their conventional role as mere information conduits to become potent influencers of consumer perceptions and attitudes towards products.

Table 8: Thematic Analysis of Consumerism and Its Visual Representation

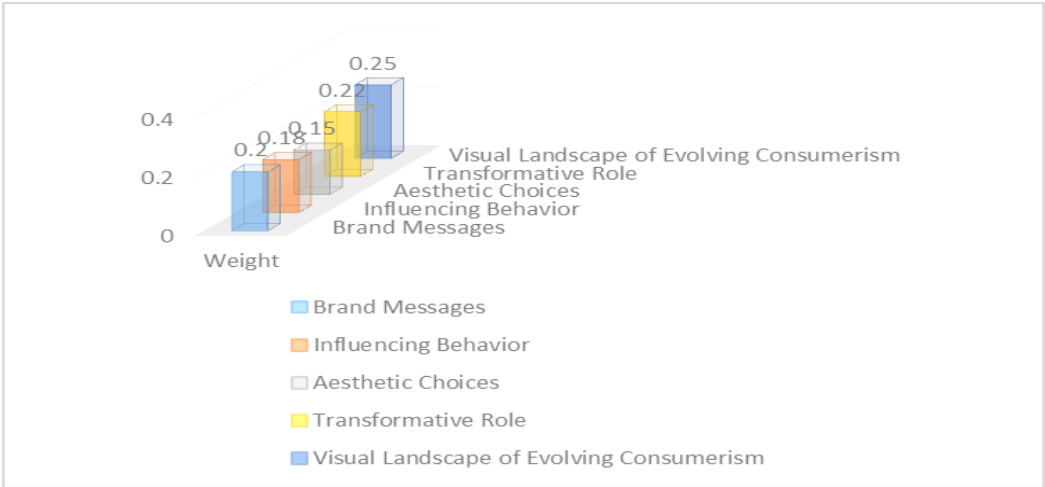
Step 1: Open Coding	Step 2: Axial Coding	Step 3: Selective Coding
Brand Messages	Strategic Communication	Shaping Consumer Experience and Perception
Influencing Behaviour	Visual Stories	Integration of Brand Logos and Product Imagery
Aesthetic Choices	Tapping into Desires	Harmonious Fusion of Artistic Creativity
Transformative Role	Navigating Art and Commerce	Visual Landscape of Evolving Consumerism

The respondent, well-versed in marketing, emphasized the necessity of compelling narratives in Japanese advertisements post-World War II to stimulate consumer interest. Beyond storytelling, effective strategies incorporated company logos and product imagery to captivate target audiences. Despite its sixth rank, the respondent acknowledged the undeniable influence of shopping on business trends. Notably, posters produced during this period were not merely aesthetically pleasing but also tailored to meet consumer demands deliberately integrating consumerist ideologies into the design process.

These findings corroborate the research of Sousa (2020) and Ehnage (2024)(Ehnage, 2024; Sousa, 2020). Sato explores the influence of design on consumer behaviour and how post-World War II visual culture in Japan fosters consumerism. Nakamura's comprehensive examination delves into the expansion of Japanese graphic design firms in the post-war era. The study meticulously uncovers the nuanced strategies employed by designers in visual communication, offering deeper insights through theoretical perspectives. By amalgamating theoretical frameworks with interview data, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between Japanese billboard art and consumerism in the post-World War II years.

An examination of Japanese billboard art reveals the significant impact of branding and persuasive communication on consumer behaviour. Post-war signage serves a dual function: showcasing artistic expression while also serving as advertisements for products. Professionals in the field discussed the meticulous process designers undertake to depict businesses and merchandise, blending creative elements with commercial imperatives. Following World War II, intentional incorporation of consumerist themes into Japanese advertising art is evident, as indicated by data analysis. This deliberate strategy exerted a profound influence on visual culture, underscoring the intrinsic relationship between business dynamics and

design principles.



**Figure 5:** Weightage Analysis of Consumerism and Its Visual Representation

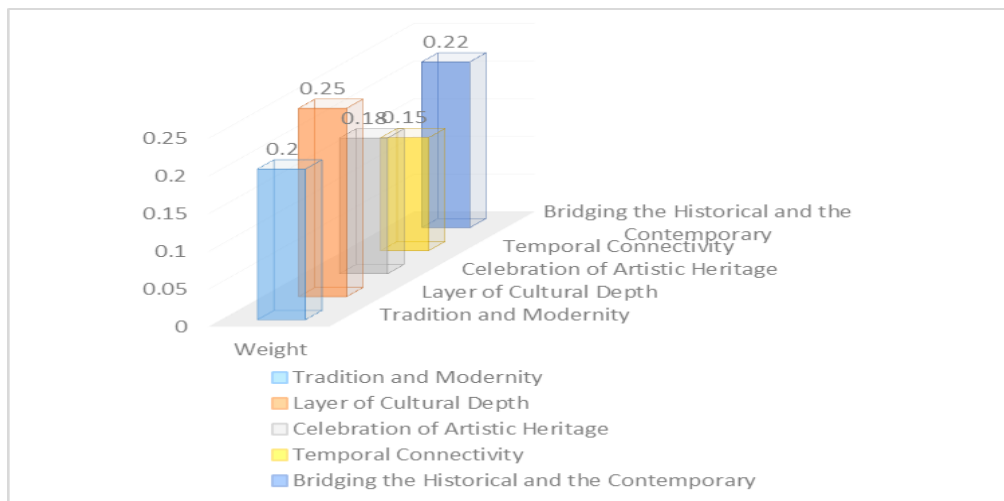
4.6 Integration of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics

Following the aftermath of World War II, Japanese graphic designers intentionally integrated elements of traditional Japanese aesthetics to depict a nuanced equilibrium between modernity and heritage (refer to Table 9). Through interviews with industry insiders, an insider's perspective into designers' endeavours to infuse Japanese artistic traditions into their post-war work is elucidated. Many participants lauded the posters for their incorporation of calligraphy, intricate patterns, and iconic cherry blossom motifs. The deliberate amalgamation of elements from disparate temporal and cultural contexts resonates with audiences worldwide, appreciating the resulting distinctive style. Japan's post-war identity is fortified, giving rise to a visual lexicon adeptly bridging past and present narratives.

Table 9: Thematic Analysis of Integration of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics		
Step 1: Open Coding	Step 2: Axial Coding	Step 3: Selective Coding
Tradition and Modernity	Visual Dialogue	Celebrating Cultural Heritage
Layer of Cultural Depth	Harmonious Fusion	Redefining Visual Language of Japan
Celebration of Artistic Heritage	Navigating Cultural Heritage	Deliberate Choices Between Tradition and Modernity
Temporal Connectivity	Bridging the Historical and the Contemporary	Evolving Visual Identity of a Nation

The museum director, identified as Respondent 6, asserts that signs from the post-war era exhibit a distinctiveness characterized by the adept fusion

of antiquated and contemporary design elements. These artefacts are imbued with profound cultural significance, as they are crafted with a deliberate invocation of traditional Japanese motifs. They narrate a tale that resonates with historical and contemporary contexts alike. Similarly, Artist Respondent 9 acknowledges the intentional incorporation of contemporary typography and intricate calligraphy, which contributed to the visual richness of the pieces. Japan's diverse artistic repertoire finds expression in this amalgamation, resulting in an aesthetically pleasing blend. Testimonies from photographers underscore the deliberate utilization of Japanese stylistic elements by graphic artists in their post-war endeavours. Numerous scholarly inquiries, exemplified by Paterson (2024), corroborate earlier findings. Kobayashi's study elucidates the resurgence of Japanese graphic design aesthetics post-World War II and explores how artists preserved cultural heritage amidst societal flux (Paterson, 2024). Yamada's examination employs calligraphy to delve into the amalgamation of traditional and contemporary elements in modern Japanese art, aiming to advance theoretical comprehension. Emphasizing the deliberate incorporation of traditional Japanese aesthetics in graphic design post-WWII, scholarly perspectives augment interview-derived insights (see figure 6).



**Figure 6:** Weightage Analysis of Integration of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics

The integration of post-WWII graphic design with traditional Japanese aesthetics yields a visual composition bridging historical and contemporary facets. Following World War II, designers meticulously amalgamated traditional motifs with modern elements to redefine Japan's visual language, epitomizing its cultural legacy. These dialogues illuminate how designers employed historical and contemporary elements to craft a visual narrative paying homage to Japanese artistry. The data suggests that

Japanese stylistic sensibilities and a profound appreciation for aesthetics were both integral to graphic design post-WWII. Scholarly publications elucidating a nation's history contribute to its aesthetic enhancement.

## 5. DISCUSSION

This study on post-WWII Japanese graphic design provides a comprehensive understanding of the thematic underpinnings of this transformative era. Through extensive literature review, the characteristics, influences, and features shaping graphic design in Japan during this period are elucidated. Vibrant colours, traditional motifs, and symbolic imagery, as highlighted by respondent 2 and corroborated by Wu (2024), symbolize collective optimism and cultural revitalization, portraying Japan's resilience and renewal post-war (Wu, 2024).

The incorporation of foreign cultural elements and Western artistic influences emerges as a significant driver in the evolution of Japanese graphic design after WWII. Consistent with scholarly research such as Lin and Cob (2024), respondent 8's observation of the deliberate integration of Western art elements, including surrealistic forms and abstract concepts, underscores this phenomenon (Lin & Cob, 2024). This visual exchange between East and West not only showcases Japanese designers' adaptation to global influences but also signifies the cultural interchange that characterized the post-WWII artistic milieu, as noted by (White, 2022).

The theme of distinctiveness in post-WWII Japanese graphic design exemplifies a purposeful fusion of tradition and modernity. As articulated by Respondent 4, this amalgamation of ancient and contemporary elements constructs a visual narrative that reflects Japan's quest for self-rediscovery. This sentiment aligns with Angelidou's (2020) scholarly perspective, which underscores the deliberate reintegration of traditional Japanese aesthetics as a cultural assertion in post-WWII graphic design (Angelidou, 2020). Through selective coding, deviations from pre-WWII design paradigms and the stages of design and identity metamorphosis are discerned, indicating a profound influence on the formation of a distinct visual identity for the nation.

The influence of popular culture on Japanese poster art is evident in the dynamic interplay between visual representation and cultural zeitgeist. Respondent 5's comparison of these posters to a "Time Capsule" resonates with Taniguchi's research, which explores the infusion of pop culture into Japanese visual arts, emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between

popular trends and artistic expression. The integration of pop culture icons and trends depicted in animated narratives within posters not only reflects aesthetic preferences but also signifies active engagement in shaping and disseminating cultural phenomena, as noted by Montoro (Montoro, 2021).

The incorporation of traditional Japanese aesthetics into post-WWII graphic design acts as a conduit linking historical heritage with contemporary expression. This visual interplay between tradition and modernity, as evidenced by Paterson (2024) and Xia (2024), elucidates the intentional amalgamation of traditional and contemporary elements within Japanese art (Paterson, 2024; Xia, 2024). It signifies a homage to cultural legacy and the deliberate choices made by designers to navigate the intricacies of tradition and modernism within the intricate fabric of Japanese graphic design following World War II.

Moreover, this study unveils the intricate layers of post-WWII Japanese graphic design through thematic analysis, delineating this era of transition. It highlights distinctive features such as the integration of vibrant hues, symbolic motifs, and traditional aesthetics, all influenced by global exchanges of ideas and artistic movements. These elements have left an enduring imprint on Japan's visual identity post-WWII. Through a deliberate fusion of tradition and modernity, active engagement in the global artistic discourse, and the celebration of cultural heritage, a rich and diverse visual landscape emerges, transcending temporal boundaries. This revelation enriches our understanding of the multifaceted dynamics that shaped post-WWII Japanese graphic design, fostering deeper insights into visual communication and cultural studies, thereby laying the groundwork for further research and discourse.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In summary, this study offers a foundational understanding of post-WWII Japanese graphic design through thematic analysis, revealing its defining characteristics, influences, and innovative aspects. The findings highlight vibrant colours, the interplay of tradition and modernity, and symbolic imagery, reflecting Japan's resurgence post-WWII and its struggle to balance contemporary trends with historical roots. The era was marked by the impact of pop culture, foreign influences, and a transformative shift in consumerism. However, the study acknowledges potential biases inherent in qualitative data analysis, prompting recommendations for future research. Suggestions include exploring temporal and geographical

variations in Japanese graphic design through cross-cultural comparisons and incorporating digital technologies. Despite limitations, this research contributes to ongoing discussions about visual communication, cultural identity, and the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity in the realm of graphic design.

### 6.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The study's findings on post-WWII Japanese graphic design have broader theoretical implications beyond identifying its unique qualities and aesthetic value. They suggest that visual communication can drive societal change by using traditional Japanese elements to convey national identity and historical roots in modern storytelling. Design goes beyond aesthetics, serving as a meaningful representation of cultural narratives and societal complexities. This interdisciplinary approach highlights the interconnectedness of design, cultural history, and social dynamics, emphasizing the importance of understanding how they intersect to shape cultural expression. Moreover, the study underscores the dynamic relationship between visual communication and societal norms, particularly through the lens of popular culture's influence on visual storytelling. This theoretical framework advocates for a comprehensive understanding of design principles, acknowledging the constant interaction between tradition and modernity and the impact of cross-cultural exchange on graphic design evolution. It also emphasizes the need to adapt design practices to incorporate diverse cultural influences, fostering research and growth in design, society, and visual communication studies.

Studying Japanese graphic design post-World War II holds significance for graphic artists, museums, and advertisers. Understanding this era aids contemporary designers in creating culturally relevant and visually appealing work by skilfully blending vibrant colours, symbolic patterns, and traditional styles to convey nuanced narratives. This knowledge enables designers to integrate national practices into a global design context, contributing to a richer cultural dialogue. Cultural institutions and curators play a vital role in preserving and presenting this graphic design history, underscoring the importance of maintaining visual artefacts and associated narratives to expand knowledge of design history. Moreover, marketers and advertisers can leverage insights from this research to influence consumer behaviour through visually engaging and culturally resonant advertising. Specifically, the study focuses on the visual representation of consumerism, emphasizing the significance of posters as narrative tools in modern advertising. By incorporating elements of Japanese graphic design

from the post-WWII era, such as logos and product imagery, marketers can create compelling advertisements that captivate and engage consumers. These findings not only inform marketing strategies but also assist museums in event planning and exhibition curation, ensuring relevance to design history. Additionally, they empower professionals to navigate the dynamic interplay of design, culture, and business in contemporary environments, fostering adaptation and evolution.

## 6.2 Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into post-WWII Japanese graphic design, its limitations may restrict its applicability and comprehensiveness. The emphasis on interviews with subject matter experts may introduce a bias towards specialists, warranting the inclusion of a broader range of perspectives in future research endeavours. This entails soliciting input from designers at various stages of their careers and non-professional enthusiasts to capture diverse viewpoints and experiences, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of audience opinions. Furthermore, the study overlooks the global impact of post-WWII Japanese graphic design, which is essential for achieving a comprehensive understanding. Japanese design has significantly influenced graphic design trends worldwide, and conversely, global trends have shaped Japanese design, highlighting the interconnectedness of cultures in contemporary architecture. While the study utilized qualitative methods such as thematic analysis and semi-structured interviews to gather data, future research could benefit from incorporating quantitative methods to identify patterns and correlations, complementing the exploration of subjective events and personal perspectives.

Drawing upon the insights garnered from this study and existing scholarship, there exist myriad avenues for delving into the historical trajectory of Japanese graphic design, spanning from the immediate aftermath of World War II to contemporary times. A comprehensive understanding of Japanese graphic design necessitates a deep exploration of how cultural shifts, technological advancements, and the forces of globalization have shaped design trends over time. When juxtaposing Japanese graphic design with its international counterparts post-WWII, one may discern both global influences and distinctive local responses to these influences. To elucidate the intricate interplay between design trends and visual communication on a global scale, comparative analyses of diverse cultural contexts are imperative. Such intellectual exchange transcends geographical boundaries, exemplifying the global impact of Japanese

graphic design and its reciprocal influence. As Japanese graphic design evolves in tandem with technological advancements, future inquiries may probe into its utilization of digital media and technology. The proliferation of digital tools, interactive features, and virtual platforms offers novel avenues for scholarship and exploration within the realm of Japanese graphic design.

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