

Sample Essay #1 – Intro

About this essay

Title: “Naked and Unafraid: An Exploration of Westernization in 1900s Japanese Art through the Nude”

Grade received: A.

Important Information

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KEY

Red = Main topic

Green = Thesis statement

Yellow = Argument breakdown

Blue = Essay conclusion

See the next page for the essay introduction; see the last page for notes and analysis.

Fion Tse

Naked and Unafraid: An Exploration of Westernization in 1900s Japanese Art through
the Nude

Kuroda's *Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment* (1899) and Foujita's *Reclining Nude (The
Nude Portrait of Kiki)* (1922) are works of Japanese art most notable for their
depictions of the feminine nude. Both Kuroda and Foujita exploit the nude figure to
respond to longstanding artistic conventions, as well as depictions of women, in the
West and in Japan. Where Kuroda's triptych fuses aesthetic ideals from both worlds to
blur the distinctions of "Japan" and "the West", Foujita addresses the "other" in both
Western and Japanese art within the context of his position as cultural interlocutor. A
comparison of social context, artistic choice and materials, and the purposeful gazes
of the women reveals a continuous argument about Westernization across the two
works of art: Kuroda recognizes the amalgamation of Western and Japanese elements,
whereas Foujita further probes into the essentialization and compartmentalization of
what is "Japanese" and what is "Western".

See the next page for notes on the main topic, thesis statement, argument
breakdown, and essay conclusion.

NOTES

This introduction achieves several things:

- The **main topic** introduces the scope of the essay, by introducing the works (Kuroda's *Wisdom, Impression, Sentiment* and Foujita's *Reclining Nude*) and areas (Japanese art and depictions of the feminine nude) to be explored.
- The **argument breakdown** outlines the most basic structure of the essay. Think of these as chapter headings in a book! Here, we see that Body Section 1 will be on social context of the artworks, Body Section 2 will be on artistic choice and materials, and Body Section 3 will be on the gazes in the paintings.
- The **thesis statement** announces your main line of argument, or what you are trying to argue for. While this can be something simple like "Cats are better than dogs" or "All good essays have introductions," a good thesis statement is hard to write. A good thesis statement will (1) be within the scope of your **main topic**, (2) be a valid and sound conclusion to draw from your argument and argument breakdown, and (3) strike a balance between detail and concision—don't weigh down your statement with unnecessary detail about your examples, main topic, or argument structure, but it's equally important to be specific about what your argument is!
- The **essay conclusion** answers the question of "So what?" This briefly states the consequences of your argument. What does it mean for other questions or issues, either within your **main topic** or slightly beyond? Again, try to keep this brief yet specific. Say "This conclusion affects A, B, and C in these ways," and explain why they affect A, B, and C if necessary.