

# Through the Iris:

*Exploring self-expression and the evolution of Japanese cultural practices through Ikebana*



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Part I: *Roots*

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Cultures grow, wilt, and rebloom. China, Japan, and Korea adapt East Asian traditions to their own cultural contexts, developing and drawing from a uniquely interconnected history. Many cultural practices in East Asia are highly coherent across borders. Tea ceremonies, art, and ceramics draw from similar roots—whether it be Buddhist philosophy, ancient Chinese art forms, or shamanistic systems of beliefs—reflecting the cultural unity of East Asia. Floral arrangement, too, bears resemblances across borders, yet Japanese Ikebana (生け花, or “giving life to flowers”) exemplifies how each East Asian nation modifies a practice to fit within its cultural framework. Ikebana continues to evolve alongside an ever-changing Japan but possesses distinctly Japanese characteristics. As the world becomes more divided and interdependent at once, cultural practices, including floral arrangement, preserve and bolster identity.

Prior to the emergence of Ikebana, Japanese shamanistic practices reflected a unique relationship with nature. Before the arrival of Buddhism in Japan, myriad animistic religions honored spirits of nature or *kami*.<sup>1</sup> These groups, roughly defined as proto-Shintoists, drew from Japanese anthropologist Sasaki Kōmei’s concept of “Laurilignosa Culture” (*shōyō jurin bunka* 照葉樹林文化).<sup>2</sup> Japanese culture has been deeply intertwined with the rest of East Asia from ancient times: the introduction of the deciduous broadleaf forest around 12,000 BCE in southern Kyūshū from what is today Southeastern China and Taiwan triggered the start of the Jōmon period.<sup>3</sup> The creation of a “vegeculture complex” amongst the Jōmon peoples hinged upon the

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<sup>1</sup> BBC, “Shinto History,” [bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/shinto/history/history_1.shtml), October 30, 2009, [https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/shinto/history/history\\_1.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/shinto/history/history_1.shtml).

<sup>2</sup> E. Palmer, “Out of Sunda? Provenance of the Jōmon Japanese,” *Semantic Scholar*, 2007, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Out-of-Sunda-Provenance-of-the-J%C5%8Dmon-Japanese-Palmer/bef2e606d14f4cc881689a3704fc9ac9a442ef0b>, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

expanding zone of Laurilignosa forests and by extent taro and yams.<sup>4</sup> Scholar Kudo Masanobu traces the earliest influences of Ikebana to Laurilignosa Culture, as the aesthetic influence of shiny broad-leaf trees and diverse flowering plants introduced from mainland East Asia fostered a culture of tree-worship, a “seminal” component of Ikebana.<sup>5</sup> The introduction of Buddhism to Japan from China in the 6th century further solidified tree-worship: Buddhist authors were the first to document Shintoist beliefs, thereby codifying terms and uniting shamanistic practices under one umbrella “faith.”<sup>6</sup> Another example of the interrelationship between Japanese culture and East Asia is the source of the first set of rules around floral arrangements, which Ono No Imoko, the Japanese envoy to China in the 7th century, introduced to the island. Floral altar decore before images of Buddha, or *Kuge*, served as the earliest practices that resemble contemporary Ikebana.<sup>7</sup> However, as opposed to floral offerings in broader East Asia at the time, the Shinto *Yorishiro* (an object, typically natural, that has the capability of being a temporary vessel for spirits) influenced people to utilize evergreen materials in floral arrangements to attract *kami*.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the syncretism of Buddhism and Shintoism became so entrenched in Japanese culture that it had its own term: *Shinbutsu-shūgō* (神佛習合).<sup>9</sup> Thus, even the earliest forms of Japanese floral arrangements were drawn from external East Asian practices, and Japanese beliefs were grafted onto them to form unique traditions.

The appreciation of floral arrangements in Japan can be traced to the Heian Period (794-1192). The *Kokin Wakashū* (古今和歌集) details multiple examples of the Heian Japanese

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<sup>4</sup> Yukihiro Fujime, “Introduction to Some Indigenous Vegetables in Japan,” *HortScience* 47, no. 7 (July 2012): 831–34, <https://doi.org/10.21273/hortsci.47.7.831>.

<sup>5</sup> Kudo Masanobu, *The History of Ikebana* (Weatherhill, 1986), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Fabio Rambelli, “Buddhism and Shinto,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, February 26, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.612>.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Lexi Kawabe, “Ikebana Originated from Shinto and Buddhism,” *Talk about Japan*, May 31, 2016, <https://talkaboutjapan.wordpress.com/2016/05/31/ikebana-originated-from-shinto-and-buddhism/>.

<sup>9</sup> Patrizio Mugianesi, “Defining Shintō in Edo Period Japan: Kokugaku and Kami Worship,” *Dspace.unive.it*, March 22, 2022, <http://dspace.unive.it/handle/10579/20851>.

aristocracy admiring flowers unrelated to religion.<sup>10</sup> Poetry contests from the Heian Period, or *uta-awase* (歌合), drew from matching objects, or *mono-awase* (物合), which included flowers in vases. These poetry contests provided an impetus for flower offerings to develop distinct aesthetic profiles.<sup>11</sup> In the Kamakura Period (1192-1333), the *Shoin-zukuri* residential style of architecture, introduced from China, became popular for court nobles.<sup>12</sup> The “traditional” Japanese *zashiki* (座敷) importantly held an alcove area, or *Tokonoma* (床の間), that would contain a flower arrangement and incense.<sup>13</sup> However, Ikebana, or more broadly *kadō* (華道, “the way of the flowers”), did not emerge until the Muromachi period (1336 to 1573 CE). Buddhist monks and aristocrats gathered together for the Tanabata, or “Star Festival,” where they participated in flower arranging competitions.<sup>14</sup> The “founder” of Ikebana, Ikenobo Sengyo, subsequently established the first Ikebana school at the *Rokkaku-do* temple in 1462.<sup>15</sup> The oldest Japanese book of floral arrangement,



*Kaoirai no Kadensho*, was published in 1499.<sup>16</sup> *Rokkakudo Temple, Kyoto (1903). Courtesy of National Diet Library.*

Early Ikebana styles are known as *tatebana*, which involved three flowers placed symmetrically in a standing arrangement with the central stem 1.5 times the height of the vase. Japan could develop a unique style of floral arrangement, partly because of China’s instability at the time.

<sup>10</sup> Masanobu, *History of Ikebana*, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> Machiko Nakayama, “The Historical Development of Ikebana,” *Malaysian Journal of Performing and Visual Arts* 4, no. 1 (December 31, 2018): 36–62, <https://doi.org/10.22452/mjpv.vol4no1.3>.

<sup>14</sup> Junko Kikuchi, “Ikebana History and Evolution,” Ikebana by Junko, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.ikebanabyjunko.com/ikebana-history/#:~:text=From%20the%20late%2013th%20to%2015th%20century%2C>.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Masanobu, *History of Ikebana*, p. 12.

Though floral arranging in China was a widespread practice during the Tang and Song dynasties, when Ono No Imoko brought floral arrangements to Japan, it fell from its zenith during the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368).<sup>17</sup> The Mongols overtook the Central Plains, forcing the



*Rikka Zu* (1673) Courtesy of New York Public Library.

Han literati into hiding. Lacking competing floral movements, Senkei established the *rikka* style. The seven elements of *rikka* represent *yō* (陽), *in* (陰), peak (嶺), waterfall (滝), hill (岳), the foot of the mountain or the valley behind it (尾), and town (市).<sup>18</sup> *In-yō* is the Japanese equivalent of the Taoist

yin-yang, which traveled to Japan along with

China's legal system in the late 7th and early 8th century. Japan once more synchronized multiple belief systems, as the mountain and town elements of *rikka* symbolize the Mountain Meru of Buddhist cosmology, and the hill and valley draw from Shintoist animism.<sup>19</sup>

The emphasis on natural objects reflects the Shintoist concept of *shintai* (神体, “body of the kami”), indicating Ikebana as a Japanese invention. The isolationist Edo Period also allowed a uniquely Japanese aesthetic to thrive. *Sukiya-zukuri* architecture became popular outside of elite circles, with wealthy merchants from Osaka, Kyoto, and Edo engaging in *kadō* for tea ceremonies, or *chabana* (茶花).<sup>20</sup> Sen no Rikyū (1522-91) pioneered the expressive, naturalistic aesthetics of *chabana* in contrast to the intellectual symbolism of *rikka*.<sup>21</sup> The *seika* (生花) style of Ikebana flourished in the late Edo Period, simplifying the *rikka* style into three main lines to

<sup>17</sup> 张辉, “The Art of Traditional Chinese Flower Arranging,” China Today, November 19, 2021, [http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/2018/cs/202111/t20211119\\_800263877.html](http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/2018/cs/202111/t20211119_800263877.html).

<sup>18</sup> Japanese Architecture and Art Net Users System, “生け花,” JAANUS, 2001, <https://www.aisf.or.jp/~jaanus/deta/i/ikebana.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, “Tatebana | Japanese Art Style,” Britannica, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/art/tatebana>.

<sup>20</sup> Masanobu, *History of Ikebana*, p. 24.

<sup>21</sup> JAANUS, “生け花.”

represent heaven, Earth, and mankind (*shin-soe-hikae/tai*). Unlike earlier styles, the *Seika* style reflected a fundamentally Japanese theory of the universe. The founder of the *Seika* school, Shogetsudo Koryu, was a member of the Japanese Buddhist priesthood who purported a unique triangulation theory of the universe.<sup>22</sup> Yet even this was not without Chinese influence, as the Chinese landscape painting aesthetic had previously followed triangular framing. Despite its influence from China, the *Seika* style is still fundamentally Japanese. The style fashioned previous concepts into something new, attaching a spiritual significance to an aesthetic tool. Indeed, the spread of triangulation theory via Japanese trade with the Dutch influenced Rembrandt's theory of form.<sup>23</sup>

The evolution of Ikebana halted not with the arrival of Europeans but with Japanese imperialistic endeavors. After the violent arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry in Japan in 1858 and the subsequent opening of Japanese borders through The Convention of Kanagawa, Japan turned to imperialism to strengthen its defenses against the West.<sup>24</sup> The Meiji Restoration oversaw the official separation of Shintoism and Buddhism under the *Kami and Buddhas Separation Order* (神仏判然令, *Shinbutsu Hanzenrei*) of 1868 (also known as *shinbutsu bunri*), erased some of the Shintoist roots of Ikebana by reassigning its philosophy as entirely derived from Buddhism.<sup>25</sup> Yet Japan became more nationalistic than ever during the Meiji period, even forbidding the use of Western flowers in Ikebana (in a style known as *moribana*).<sup>26</sup> The nationalization of Ikebana intensified during the Showa Period. Suppliers of Ikebana portrayed it as a nationalistic art, or *kokusui geijutsu*, and a spiritual training, or *seishin shuyo*, to justify the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>24</sup> National Archives, "The Treaty of Kanagawa," National Archives, October 6, 2015, <https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/treaty-of-kanagawa#:~:text=On%20March%2031%2C%201854%2C%20the>.

<sup>25</sup> Jason Ananda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago ; London: The University Of Chicago Press, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, "Moribana | Ikebana, Flower Arrangement & Japanese Culture," Britannica, n.d., <https://www.britannica.com/art/moribana>.

art form in an increasingly militaristic culture.<sup>27</sup> Despite fascist pressures, such constraints failed to quell the impact of a globalized, cosmopolitan culture on shaping Ikebana. Influenced by Western Modernism, the Freestyle Ikebana Movement (FIM) emerged as a rebellion against Ikebana for the state. FIM was an accessible form of Ikebana to the masses, and the art reached its zenith in popularity during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>28</sup> After the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, innovations in Ikebana came to a standstill.<sup>29</sup> The Shōwa government succeeded in stifling Japanese culture in the name of Japanese exceptionalism.

Since World War II, Ikebana has returned to its nationalistic function. From FIM evolved Avant-garde Ikebana, which, as opposed to FIM, falls into Pierre Bourdieu's categorization of bourgeois art: it often requires high economic capital to access, yet is regulated (via Ikebana schools) to the point that arrangements can appear almost mass produced.<sup>30</sup> This is, of course, a highly contentious statement. However, it suggests that art has become co-opted once more by the state, which is, to an extent, true. Ikebana is wielded as a form of soft power. The “three kingdoms” of Ikebana—Ikebono, Ohara, and Sogētsu schools—proliferated in the postwar period to assert Japan as a “country of culture.”<sup>31</sup> The “Ikebana industry” had arrangements with the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) and the Cultural Affairs Bureau, including tax breaks and ministry-sponsored trips, to further the state's goal of creating a postwar national identity.<sup>32</sup> The three leading Ikebana schools thus became a sort of state-sponsored cartel, purporting *Nihonjinron* ideology while being propped up by the government.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Shoso Shimbo, “Nature in Ikebana (Japanese Flower Arrangement): Beyond Sustainability,” *The Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities 2020 Official Conference Proceedings*, July 31, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.22492/issn.2186-229x.2020.3>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Masanobu, *History of Ikebana*, p. 32.

<sup>30</sup> Shimbo, *Nature in Ikebana*.

<sup>31</sup> Nancy K. Stalker, “Ikebana as Industry: Traditional Arts in the Era of High-Speed Growth,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017): 1–29, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26448154>, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

The nationalization of Ikebana continues in the present day. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) continues to utilize Ikebana as a form of cultural diplomacy through the Cool Japan and Japan House initiatives.<sup>34</sup> The state's use of Ikebana is, in itself, not inherently harmful. Ikebana can foster international relations and improve Japan's image in foreign contexts to promote peace. However, in East Asia specifically, these efforts often involve historical erasure. China, Japan, and Korea have a degree of mutual animosity. Whether it is Japanese imperialism and war crimes in China and Korea or the threat of Chinese economic dominance in East Asia, the commonalities between cultural practices have become a source of shame. Originally a form of Chinese cultural emulation, *kadō* has been divorced from its East Asian roots. Ikebana has become a source of unity and division. In tracing the development of Ikebana, it is with an unfortunate frequency that recently documented histories or news articles reflect nationalistic tendencies. Few of the sources I read credited China or East Asia for influencing Ikebana, besides the influence of Buddhism. Similarly, multiple Chinese sources begin their articles by tracing Chinese floral arrangements with the preface that Japan did *not* create an East Asian style of flowers. For example, one article states that “there is a widespread misconception that flower arranging is a traditional Japanese art. Actually, flower arranging, like many other cultural traditions adopted by the Japanese, originated in China.”<sup>35</sup> It is wrong to discredit Ikebana as distinctively Japanese and equally wrong to ignore the influence of other East Asian nations—and even the West in recent years—on its development.

Ikebana represents the cultural dynamism of East Asia. The distinctiveness of Ikebana as a Japanese art form was bolstered thanks to, not despite, East Asia's interconnectedness.

Imported plant species informed the very basis of animistic religions in Japan, and since the

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<sup>34</sup> Kazuo Ogoura, “From Ikebana to Manga and Beyond: Japan's Cultural and Public Diplomacy Is Evolving,” *Global Asia*, September 2012, [https://www.globalasia.org/v7no3/cover/from-ikebana-to-manga-and-beyond-japans-cultural-and-public-diplomacy-is-evolving\\_kazuo-ogoura](https://www.globalasia.org/v7no3/cover/from-ikebana-to-manga-and-beyond-japans-cultural-and-public-diplomacy-is-evolving_kazuo-ogoura).

<sup>35</sup> Wang Jiafong, “Chinese Flower Arrangement - 台灣光華雜誌,” *Taiwan Panorama*, n.d., <https://www.taiwan-panorama.com/Articles/Details?Guid=c68b093a-ceee-4a3c-8406-dc5eca0c6a10&langId=3&CatId=8>.



Jōmon period, continental East Asia has influenced Japanese religion, aesthetics, and art.

Isolation during the Edo period fostered a new wave of Ikebana styles. Still, the opening of Japan to the rest of the world brought forth a proliferation of radical, creative floral expressions.

Ikebana thus grapples with twofold identities: a traditional practice and a global art form.

Ikebana continues to evolve and incorporate diverse influences, catalyzing positive international relations. Contemporary Ikebana invites everyone to engage.



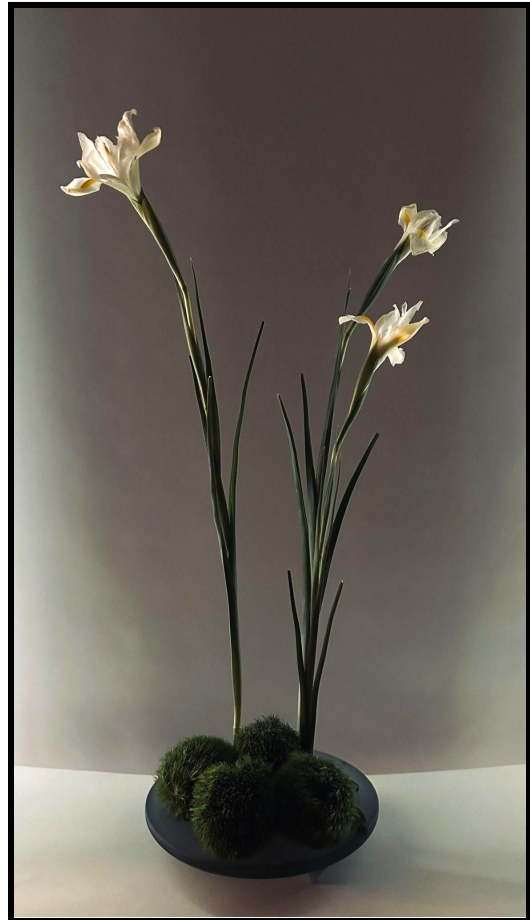
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Part II: *Arrangements*

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I began my process of floral arranging by acquiring basic materials necessary for freestyle, or *jiyuka*, and *moribana* Ikebana. A *kenzan* (剣山) is a heavy plate with needles that allows one to exaggerate the height of a floral arrangement. I chose to engage with *moribana* and freestyle arrangements because of my own connection with Ikebana: as a Westerner with limited access to primarily Western flowers, it felt appropriate to engage in two of the most “contemporary” and flexible styles of Ikebana. Within the *jiyuka* umbrella of styles, I engaged with a naturalistic, rather than abstract, expression of flowers. The goal of naturalistic *jiyuka* is to convey a sense of airiness through minimal manipulation of

*Premier*



plants, whereas the abstract school, or “designed expressions,” makes use of non-plant materials and more exaggerated plant manipulations.<sup>36</sup> The beauty of this style of Ikebana is its simplicity: it is vital to subtract elements as one creates one’s oeuvre, highlighting the shapes and movement of the plants. Unlike *rikka* and *shoka*, *jiyuka* does not necessarily require intensive schooling to access. Given my limited timeframe to complete this project and the difficulty of finding an in-person Ikebana school near Middletown, Connecticut, I avoided labeling any of my

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<sup>36</sup> Joanne Wimberly, “Maze-Ike and Jiyuka,” Ikenobo Ikebana Society of Boston, September 19, 2022, <https://www.ikenobobostonchapter.org/galleries-2/maze-ike>.

arrangements as a classical style. However, I did attempt to combine elements of classical styles in a few of my arrangements.

In extensive interviews with Ikebana practitioners, Allison Watters et al. discovered three primary themes behind their engagement: “1) ikebana as an avenue to a richer life; 2) transformation of the self through ikebana, and 3) ikebana supports harmony in life.”<sup>37</sup> It is with these motivations in mind, particularly the transformation of self, that I began my arrangements.



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<sup>37</sup> Allison M. Watters et al., “Occupational Engagement and Meaning: The Experience of Ikebana Practice,” *Journal of Occupational Science* 20, no. 3 (August 2013): 262–77, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2012.709954>, p. 1.

*Brothers*



*Cirque du Diable*



*Capillary*



*Spring*



*Man's Hubris*

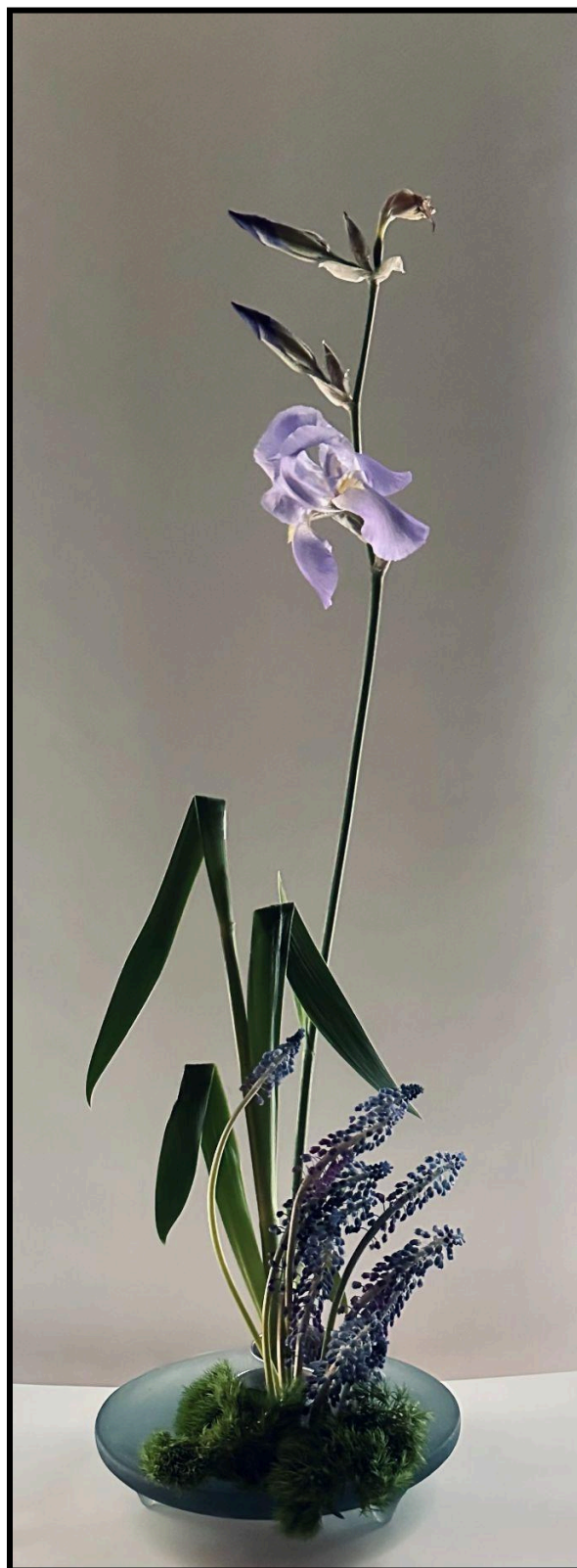




*Gigi*



*Feas*



*Grafts*



*Paramours*



*Sarah*



*Two Irises*



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 Part III: *Reflection*


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Ikebana is a challenging endeavor. The above photos do not represent my arrangements in their entirety or even the majority; they merely capture a variety. Each arrangement required multiple trials and errors, as I had attempted to follow the subtraction philosophy and whittle down each arrangement to what I viewed as its most beautiful form. Due to seasonal and budgetary constraints,

*Home Ave*

I had limited access to flowers, but I regret not attempting to use more locally sourced materials. Part of Ikebana's beauty and idiosyncrasy is its employment of evergreen materials, branches, and non-flowering plants. The manipulation of stems opens an entirely new avenue of creative exploration and is, in a sense, a more "legitimate" or Shintoist approach to Ikebana.

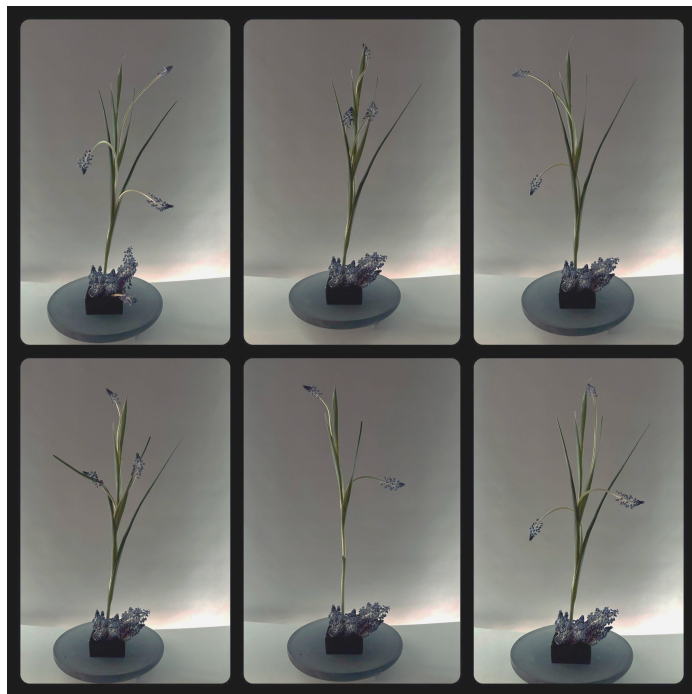
The plants used included Irises, Calla Lilies, Blue Grape Hyacinth, moss, Craspedia, Freesia, Purple Prairie Clover, and Golden Pothos. Of the various methods for shaping plants, the



technique I used the most often was repeatedly bending or twirling stems around my finger. The process lasted up to half an hour to get a plant to stay in its new form. *Cirque du Deuil* was one of the most intricate pieces to create, as the two iris stems used in the arrangement were delicately supported by the Calla Lily so as not to unfold. In the photo to the left, bending leaves to angle downwards at an angle (used in

*Untitled*) did not last. I had to photograph the manipulated forms before they came undone.

Curling the loops of *Two Irises* required using the pad of my thumb to pinch and stretch the leaf



repeatedly until the new shape formed.

*Capillary* was the most delicate of my arrangements—I accidentally snapped and bruised multiple flowers by manipulating a Freesia stem into an “S” shape. I did not use a metal wire (針金), which could have aided in reshaping plants.<sup>38</sup> I grafted plants within others in some arrangements, including *Grafts*, to create a more complex structural

arrangement. No arrangement was easy—the simplest ones had the most iterations.

In working with Ikebana, I understood why it is so dynamic as a practice: it invites the arranger to do as they wish; there is no limit to how one can manipulate plants to bend, curl, twist, and loop. I regret constraining myself to the *jiyuka* style and wish I had attempted something more radical of the avant-garde movement. For example, I would be interested in collecting litter and weeds to create an arrangement that attempts to transform the ugly and pollutive into an object of fascination. I did, however, attempt to convey messages with each of my arrangements.

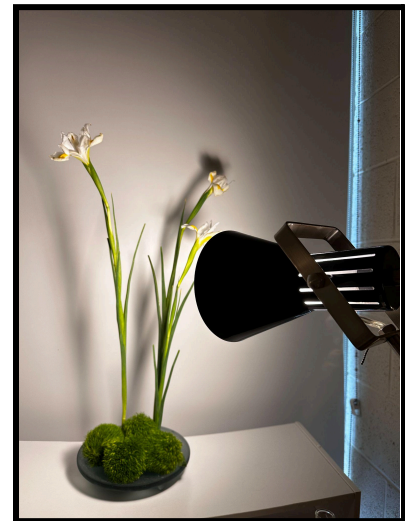
*Man’s Hubris* combined arrangement (*heigo kakei*) attempts to synchronize the *shin*, *soe*, and *hikae* arrangement of the *seika* style with the *katamukera-katachi* inclined flower style. Rather than incline the *hikae* at a 75° angle and the *shin* and *soe* at 15° and 45° respectively, I put both the heaven and Earth flowers together at 75° to represent the divinity of nature and how

<sup>38</sup> Donald Richie et al., *The Masters’ Book of Ikebana* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1966).



humans, at present, stand at odds with it. I chose to represent humans with Calla Lilies to emphasize a sense of mourning in man's detachment from Earth. In order to shape the lower flower on the left, I trimmed supporting branches and carefully ran the stem through my fingers to create a curved appearance. The arrangement is of the horizontal style (平心系).<sup>39</sup> *Feas*, in contrast, was of a traditional *shoka* vertical style. *Feas* represents Ikebana's dynamism, energy, and optimism, utilizing three primary elements reaching for the sun, as represented by the lavender iris cast in light.

Photographing Ikebana is an art in itself. While I am not trained in photography, I discovered the importance of lighting in bringing out a piece's beauty or drama. Rather than use direct lighting, which I initially attempted, I used diffused backlighting to emphasize the darkness in each photo. The white blooms stood out against shadowed leaves, and using a backlit environment also reduced the distraction of a large shadow on the white backdrop behind each arrangement. I used minimal contrast, saturation, and vibrance adjustments, as they took away from the natural colors



of the pieces. Ideally, I would present each work in person: part of the beauty of Ikebana is that each piece theatrically transforms when one views it from a new perspective.

I was drawn to Ikebana precisely because of the seemingly contradictory identities it embodies. Can I, someone who identifies as a white American lacking any formal training in floral arrangements, even call what I create a form of Ikebana? After having researched its history, albeit abridged, and attempting to follow tutorials, albeit, for beginners, it is *possible*. The fundamental commonality of Ikebana styles, from its earliest *tatebono* styles to the

<sup>39</sup> Sen'ei Ikenobō, *Best of Ikebana* (Shufunotomo Co., 1962).

avant-garde movement following WWII, is simply an *appreciation* of flowers. However, to label an arrangement as a form of traditional Ikebana requires one to identify its style, significance, and meaning. Fortunately, there exists space for the arts of yesteryear to coexist with their unbounded, accessible, modern counterparts. Contemporary Ikebana is East Asian, Chinese, Japanese, and even international once. It can be both a source of pride for Japan and a source of unity for East Asia as a living art form that transcends cultural boundaries. Deriving inspiration from its rich tradition and receptiveness towards transforming my identity and beliefs, I plan to continue practicing Ikebana.



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