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In February 1889, Japan's first national art academy opened its doors to aspiring artists. The administration of this school, the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō 東京美術学校), limited matriculating students to "good mannered and physically strong" men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, barring women from entry.[1] Consequently, women were deprived of access to institutional art education at the very moment that the Western-style art academy was first being established in Japan. This created—to borrow Linda Nochlin's characterization of the nineteenth-century Western academy—"automatic, institutionally maintained discrimination against women."[2] Given such a policy, it would appear as though women were entirely excluded from the realm of art, but the relationship between art and gender in the Meiji 明治 (1868–1912) and Taishō 大正 (1912–1926) periods was more complicated than what this single, symbolic incident might seem to suggest.

Previous scholarship has demonstrated how the modern Japanese notion of art (*bijutsu* 美術) was constructed in relation to public institutions such as the government, museums, and art academies established primarily by and for men. The neologism *bijutsu* was coined in the early 1870s when Japan was preparing to participate in the Vienna International Exposition. It was "'born' … as a direct translation of the world's-fair category of beaux arts/fine art/Schöne Kunst."[3] Kitazawa Noriaki and Satō Dōshin, in particular, have shown how the concept of *bijutsu* took shape under the

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1 Geijutsu Kenkyū Shinkō Zaidan, *Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō hen*, vol. 1, p. 125. Several women from outside of Japan were allowed to attend the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. Only one of them, Marie Eastlake (1886–?), graduated from the school in 1907; the others were visitors or temporary enrollees. See Yoshida, *Kindai Higashi Ajia bijutsu ryūgakusei*, pp. 12, 28–29.

2 In her pioneering feminist critique of art history, Linda Nochlin argues that there have been no great women artists because women painters have been socially and institutionally deprived of the means of becoming professional painters. Specifically, Nochlin discusses the place of the nude in nineteenth-century European art. The study of nude models was established by the academy as the essential method of training aspiring male painters, but women painters were institutionally denied access to nude models, creating the systemic discrimination against women. Nochlin, *Women, Art, and Power*, p. 162; for a recent response to Nochlin's argument, see Spies-Gans, "Why Do We Think There Have Been No Great Women Artists?"

3 Foxwell, "Introduction," p. 1.

supervision of the Meiji government, which was eager to deploy art as a means of elevating Japan's economic and diplomatic status vis-à-vis Western nations.[4] However, if we look at the private institution of the home (*katei* 家庭 or *hōmu* ホーム), which came to occupy a primary place in Japanese discourse on modernity, we find that art took on a strikingly different set of meanings and functions in relation to the newly conceived domestic ideals of women. This article seeks to show that the formulation and dissemination of the concept of art in modern Japan cannot be fully explained without examining the intersecting debates on domesticity and bourgeois womanhood.

In fact, at the turn of the twentieth century, Japan witnessed major efforts to feminize the artistic arena.[5] Artists, educators, and social critics endorsed women's engagement with such arts as painting, poetry, and music, regarding them as effective means of cultivating feminine virtues. They identified a close affinity between art and women in terms of beauty, morality, and civilization. Just as art was seen as aesthetically pleasing, morally virtuous, and indicative of cultural distinction and progress, women of exquisite physique, ethical purity, and intuitive aesthetic sensibility were proposed as guardians of morality and bastions of tradition who could deploy their beauty, taste, and propriety to lead civilization.[6] This conflation of art and womanhood led to the circular justification for women's involvement in art: women practiced art because they were naturally feminine, and they were feminine because they naturally engaged in art.[7] Art's femininity and that of women reinforced each other.[8]

As women and art became inextricably linked, the conceptions of art that came to grace the pages of women's commercial magazines and feminine prescriptive literature were gendered—that is, artistic practices promoted among women were differentiated from aesthetic pursuits in which men specialized. In these texts, writers often use the term *bijutsu* capaciously. In addition to painting, poetry, and music, such handcrafts (*shugei* 手芸) as sewing, knitting, embroidery, and artificial flower-making were seen as particularly feminine provinces, while fine art, industrial art (*kōgei* 工芸), and architecture (*kenchiku* 建築) were thought to belong to the masculine domain. In other words, when the concept of *bijutsu* was invoked as a universal category—which was, by default, gendered as male—art did not necessarily include handcrafts. However, when the notion of *bijutsu* was discussed vis-à-vis women, it often signified painting, poetry, music—and handcraft.[9] The artistic hierarchy was thus mapped onto the gender hierarchy, which reserved high art for men and relegated artisanal craft to women. In this way, *shugei* became "a signifier of sexual difference," mediating between amateurism and professionalism, self-cultivation and self-expression.[10] Intellect, imagination, and innovation constituted the core of men's agenda in producing art, whereas applicability, practicality, and utilitarianism formed the primary rationale for women's involvement in art. The former was considered crucial for furthering national progress, while the latter was believed necessary for maintaining domestic harmony.

This gendered hierarchy encoded in the definition of art had significant implications for women's place at home, work, and school, each of which will be explored in this article. We will first investigate the discursive feminization of art and home. The Meiji-period conception of home was informed by the Victorian ideology of separate spheres that assigned the public terrain of commerce and competition to men and the private province of home and harmony to women. When home was newly designated as a feminine space, art came to be perceived as an essential means of improving women's ability to fulfill domestic duties. Women were encouraged to cultivate their taste and refine their character through engagement with art so that they could apply their aesthetic sensibility to fashion, interior décor, and children's education. In the modern

4 For foundational studies on modern Japanese art institutions, see Kitazawa, *Me no shinden*; Satō, *"Nihon bijutsu" tanjō*; Satō, *Modern Japanese Art*; Tseng, *The Imperial Museums*.

5 Ikeda, "Josei bijutsuka," p. 5.

6 Shimada, "Joshi to bijutsu"; Lippit, *Aesthetic Life*, p. 120.

7 See, for example, Iwaya and Numata, *Saishin Nihon shōjo hōten*, pp. 456–57. This sentence is adapted from Rozsika Parker's analysis of the nineteenth-century British discourse on women and embroidery: "Women embroidered because they were naturally feminine and were feminine because they naturally embroidered." Parker, *Subversive Stitch*, p. 11.

8 Ultimately, art and women coalesced to such an extent that they became interchangeable: women represented a "crystalized essence" of the beauty of nature–a work of art itself. See "Shasetsu bijutsu"; Kimura, *Geien ōrai*, p. 153; Lippit, *Aesthetic Life*, pp. 23, 115.

9 This idea builds on Yamazaki, "Bijutsu kyōiku," p. 292; Yamazaki, *Kindai Nihon no "shugei" to jendā*, pp. 7, 9.

10 Parker has discussed how embroidery became "a signifier of sexual difference" in modern British discourse in *Subversive Stich*, p. 81.

discourse on home and taste, the bourgeois housewife gained new agency to manage, cultivate, and aestheticize the home. However, her acquisition of artworks and modern commodities was channeled toward the benefit of home and family. Next, we will examine the discourse on women's work in the arts. Art featured conspicuously in debates on women's wage employment when the inflation and urban housing crisis sparked by World War I threatened to impoverish the new middle class. Artists, journalists, and social commentators promoted women's utilization of art for paid employment, but the forms and genres of art that women could practice were hotly debated. The gendering of art-work—that is, both the act of producing a work of art and the resultant creation itself—became a site of ideological struggle. Many commentators sought to direct women's professional aspirations to the field of craft production, considering it compatible with their domestic duties. Finally, we will see that the debate on women's occupations in the arts was intimately connected to the discourse on women's art education, but the types of artistic training best suited to women remained contested. In fact, sexual difference was inscribed institutionally in the curricula of art educational programs from primary schools to art academies. The principal aim of these institutions was to provide female students with the practical skills necessary for crafting a refined, harmonious home where the housewife served as its affective, aesthetic center.

A powerful link was thus forged between art, femininity, and home in the modern Japanese discursive landscape. In this cluster of beliefs that was predominantly presented by and for the emergent middle class, the cult of bourgeois domesticity and artistic cultivation converged with debates on topics ranging from taste, interior décor, and the modern marketplace to women's home-work, professions, and education. Art played an integral role in shaping and solidifying the rhetorical construct of modern bourgeois womanhood. Tracing the processes of creating and consecrating this feminine ideal, in turn, unveils the ways in which art was categorized, hierarchized, and gendered in Japan at the turn of the twentieth century. Through these processes, women and art came to cohabit the home—both literally and figuratively. Women and home occupied a pivotal place in the construction of art in modern Japan.

Feminizing Art and Home

In turn-of-the-century Japan, when bourgeois women gained new roles as home managers, art—defined loosely to include painting, music, and design—came to be conceived as an essential instrument for women to fulfill domestic responsibilities. Taste reformers and domestic ideologues encouraged women to engage with art to refine their taste, sensibility, and character—qualities that could be deployed to clothe the family, decorate the home, and educate children. The cultivation of one's taste was deemed particularly desirable to members of the emergent urban middle class, who sought to elevate their social status by wielding aesthetic discernment as cultural capital. Such efforts were facilitated by the advent of the modern marketplace, which made possible the attainment of taste through commerce. In the modern discourse on bourgeois domesticity and tasteful consumption, the housewife gained new agency to aestheticize the institution of the home, but she was expected to acquire artworks and modern commodities for the sake of family and home.

The assumed affinity between art and women was rooted in the reconceptualization of feminine virtue during the Meiji period—specifically, the new vision of the virtuous woman as mother, homemaker, and educator of children. As historian Marcia Yonemoto has shown, the figure of the mother was largely absent in Edo 江戸-period (1603–1868) didactic literature until the early nineteenth century, when the conception of the mother as a moral exemplar for and principal educator of children came to be celebrated.[11] Furthering this maternal ideal, leading pedagogues of the Meiji era "endorsed educated motherhood for the sake of the nation," creating a vision that "great mothers equal great children, and great children equal a great nation."[12] At the same time, ideologues and policymakers posited the home as the foundation of the state and housewives (*shufu* 主婦) as its "veritable officers," thus drawing a direct link between women's domestic labor and the creation of a strong Japanese nation-state.[13] This assignment of value to women as mothers and home-managers provided women with a certain degree of agency, but

11 Yonemoto, *Problem of Women*, p. 134.
12 Uno, "Womanhood, War, and Empire," p. 499; Koyama, *Ryōsai kenbo*, pp. 38–39.
13 Nolte and Hastings, "The Meiji State's Policy toward Women," p. 157.

the institutionalization of "good wife, wise mother" (*ryōsai kenbo* 良妻賢母) as state policy simultaneously confined women to the domestic interior and limited their access to higher education, employment, and the political sphere.

In fact, the Meiji government introduced four years of compulsory education for both girls and boys in 1872, but little more than 30 percent of eligible girls were actually attending school by 1890.[14] The importance placed on mothers, who were thought to be directly responsible for the upbringing of the next generation of Japanese citizens, led to the idea that women required a solid education in order to fulfill their maternal duties.[15] The government thus promulgated another decree in 1899 that mandated the establishment of at least one school of higher education for girls in each prefecture; it further proclaimed that the purpose of women's higher education was to foster "elegant and refined manners" as well as "docility and modesty"—qualities necessary to develop female students into "wise mothers and good wives."[16] As a result, this law increased the number of schools for girls but simultaneously limited the scope of women's education.[17] As Kathleen Uno has noted, the "creation of a separate secondary education track for girls as well as its emphasis on moral education and homemaking skills channeled young women toward a domestic destiny rather than wage employment, cultural and intellectual pursuits, or political activities in the public sphere."[18] In this process of tying women to private labor at home, art came to be construed as an effective means of improving women's ability to perform domestic tasks.

From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, a number of writers in varying positions—including artists, journalists, educators, and domestic scientists—advocated the significance of art in refining women's taste for the improvement of the home, which they invariably presented as a microcosm of the state. Many writers called for "artistic cultivation" (*bijutsuteki shūyō* 美術的修養) among women, arguing that engagement with high arts such as painting, poetry, and music could foster their character, elevate their dignity, and serve as important tools by which to educate their children.[19] Some authors of feminine prescriptive literature posited sexual and spatial divisions of labor, arguing that women should practice the arts at home, while men pursued technology (*gijutsu* 技術) outside the home.[20] This notion of divided duties (*bungyō* 分業) was fueled by the Victorian ideology of separate spheres. According to this doctrine, men and women possess immutable sex differences and gender roles and should, therefore, hold separate yet complementary duties upon which the opposite sex should not infringe.[21] Such sexual difference was seen as a mark of a civilized society: the greater the difference, the more advanced the civilization. A breakdown of these distinctions signified social disorder, cultural regression, and sexual perversion.[22]

This notion of the sexual division of labor accompanied a new gendered conception of the home. For men, home served as a site of respite and recuperation, a private place of refuge to which they returned after a hard day in the ruthlessly competitive working world.[23] Conversely, the home represented a "battleground" for women, where the housewife, as the "prime minister" of the household, shouldered all responsibilities for reproduction and maintenance associated with dwelling.[24] These gendered conceptions of home and divided duties became solidified in the modern era. During the Edo period, when the boundary between workplace and home was not strictly demarcated, both women and men labored at various productive and reproductive tasks.[25] However, when new institutions, such as office buildings and schools, were established at the turn of the twentieth century, men and children left home for long hours each day, while women alone were expected to stay at home and await their family members'

14 Ibid.
15 Uno, "Womanhood, War, and Empire," pp. 497–98.
16 Copeland, "Introduction," p. 16.
17 Nolte and Hastings, "The Meiji State's Policy toward Women," p. 158.
18 Uno, "Womanhood, War, and Empire," p. 493.
19 See, for example, Tsukakoshi, *Seika shōkun*, pp. 123–36.
20 "Shasetsu bijutsuron (dai ni)," p. 62.
21 Shimada, "Joshi to bijutsu," pp. 3–4.
22 Garb, *Sisters of the Brush*, p. 112.
23 "Shasetsu bijutsuron (dai ni)," p. 62.
24 Sand, *House and Home*, pp. 61, 89.
25 In a peasant household where a young wife's productive work was vital to the livelihood of the family, in-laws or older children often cared for infants while the wife engaged in agricultural work alongside her husband. In a high-ranking warrior household, domestic tasks that came to be delegated to the modern housewife—e.g., cooking, cleaning, and childrearing—were distributed among members of the household, as well as servants and nursemaids. See Uno, "Women and Changes," pp. 27, 40; Sand, *House and Home*, p. 93.

return.[26] To accomplish their newly prescribed domestic work in the demarcated realm of the home, women were encouraged to deploy the arts for the purposes of self-refinement, interior decoration, and children's edification.

Although women came to be closely associated with domestic space, their involvement in home design in the first decades of the twentieth century was complicated and even contradictory, as Sarah Teasley has argued. The Meiji civil code of 1898, which established the household (*ie* 家) as the basic unit of the state, limited home ownership to the patriarchal head of the household, "barring women from owning property and making actual ownership of the home a male domain."[27] Further, women were largely excluded from architectural programs at universities and vocational schools until 1945.[28] At the same time that women were legally prohibited from owning property and institutionally precluded from pursuing architecture as a profession, they were actively encouraged, particularly by female-targeted commercial magazines, to create domestic environments as amateur designers. In other words, women gained new authority as interior decorators, but they were to exercise that authority only within the confines of homes owned by men. Women's new roles as homemakers thus reinforced, rather than threatened, the foundations of the patriarchal household.

Ubiquitous in the writings on art and women produced during this period are the ideas that art refines women's taste and that a tasteful home is essential to the wellbeing of children, families, and by extension, the state. Domestic ideologues and taste reformers stressed the practical applications of art, arguing that it should not be dismissed as mere entertainment nor as a frivolous pursuit. Rather, art should be considered a useful tool necessary for women's fulfillment of their domestic responsibilities.[29] For example, women's performance of music was promoted as a means of fostering family gatherings (*ikka danran* 一家団欒). Whereas "high music" such as violin, piano, organ, and koto were deemed elegant and suitably ennobling for middle-class families, shamisen was denounced as vulgar, degrading, and inappropriate for the bourgeoisie because of its association with the pleasure quarters, which threatened the sanctity of the monogamous family.[30] Meanwhile, by viewing or practicing painting, women were thought to be able to hone their perception of colors, shapes, and patterns—skills directly applicable to fashion and interior décor.[31] The achievement of balance, harmony, and unity was presented as the ultimate goal of women's coordination of clothes and domestic space—e.g., the colors and patterns of the kimono should match those of the sash, the tone and design of the floor should correspond to those of the wall, the interior decoration should complement the architectural style of the home, etc.[32] Critics claimed that such balanced, coordinated domestic arrangements were necessary to make a happy, harmonious home. Through artistic engagement, the housewife allegedly learned to become an aesthetic harmonizer of the domestic interior. Tying artistic pursuits to women's housework, these texts ultimately endorsed the "cultivation of the home" through women's practice of the arts.[33] The underlying assumption is that the home is "the root of the state, but the quality of the housewife … determines the quality of the home."[34] Art, thus broadly conceived, came to be domesticated and implicated in the discourse on "good wife, wise mother," helping women elevate the cultural sophistication of their home and, ultimately, the state. In this rhetorical construction of art, home, and womanhood, the notion of taste (*shumi* 趣味) figured prominently as a recurring theme.

26 Uno, "Women and Changes," p. 40.
27 Teasley, "Home-builder or Home-maker?," p. 89.
28 Ibid., p. 88.
29 See, for instance, Matsukata, "Joshi to bijutsushin," p. 50. Some critics, however, argued against this widespread emphasis on the usefulness of art to women's performance of housework. For example, the educator Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉 (1835–1901) argued in *The New Great Learning for Women* (*Shin onna daigaku* 新女大学) that although "the refined arts naturally become the monopoly of women, … to indulge in them … is a kind of pleasurable pastime, since these arts are not of actual use in everyday living or in the actual management of a home." Fukuzawa, *Fukuzawa Yukichi on Japanese Women*, p. 224.
30 Shūtō, "Nari hibiku katei kūkan," p. 96; Utagawa, *Joshi no tashinami*, p. 95.
31 Oka, "Joshi to kaiga no hitsuyō," p. 77.
32 Shimoda, *Kaji jisshūhō*, pp. 254–56; Ōmori, *Katei no shumi*, pp. 156–57; Kuroda, "Shikisai no chikara."
33 Sand, *House and Home*, p. 96.
34 Uno, "Womanhood, War, and Empire," p. 503.

Cultivating Taste for the Home

Shumi, the modern Japanese word corresponding to "taste," entered the standard lexicon at the turn of the twentieth century.[35] In contrast to *omomuki* 趣—an earlier Japanese concept of beauty that referred to the intrinsic aesthetic quality of a particular object, the neologism *shumi* signified one's inner capacity to discern the aesthetic value in an external object.[36] This notion of taste was informed by such Western thinkers as the Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), who defined taste as "a general susceptibility to truth and nobleness, a sense to discern, and a heart to love and reverence all beauty, order, goodness, wheresoever, or in whatsoever forms and accompaniments they are to be seen."[37] Although such a conception of taste was initially adapted as part of a literary movement in Japan, intellectuals in the early twentieth century began to advocate for the cultivation of good taste through school and home education as a means of elevating one's character and civilizing the nation.[38] Importantly, the rise of the rhetoric of taste in didactic and popular literature coincided with the emergence of a new urban middle class, whose members sought to articulate individual and group identities by wielding aesthetic discernment as cultural capital.

The rapid industrialization and urbanization accelerated by the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) led to the rise of a new middle class of professionals and salaried workers who staffed government agencies and private corporations in urban centers.[39] This emergent, heterogeneous class comprised civil servants, educators, journalists, and office workers whose educations and occupations distinguished them from the old middle class of shopkeepers, wholesalers, manufacturers, and landowners.[40] Presenting themselves as cultural authorities, bourgeois proselytizers entrusted themselves with the mission of modernizing the nation. They sought to construct their identity as the "principal promoters of national progress" by differentiating and elevating their values and expertise from those of lower classes.[41] More specifically, they established standards for the practices of middle-class domestic life, including housing, food, and clothing. Further, they pressed their peers to rationalize, cultivate, and aestheticize the institution of the home.

In fact, the turn of the century saw the proliferation of publications on taste, home, and interior décor primarily targeted to the bourgeois, as Jordan Sand has shown.[42] Taste reformers stressed that home decoration reflected the inhabitants' taste or lack thereof. They also argued that refined furnishing could elevate the family's status and morals, while conversely, vulgar ornamentation would diminish the occupants' dignity.[43] This was critical, they asserted, because those who lack aesthetic sensibility or interest in art—that is, members of the lower classes—tended to seek unrestrained material pleasure and dangerous carnal desire. To pursue a life of civility and gentility, one must instead learn to appreciate the arts and acquire the civilizing influence of taste.[44] The attainment and demonstration of aesthetic distinction thus became an essential means of asserting one's cultural refinement and social status. Whereas the decorating of formal rooms (*zashiki kazari* 座敷飾り) had customarily been practiced by men prior to the Meiji period, authors of modern edification manuals contended that it was the woman's duty to furnish the home for the family, as the housewife became responsible for the management of the modern home.[45] To do so, the writers insisted, women needed to refine their taste and nurture their character; only then could their aesthetic sensibility infuse every aspect of their lives.[46] This emergent discourse on women and interior decoration provided the bourgeois housewife with new authority over the aesthetic disposition of the home. Critics

35 Sand, *House and Home*, p. 95.
36 Jinno, *Shumi no tanjō*, p. 11.
37 Carlyle, "State of German Literature," p. 315. This passage is translated and cited in the article on "Shumi" written by the author and literary critic Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遥 (1859–1935); it appeared in the first issue of the journal *Shumi*, published in 1906. See Jinno, *Shumi no tanjō*, p. 21.
38 Ibid., pp. 19, 26.
39 Ambaras, "Social Knowledge," p. 1.
40 Ibid., p. 3.
41 Ibid., pp. 2, 9.
42 Sand, *House and Home*.
43 Terauchi, *Fujin to katei*, p. 27; Kondō, *Shitsunai sōshokuhō*, p. 22.
44 Ōmori, *Katei no shumi*, p. 181.
45 Sand, *House and Home*, p. 346. Although feminine advice literature identified home décor as one of the primary responsibilities of the bourgeois housewife, this did not mean that men stopped furnishing the home. Even in the modern era, men, as household heads, continued to decorate reception rooms and tokonoma alcoves as a means of displaying their taste, erudition, and status. See Jinno, *Hyakkaten de "shumi" o kau*, pp. 98–99.
46 See, for instance, Terauchi, *Fujin to katei*, p. 27.

celebrated women as aesthetic paragons, asserting that without the artistic influence of women, the home—and more broadly, the nation itself—risked being bleak and insipid.[47] These edifying texts, however, emphasized the benefits of domestic decoration not to women themselves but only to other members of the household—specifically, men and children. Selflessly serving others, women were posited as crucial yet subservient agents who cultivated taste and deployed décor for the sake of family and home.

A decorating guide from 1910, for example, proclaims that a carefully arranged domestic environment has the tremendous capacity to "console, enlighten, and harmonize" the occupants' minds.[48] When a man returns home from a grueling day of work and enters a tranquil, elegantly decorated room, "his tired soul would recover instantly."[49] When a child enters a room furnished with portraits of heroic figures and related artifacts, such an environment will have a "profound impact" on the child's impressionable mind—an effect "even comparable to reading a biography of a self-made man."[50] Indeed, portraits of courageous men and virtuous women were often deemed ideal images for children's edification since they were thought to instill in young viewers an aspiration to become such honorable figures.[51] Pictures of historic sites and photographs of landscapes could also delight children's eyes and increase their historical and geographic knowledge, especially when the mother could interpret and narrate such images for them. Thus, mothers should deploy pictures as an "effective educational instrument," pronounced Tsukakoshi Yoshitarō 塚越芳太郎(1864–1947), the editor of *Katei zasshi* 家庭雑誌 (Home Magazine), in 1902.[52] Likening "home instruction without images" to "school education with no words," he asserted that "adoring pictures is a child's nature; using pictures to educate the child is the mother's duty."[53]

Critics thus insisted on the woman's use of interior decoration to comfort her husband and nurture her children, exhorting the housewife to produce a home environment that was at once aesthetically pleasing and morally sound. *Shufu* (housewife) thus became the affective and artistic center of the abode.[54] At the same time that the housewife gained new authority as a home designer, however, she was also likened to the decorative arts through their shared moralizing function: just as objects function to console a man's spirit and foster a child's morality, a woman serves to provide comfort and moral guidance to her family.[55] In this way, the housewife-decorator was made simultaneously into a subject and an object of art—both the principal beautifier of the home and part of the aesthetic ensemble she coordinated.[56] Conflating the housewife with the decorative objects on display, such rhetoric undermined the woman's agency as the autonomous creator of the domestic realm.

Purchasing "Good Taste"

If the middle-class housewife was conceived as both a chief coordinator and a quintessential embodiment of the art of dwelling, how and where was she to acquire the appliances, furniture, and ornaments necessary to manage, cultivate, and adorn the home? It was no coincidence that the cult of bourgeois domesticity coincided with the advent of the modern marketplace. Mitsukoshi 三越—formerly Echigoya 越後屋, a dry goods store founded in Edo in 1673—is credited with establishing Japan's first department store in 1904. Mitsukoshi was soon rivaled by such stores as Matsuya 松屋, Matsuzakaya 松坂屋, Shirokiya 白木屋, and Takashimaya 高島屋. Targeting the middle class as their primary customer base, these department stores sold new kitchen implements, furniture, and home appliances as tools for rationalizing and modernizing everyday life. They developed a marketing strategy of selling "modernity." Through their advertisements and window displays, they directly linked the consumption of daily products to the acquisition of an advanced aesthetic lifestyle, attracting the rising bourgeois consumers who forged their class consciousness as promoters of Japan's

47 "Shasetsu bijutsuron (dai ni)," p. 63; Fujikake, "Joshi no bijutsu shumi," p. 279.
48 Kondō, *Shitsunai sōshokuhō*, p. 2.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Tsukakoshi, *Seika shōkun*, p. 164; Yomiuri Shinbunsha, *Katei no kyōiku*, p. 138.
52 Tsukakoshi, *Seika shōkun*, pp. 126, 164.
53 Ibid., p. 135.
54 Miwata, *Katei no kenkyū*, pp. 252–53.
55 As the poet and art critic Izumi Kōji 泉甲二 (1894–1980) remarked, "pictures give particularly peaceful pleasure to children just like the way mothers provide comfort to them." Izumi, "Jidō no tame," p. 167.
56 Tiersten, "The Chic Interior," pp. 30–32; Tiersten, *Marianne in the Market*, pp. 178–80.

modernization. Replete with theaters, restaurants, and exhibition halls, as well as luxurious lounges and rooftop gardens, department stores presented themselves as ideal destinations for bourgeois families to pursue leisure, pleasure, and entertainment (figure 1).[57]

These modern retail stores played a pivotal role in making the acquisition of taste broadly accessible to middle-class consumers, particularly the housewives responsible for decorating their homes. Specifically, market professionals provided consumers with specialized knowledge about the material culture of modern life.[58] They did so by creating special exhibitions and model rooms that gave customers "object lessons in the meanings and uses of new commodities."[59] Appealing to the middle-class preoccupation with practicality and progress, agents of the market turned the retail store into an edifying site where the bourgeois consumer public could educate themselves in the modern lifestyle and tasteful consumption. Browsing and shopping at the department store was marketed as an instrument of self-education and empowerment.[60] In this new regime of consumption, taste became a trait that no longer required sustained, continuous cultivation but that could be readily attained in the marketplace itself.[61] In short, "good taste" could now be bought and sold. By the early twentieth century, department stores in Japan, like those in fin-de-siècle France, capitalized on the bourgeois desire to attain taste as cultural capital by framing "the consumer as an artist, the commodity as an art object, and the marketplace itself as an artistic arena."[62]

Figure 1. New building of the Mitsukoshi Kimono Store (Mitsukoshi Gofukuten) in Tokyo, ca. 1914. Collotype, color lithograph, ink on card stock, 8.8 x 13.8 cm. Leonard A. Lauder Collection of Japanese Postcards, 2002.11010. Photograph © 2025 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

57 Tipton, "The Department Store."
58 Young, "Marketing the Modern," pp. 56–57, 60.
59 Sand, *House and Home*, p. 97.
60 Young, "Marketing the Modern," p. 60.
61 Tiersten, *Marianne in the Market*, p. 4; Jinno, *Hyakkaten de "shumi" o kau*, p. 1.
62 Tiersten, *Marianne in the Market*, p. 4.

Marketers' efforts to blur the boundary between art and commodities were most apparent in the art sections of department stores. It was through these specially designated divisions that the marketplace made art an essential element of the modern bourgeois home, designed and coordinated by the housewife. Considering the dwelling layouts of the rented houses that many of their clients occupied, market representatives advertised specific objects—such as hanging scrolls to display in the tokonoma alcove and small paintings to hang in the narrow space between the lintel and ceiling—as particularly desirable for making a proper reception room.[63] At the same time, the department store presented itself as the most convenient and reliable place to procure such necessary art objects. Mitsukoshi, for example, established a "New Art Department" (Shin Bijutsubu 新美術部) in 1907 both at its main Tokyo store and at its Osaka branch (figure 2).[64] The marketing strategy they employed radically transformed the previous protocols of art acquisition, as Younjung Oh and Jinno Yuki have shown. Instead of procuring an artwork directly from an artist or art dealer—which often required experience with connoisseurship, a network of connections, and time for negotiations—customers at the department store could simply select a work from a plethora of ready-made artworks with fixed, published prices.[65] To evade the problem of fakes that frequently plagued the purchase of antiques, the store sold artworks created solely by living artists who could verify their authenticity (hence the name "New Art Department").[66] In particular, marketers turned to contemporary artists whose reputations were well

Figure 2. Art exhibition held in the Mitsukoshi Store, Tokyo, ca. 1910. Collotype, color lithograph, ink and metallic pigment on card stock, 8.8 x 13.8 cm. Leonard A. Lauder Collection of Japanese Postcards, 2002.1617. Photograph © 2025 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

63 Sand, *House and Home*, p. 123.
64 Jinno, *Hyakkaten de "shumi" o kau*, p. 74.
65 Oh, "Shopping for Art," p. 356; Jinno, *Hyakkaten de "shumi" o kau*, p. 74.
66 Oh, "Shopping for Art," p. 356; Jinno, *Hyakkaten de "shumi" o kau*, pp. 102–104.

established through their participation in the annual state-sponsored Ministry of Education Art Exhibitions (Monbushō Bijutsu Tenrankai 文部省美術展覧会). In so doing, they effectively appropriated the prestige associated with the official art salon to increase the commercial value of the artists' creations.[67]

Ultimately, department stores advertised the acquisition of art as inexpensive, expeditious, and risk-free to novice art collectors.[68] Making ready-made art an integral part of the bourgeois home décor, they promised "an affordable cosmopolitanism" to their upwardly mobile clientele.[69] Although this consumer base consisted of both women and men, browsing exhibits at the marketplace was deemed particularly desirable for women. Artist-educators such as Oka Fuhō 岡不崩 (1869–1940) encouraged women to view department stores' displays not necessarily to purchase goods but rather to develop connoisseurial skills. Repeated visits to the stores, Oka maintained, would naturally train women's eyes, increase their knowledge of colors and patterns, and ultimately elevate their taste—qualities necessary to becoming competent mothers and housewives.[70]

The newly conceived role of the bourgeois woman as a homemaker and moral exemplar thus converged with the debates on art, taste, the new middle class, and the modern marketplace. The middle-class housewife gained new agency to manage and cultivate the home, but she was expected to acquire artworks and modern commodities only in the interests of family and home. As in turn-of-the-century France, the "market campaign[ed] to channel all forms of feminine consumption toward home and family and to privilege the domestic interior as the ultimate arena for the expression of her aesthetic individuality."[71] In this way, the bourgeois housewife's domestically oriented consumption "served to confirm, rather than challenge, male authority."[72] However, the middle-class housewife was not only a consumer but also a producer of artworks. A woman's artistic engagement within and for the home as unpaid labor was seen as a route toward fulfilling her domestic roles. Her production of art as a profession, on the other hand, occupied an ambivalent position in these debates.

Deploying Art for Women's Work

Art figured prominently in debates on women's wage employment when the rise of women's rights movements coincided with inflation and an urban housing crisis sparked by World War I, which made financial insecurity a pressing concern for the new middle class.[73] Artist-educators and social critics promoted women's engagement with art as a means of earning a living. Much as in late nineteenth-century France, they presented it as "one of the most suitable and unthreatening areas of women's work."[74] However, the forms and genres of art that women should practice remained open to debate. Some saw in women an inherent potential to excel in the fine arts, a potential that had been historically inhibited by social expectations. Others sought to guard the arena of high art as a masculine domain by assigning comparatively modest, manual tasks to women. It was to the field of craft production, which was considered compatible with women's domestic responsibilities, that many commentators sought to direct women's professional aspirations.

Throughout the early twentieth century, artists and social commentators actively debated the appropriateness of women's professional pursuit of the fine arts. The Christian theologian Ishikawa Kisaburō 石川喜三郎 (1864–1932) offered one of the most explicit arguments in support of women's involvement in fine art. In 1905, he contended that women possessed the innate capacity to become great artists. Prefiguring Nochlin's canonical discussion of the dearth of great women artists, he argued—albeit within a decidedly essentialist framework—that there had been no prominent Japanese women artists because their academic or artistic talents had long been considered useless or even a hindrance to the fulfillment of their socially prescribed obligations. Because society expected them to be dependent on men, women consequently lost their ability to lead independent lives. Ishikawa contended, therefore, that if women devoted themselves to art, they would inevitably

67 Oh, "Shopping for Art," pp. 357–58.
68 Such an advertisement can be found in Kitamura, "Shinchiku to tokonoma."
69 Sand, *House and Home*, p. 125.
70 Oka, "Joshi to kaiga no hitsuyō," p. 79.
71 Tiersten, *Marianne in the Market*, p. 235.
72 Ibid.
73 Sand, *House and Home*, p. 171.
74 Garb, *Sisters of the Brush*, p. 128.

become "great artists" (*ichidai bijutsuka* 一大美術家).[75] The author's argument is grounded in his belief that women's feminine traits are compatible with the qualities required for artists. Unlike men, women's "keen senses" (*eibin naru kankaku* 鋭敏なる感覚) and "calm insight" (*chinchaku naru kansatsuryoku* 沈着なる観察力) are well-suited to the practice of art, particularly music, painting, and sculpture.[76] Ultimately, Ishikawa encouraged women to practice art not simply for recreation or the cultivation of taste but instead as a means of displaying their "natural gifts" (*tenpu* 天賦), which heretofore had been suppressed by societal expectations.[77]

In a gesture antithetical to Ishikawa's attempt to feminize fine art, some commentators sought to reclaim high art as a masculine domain, in which women could play only subordinate roles. For instance, Koyama Shōtarō 小山正太郎 (1857–1916), a pioneering artist of Western-style painting (*yōga* 洋画), envisioned a gendered hierarchy of artistic training and labor in an article published in 1906. Concerned with what he perceives as the indolence and unproductivity of Japanese women in cities, Koyama presses urban middle- and upper-class women to receive practical training in the applied arts, rather than specialized education in high art, in order to become productive national assets.[78] According to the author, men had been occupying jobs that might be deemed more appropriate for women, including editing and coloring photographs and making underdrawings for prints. He claims that adding facial features to dolls is particularly suitable for women since "women cherish dolls from childhood."[79] Koyama thus advocates the assignment of what might be considered minor, supplementary jobs to urban higher-class women, suggesting that women do not require formal education in fine art but only the basic, technical skills necessary to fulfill manual, artisanal tasks. What the author ultimately seems to propose is a gendering of manual labor—that is, the creation of a class of selflessly anonymous yet technically skilled craftswomen. The implication is that by making women attend to modest, methodical tasks, men can focus on producing works that require a higher level of intelligence and creativity.

The prominent *yōga* painter Kuroda Seiki 黒田清輝 (1866–1924) also argued for the exclusion of women from the realm of serious art in an essay from the same year.[80] In a manner similar to Koyama, Kuroda seeks to distinguish men's and women's roles in the field of art, exalting the former while trivializing the latter, but he does so by invoking women's maternal function. Kuroda begins by arguing that "painting [education] is essential to the advancement of the industrial arts," which the author codes as a masculine endeavor.[81] This raises the vexing question: should women be versed in painting? If so, to what extent? The author's answer to the question is affirmative, yet his discussion of women's place in art focuses exclusively on their maternal role: women as mothers are useful to the extent that, once they are ingrained with artistic thought (*bijutsu shisō* 美術思想), they can serve as mediators who disseminate that thought to their children and the public at large.[82] Kuroda thus implies a dichotomous relationship between men and women—between the active creators of artistic concepts and the passive transmitters of those ideas. Women are beneficial to the development of art precisely because of their capacity to nurture the next generation of art-minded citizens.

The anxious insistence on sexual difference underlying the above assertions by Koyama and Kuroda suggests that the appropriateness of women's participation in the art world was being hotly debated at the time. In fact, art-related professions appeared frequently in contemporaneous vocational guides for women. For instance, a 1903 *Joshi shokugyō annai* 女子職業案内 (Guide to Women's Occupations) written by the reporter Ochiai Namio 落合浪雄 (1879–1938) begins with pressing women to seek wage employment in order to attain economic self-sufficiency. He notes that living expenses were rising, but wages were disproportionately low; consequently, men were becoming incapable of taking a wife and supporting a family on their own. The guide thus compels female readers to achieve "financial

75 Ishikawa, *Katei to rinri*, pp. 30–35, 124–30. See n. 2 above.
76 Ishikawa, *Katei to rinri*, pp. 32–33, 129.
77 Ibid., p. 33.
78 Koyama, "Joshi no jitsuyōteki gigei kyōiku."
79 Ibid.
80 Kuroda, "Joshi to kaiga."
81 Ibid., p. 72. Kuroda was certainly not alone in identifying *kōgei* as masculine work. The educator Shimoda Utako 下田歌子 (1854–1936) also claimed that women should not be involved in physically strenuous labor—namely, *kōgei*—that would rob them of their beauty, make them desperate and brutal, and turn them into disruptors of social harmony. Given their frail, delicate form, she continued, women are most suited to practice the arts (*gigei* 技芸), as opposed to the masculine endeavors of industrial art. Shimoda, *Joshi no gigei*, pp. 1–3; Yamazaki, *Kindai Nihon no "shugei" to jendā*, p. 70.
82 Kuroda, "Joshi to kaiga," p. 73.

independence" (*keizaiteki dokuritsu* 経済的独立). However, this does not mean that women should remain single. Instead, the author emphasizes that women must work and earn an income while fulfilling their "greatest obligations"—namely, getting married and raising children.[83] Given these womanly duties, it is critical, Ochiai insists, that women choose occupations suited to their distinctive feminine qualities—meek kindness (*onjun shinsetsu* 温順親切), meticulous conscientiousness (*menmitsu teinei* 綿密丁寧), and profuse artistic sensibility (*biteki kanjō ni tomu* 美的感情に富む).[84] Women's kindness makes them suitable teachers, midwives, nurses, and doctors. Their conscientiousness is ideal for clerical positions such as bookkeepers, stenographers, salesclerks, and telephone operators. Their aesthetic sensibility allows them to engage in painting, photography, music, writing, and embroidery, as well as teaching the tea ceremony and flower arrangement.[85]

Another occupational guide for women published three years later similarly stresses the reader's need to remain "womanly" while pursuing paid work.[86] The author asserts, for instance, that photography is currently a male-dominated profession, but the task of editing photographs is particularly appropriate for women since it requires delicate, nimble fingers.[87] Painting is presented as another fitting métier for women. The writer first provides a rather optimistic vision of the place of women painters (*keishū gaka* 閨秀画家): although it was rare for women to paint in the past, the number of women painters had grown since the early nineteenth century. Particularly successful were Okuhara Seiko 奥原晴湖 (1837–1913), a literati artist famed for creating exuberant ink landscapes and idiosyncratic calligraphy; Noguchi Shōhin 野口小蘋 (1847–1917), another literati painter who became the first woman to be appointed an Imperial Household Artist (*teishitsu gigeiin* 帝室技芸員); and Atomi Kakei 跡見花蹊 (1840–1926), a calligrapher, painter, and educator who founded the women's school Atomi Gakkō 跡見学校 in 1875.[88] For the author, these artists' careers evidenced that the painting profession had become a sexually indifferent domain. However, this rosy picture quickly turns dismal when the discussion shifts to income, which is noted to be "extremely unstable."[89] The guide recommends that aspiring painters focus on studying without expecting to receive income for the first several years. After establishing relationships with clients, they might eventually earn thirty to forty yen per month.[90] The instability of a fully-fledged artist's income implies that this profession was largely limited to women of affluent families.[91] For steadier sources of income, one could turn to producing illustrations for newspapers and magazines or drawing designs (*zuan* 図案) for embroidery and fabric—tasks that could be performed at home and thus easily reconciled with the doctrine of domesticity.[92] In this way, the distinction between women's home-work (*naishoku* 内職) and professional work was blurred. Shifting between amateurism and professionalism, the production of artifacts within the domestic arena was perceived as suitably feminine work.

Indeed, at the same time that critics debated the appropriateness of women's pursuit of art as a full-time profession, women's practice of art as home-work was widely promoted as an acceptable—even admirable—feminine activity. Although women gained new identities as home managers, the status of the full-time professional housewife largely remained an unattainable ideal until the 1930s, when men's wages in white-collar occupations finally surpassed their actual household expenditures.[93] Addressing the anxiety and financial instability of urban middle-class readers, women's commercial magazines encouraged readers both to restrict spending and to seek piecework to supplement

83 Ochiai, *Joshi shokugyō annai*, pp. 2–3, 8.
84 Ibid., pp. 14–15.
85 Ibid., pp. 15, 31–32.
86 Kondō, *Joshi shokugyō annai*, p. 19.
87 Ibid., pp. 173, 178–79.
88 For a discussion of these artists, see Wakamatsu, "Painting in Between."
89 Kondō, *Joshi shokugyō annai*, pp. 139–40, 143.
90 Ibid., p. 143. Around the same time, male provincial teachers are known to have earned forty yen a month. Civil service workers earned twenty-five to forty yen, while bankers earned as little as ten to twenty yen. See Huffman, *Creating a Public*, p. 316.
91 Unstable income was also a predicament for lower-class male artists. Not many artists could make a living just from their art, especially oil painters, who lacked an established system to market and sell their works. However, it was easier for men to earn income through part-time jobs than for women, thus making painting a more promising pursuit for them. See Kira, *Josei gakatachi to sensō*, p. 26.
92 Kondō, *Joshi shokugyō annai*, p. 150; Kamoda, *Gendai joshi no shokugyō*, p. 22; Shun'yō, *Jikatsu no dekiru joshi no shokugyō*, p. 17.
93 Sand, *House and Home*, pp. 223, 369.

household income. A number of social critics specifically endorsed women's engagement with "artistic home-work" (*biteki naishoku* 美的内職). In this process, *naishoku*—that is, "the home-based production of goods sold to brokers or to neighbors"—was reconceptualized from a shameful necessity of the desperate poor to an honorable pursuit of bourgeois women.[94] Among such home occupations, handcrafts (*shugei*) were deemed particularly refined and thus appropriate for higher-class women.[95] Feminine piecework was virtually synonymous with needlework.

The term *shugei*, which initially referred broadly to handwork, came to be associated almost exclusively with girls and women in the early Meiji period, as Yamazaki Akiko has shown. A tight knot between *shugei* and womanhood was formed in the 1872 First National Plan for Education (*gakusei* 学制), which assigned the subject of *shugei* only to girls. In this context, *shugei* encompassed a wide range of womanly work including sewing, weaving, laundry, and cookery. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, it specifically denoted women's handcrafts, such as embroidery, sewing, knitting, artificial flower-making, and lacework.[96] These crafts came to be seen as hallmarks of womanhood—quintessential feminine practices. The figure of a craftswoman engaged in a meticulous, methodical task in the safe confines of her home reflected—and reinforced—her sedentary nature, quiet disposition, and virtuous chastity.[97] The educator Shimoda Utako even sought to naturalize and consecrate the putatively intimate relationship between women and handcrafts by locating its origin in Japan's mythical past.[98] *Shugei* was, by definition, women's work.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Japanese women's handcrafts supplied both domestic and international markets. Silk handkerchiefs and shoulder accessories with intricate lace designs or embroidered details competed with German, French, and Italian products in the American, Australian, and British markets.[99] Circulating globally, women's creations increased both household income and national revenue, but they could also be marshalled to support the doctrine of domesticity: embroidered patterns and lace accessories could embellish children's clothes, while hand-sewn cotton curtains and linen tablecloths could add a soft feminine touch to the otherwise spartan home.[100] Prescriptive advice manuals repeatedly advocate women's practice of *shugei* as a vehicle for cultivating feminine virtues of diligence, patience, and dexterity. They attribute a higher value to women's act of crafting than to the resultant creation itself.[101] Performance is prioritized over product since performance has the capacity to cultivate the performer.[102] In handcraft manuals from the 1920s that present *shugei* as a mode of personal expression, the housewife's identity as an amateur practitioner is often assumed and foregrounded. Publications on the arts of home (*katei geijutsu* 家庭芸術) or the aestheticization of home (*katei no geijutsuka* 家庭の芸術化) emphasize the ease and economy of producing crafts at home, featuring such items as "elegant tablecloths," "splendid cushions," and "artistic photo albums" that can be "made easily by anyone"—even "by an amateur."[103] Ensconced within the domestic sphere, the woman craft-producer was a respectable figure who practiced art for her family and home. Whether pursued to supplement the household income or to express aesthetic individuality in fashion and interior décor, *shugei* was extolled as the ideal home-work for women. Inevitably, the designation of *shugei* as a quintessential feminine practice played a critical role in shaping women's art education, which concurrently became a topic of heated debate.

Gendering Art Education

The debate on women's artistic professions was inseparable from the discourse on women's art education, in which the types of artistic training that women should receive remained contentious. Sexual difference was

94 Gordon, *Fabricating Consumers*, pp. 72, 78.
95 Katsura, *Fujin no naishoku*; Takahashi, *Fujin katei naishoku*.
96 Yamazaki, *Kindai Nihon no "shugei" to jendā*, pp. 7–8, 191–202.
97 Embroidery also became synonymous with chastity in nineteenth-century Britain. See Parker, *Subversive Stitch*, p. 75.
98 Yamazaki, *Kindai Nihon no "shugei" to jendā*, pp. 98–99.
99 Eitō, "Meiji Taishōki no fukugyō."
100 Sand, *House and Home*, p. 347.
101 Yamazaki, *Kindai Nihon no "shugei" to jendā*, pp. 196–97.
102 On the rhetoric of promoting women's practice of tea as a means of cultivating feminine comportment, see Corbett, *Cultivating Femininity*, pp. 98–121.
103 Fujii, *Katei shugeihin no seisakuhō*; Satō, "Taishōki no *Shufu no tomo*."

imprinted onto art education throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This can be seen even in primary school curricula, where sewing—a skill deemed necessary to fulfill domestic duties—was prioritized over drawing for girls. The institution of the modern school also inhibited women's pursuit of high art. Women could only receive formal training in the arts at private studios and schools.[104] Some graduates of such schools pursued careers as professional painters, but women artists, particularly oil painters, were often subjected to suspicion and sneers. Art instruction, by contrast, was deemed a more suitably feminine occupation since women were thought to be naturally inclined to serve as home instructors. Women's engagement in professional pedagogy at school was defended in terms of what they could contribute to their maternal mission at home.

Drawing education was compulsory for both girls and boys in primary schools from the time of their establishment in 1872, but its content was differentiated for the sexes, as Yamazaki has discussed. State-issued textbooks on drawing, which became widely available in the early twentieth century, were generally differentiated for girls and boys.[105] Not only did girls' textbooks feature fewer illustrations, but they also included images that were designed to inculcate girls with a specific vision of femininity, a vision constructed as antithetical to the masculine ideals presented in boys' textbooks. For figure drawings, for instance, female subjects were selected for girls, while male subjects were chosen for boys, encouraging same-sex identification among young children. For still life drawings of "everyday goods" (*nichiyōhin* 日用品), girls' textbooks featured such items as hair accessories, sewing boxes, and feeding bottles, creating an expectation for girls to engage in self-adornment, needlework, and nursing respectively. Boys' textbooks, by contrast, presented grooming clippers and agricultural tools, as well as guns, gunboats, and cannonballs, implying boys' anticipated contribution to productive labor and the military.[106] Notably, these images were designed not simply to be viewed, but rather to be carefully studied and accurately copied by students. Mimetic education—that is, *ringa* 臨画, copying geometric forms and pictorial representations of objects from textbooks—constituted the principal method of drawing instruction at primary schools throughout much of the Meiji period.[107] By observing the master models and faithfully reproducing them, children were encouraged to familiarize themselves with these gendered figures and motifs and to internalize the ideals and expectations presented in the textbooks. Moreover, the number of hours allocated to drawing lessons decreased for girls as they advanced in grade level. Conversely, the number of hours dedicated to sewing—a subject taught only to girls, along with home economics—increased.[108] Consequently, girls spent more time studying sewing than drawing at school; indeed, needlework occupied a primary place in girls' education.

Women were not initially barred from receiving higher education in the arts in the early Meiji period, but their access to academic training became more circumscribed during the mid-Meiji era. When the Technical Art School (Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō 工部美術学校) was established in 1876 as the first government-operated art school in Japan, women were admitted (albeit shortly after men) to study art. Prior to the school's abrupt closure in 1883, seven women—including the painter of Russian Orthodox icons Yamashita Rin 山下りん (1857–1939) and the oil painter Kiyohara (Ragusa) Tama 清原（ラグーザ）玉 (1861–1939)—studied there.[109]

104 For a list of private schools and studios where women could study art in early twentieth-century Japan, see Joshi Daigaku Kōgi Henshūbu, *Shokugyō betsu gakkō annai*, pp. 135–37; Kokatsu, "Kindai Nihon ni okeru josei gaka o meguru seido."

105 Yamazaki, "Bijutsu kyōiku o meguru jendā shisutemu," pp. 284–85.

106 Ibid., pp. 285–88.

107 Primary school regulations from 1886 and 1900 emphasized children's need to "perceive common forms and draw them correctly." Adal, *Beauty in the Age of Empire*, p. 132. This mimetic method of drawing instruction was first introduced to British public schools in 1853 and subsequently spread to other parts of the world. The turn of the century saw an empirical turn in Japanese drawing education, in which children were encouraged to directly study objects in the real world in addition to static models in textbooks. It was during the Taishō period when the Freehand Drawing Education (*jiyūga kyōiku* 自由画教育) movement took shape that students came to be encouraged to express their inner selves creatively. Ibid., pp. 120–79.

108 Yamazaki, "Bijutsu kyōiku o meguru jendā shisutemu," pp. 283–84. The primary school curriculum for girls incorporated sewing in 1879 and home economics (*kaji keizai* 家事経済) in 1881. Home economics was initially created as the girls' counterpart to the boys' economics (*keizai* 経済). Horiuchi, "Kateika wa dare ga manabu mono?," pp. 107–108. See also Sand, *House and Home*, p. 57.

109 Yamashita Rin studied painting at the Technical Art School for three years before seeking further training at a nunnery in Saint

However, when the Tokyo School of Fine Arts was founded in 1887 as the only state-sponsored art academy in the country, the school denied admission to women.[110] It was only in 1946 that the academy finally opened its doors to female students.[111] To increase the opportunities for women to receive formal training in the arts, Private Women's Art School (Shiritsu Joshi Bijutsu Gakkō 私立女子美術学校; hereafter Women's Art School) was established as Japan's first art school for women in 1900, when a few other educational institutes for women were also founded.[112] For the seventeen years between the closure of the Technical Art School and the establishment of Women's Art School, there was practically no specialized institutional art education available to women.[113]

The mission statement of Women's Art School declared that women are endowed with "artistic nature" (*bijutsuteki no seijō* 美術的の性情).[114] To help women manifest their unique characteristics and talents, therefore, it was imperative to provide them with artistic education. The aims of the school were to fill a lacuna in women's art education, to open paths for women's economic independence, to elevate their social standing, and to train students to become technicians (*gijutsuka* 技術家), as well as art instructors to meet the shortage of teachers at women's schools.[115] The school regulations formulated seven years later more explicitly articulated the institution's allegiance to the state-sponsored doctrine of womanhood. The first item in the regulations pronounced that the school sought to "nurture students' feminine virtues" by offering instruction in "elegant, suitably feminine art" so that they would internally become "good wives and wise mothers," while externally serving as technicians and educators who would lead civilization.[116] The school's goal was thus to prepare young women for vocational skills, as well as domestic labor. This adherence to the state ideology informed the curriculum itself. The school offered tracks not only in *nihonga* 日本画 (Japanese-style painting), *yōga*, sculpture, and lacquer—subjects common at art schools designed for men—but also in knitting, embroidery, sewing, and artificial flower-making—subjects often categorized as *shugei*, promoted as ideal feminine home-work, and taught at women's vocational schools.[117] The tracks in sculpture and lacquer, however, were abolished within the first seventeen years of the school's existence, apparently due to limited demand.[118]

This reduced set of tracks offered at Women's Art School contrasted with the curriculum at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, which provided programs in painting, sculpture, and industrial arts for men. An additional track in architecture was established by 1923.[119] These curricular differences, however, do not indicate that the schools operated in complete isolation from each other. On the contrary, there was an overlap of personnel between them.[120] Although the two schools

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Petersburg. She returned to Japan in 1883 to work as an icon painter. Kiyohara Tama studied painting under Vincenzo Ragusa (1841–1927), a visiting instructor of sculpture from Italy. She married him in 1880 and lived in Italy for over fifty years, working as a painter and instructor, before returning to Japan in 1933. Other women students were Akio Sono 秋尾園 (1863–1929), Kawaji Hanako 川路花子 (d.u.), Ōtori Hina 大鳥雛 (d.u.), Sugawa Chō 須川蝶 (d.u.), and Yamamuro Masa 山室政 (Okamura Masako 岡村政子; 1858–1936). Jinnaka Itoko 神中糸子 (1860–1943) entered the school two years later in 1878. Geijutsu Kenkyū Shinkō Zaidan, *Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō hen*, vol. 1, p. 16; Kaneko, *Kindai Nihon bijutsu kyōiku no kenkyū*, pp. 193–96.

110 The exceptions being a handful of foreign students; see n. 1 above.

111 Among a large number of applicants, thirty-seven women passed the entrance exam and entered the school. Isozaki and Yoshida, *Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō no rekishi*, p. 290; Geijutsu Kenkyū Shinkō Zaidan, *Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō hen*, vol. 1, pp. 1023–25.

112 Women's Art School underwent multiple name changes in its history. It was renamed Joshi Bijutsu Gakkō 女子美術学校 in 1919 and Joshi Bijutsu Senmon Gakkō 女子美術専門学校 in 1929 before it gained its current name Joshi Bijutsu Daigaku 女子美術大学 in 1949. See Joshi Bijutsu Daigaku Rekishi Shiryōshitsu, *Joshi bijutsu kyōiku to Nihon no kindai*, pp. 374–75. The Women's English College (Joshi Eigaku Juku 女子英学塾) and Tokyo Women's Medical School (Tōkyō Joi Gakkō 東京女医学校) were also founded in 1900.

113 Kira, *Sensō to josei gaka*, p. 36. See n. 104 above.

114 Joshi Bijutsu Daigaku, *Joshi Bijutsu Daigaku hachijūnenshi*, p. 504.

115 Ibid., pp. 503–504.

116 Ōsaki, "Joshi Bijutsu Gakkō no shishū kyōiku," p. 15. These new regulations were formulated after the school leadership changed from the cofounder Yokoi Tamako 横井玉子 (1855–1903) to Satō Shizu 佐藤志津 (1851–1919), who is credited with rescuing the school from financial trouble.

117 Yamazaki, "Meijiki ni okeru josei to bijutsu kyōiku," p. 290.

118 Joshi Bijutsu Daigaku, *Joshi Bijutsu Daigaku hachijūnenshi*, p. 67.

119 Isozaki and Yoshida, *Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō no rekishi*, p. 51. The Painting Department initially taught only *nihonga*; it began to offer a curriculum in *yōga* from 1896. The Department of Industrial Arts (Kōgeika 工芸科) was originally named the Department of Design (Zuanka 図案科).

120 For example, Fujita Bunzō 藤田文蔵 (1861–1934), one of the founders of Women's Art School, was a professor of sculpture at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. Okada Saburōsuke 岡田三郎助 (1869–1939), an oil painter and professor at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, visited Women's Art School several times a month to critique students' work from 1916 to 1937. Masaki Naohiko 正木直彦 (1862–1940), the fifth president of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, served as a superintendent of school affairs for Women's

shared some staff and faculty, their contrasting programs of study suggest that the gendered division that assigned industrial art and architecture to men and handcrafts to women was institutionally ingrained in the curricula of these academies. Painting was virtually the only shared subject taught continuously at both schools.[121]

Women's Art School, in fact, produced a number of prominent painters. For example, Kataoka Tamako 片岡玉子 (1905–2008), a 1926 graduate, pursued her career as a *nihonga* painter while working simultaneously as a primary school teacher. Her work was initially rejected by conservative juried exhibitions, but her vibrant depictions of volcanic mountains and historical figures that defied the conventions of *nihonga* received critical acclaim later in her life. Akamatsu Toshiko 赤松俊子 (Maruki Toshi 丸木俊; 1912–2000), a 1933 graduate, also worked as a primary school teacher in Chiba and a tutor in Moscow while seeking to establish herself as an oil painter. She dedicated much of her career to producing *The Hiroshima Panels* (*Genbaku no zu* 原爆の図), a series of fifteen folding screens depicting the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with her husband Maruki Iri 丸木位里 (1901–1995).[122]

Besides students with aspirations to become professional artists, daughters of upper-class families also were sent to the school to learn "polite accomplishments" to enhance their marriage prospects. Other students entered the school with the goal of acquiring practical skills. According to a report from 1907, the number of such students increased after the Russo-Japanese War, when the wives of disabled or deceased soldiers enrolled in the school in hopes of equipping themselves with skills and knowledge necessary to earn a living. The report identifies this trend as a "practical, vocational turn" in women's art education.[123] At Women's Art School, the writer notes, artificial flower-making and embroidery were gaining popularity, while demand for the *nihonga* and *yōga* departments was declining. The painting tracks were unpopular, the reporter speculates, because their programs were longer than the others and it was difficult to secure a steady income as a painter. On the other hand, the sewing department had been consistently drawing a large number of applicants since it was necessary for household management: "Among the 320 students enrolled in the sewing program, three quarters [are studying needlework to] prepare to become housewives. Only one quarter are training for work."[124] Pursuing a career in education was also a popular postgraduate path. Some alumnae, including Asuke Tsune 足助恒 (1879–1962), one of the first graduates of the *yōga* track, returned to the school to serve as instructors.[125] Many others went on to teach at women's vocational schools or girls' higher schools, which proliferated in provincial areas at the turn of the century.[126] According to a 1908 essay by Tani Kisaburō 谷紀三郎 (?–1944), a head instructor at Women's Art School, one could earn twenty to thirty yen per month by teaching sewing and artificial flower-making. Graduates of the more specialized painting program could expect a higher salary as drawing instructors—thirty to thirty-five yen per month.[127]

Art instruction was often seen as a more realistic and acceptable occupation for women than that of the financially unstable—and possibly, morally suspect—artist.[128] Japanese-style painting was generally perceived as more suitable for women than Western-style oil painting since *nihonga*, as a "traditional" form of painting, was thought to fit into the vision of women as custodians of

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Art School. See Yamada, "Joshi Bijutsu Gakkō ni okeru yōga kyōiku," pp. 108, 120, 123–24; Joshi Bijutsu Daigaku Hyakushūnen Henshū Iinkai, *Joshi Bijutsu Daigaku hyakunenshi*, p. 48.

121 There was a discussion at Women's Art School in 1923 to abolish the painting tracks due their cost, but students and faculty protested, and painting continued to be taught at the school. Joshi Bijutsu Daigaku Hyakunenshi Henshū Iinkai, *Joshi Bijutsu Daigaku ryakunenshi*, p. 51.

122 Other graduates who became painters include Gōkura Kazuko 郷倉和子 (1914–2016), Hori Fumiko 堀文子 (1918–2019), Itō Kikui 伊藤喜久井 (1911–2002), Kai Hitoyo 甲斐仁代 (1902–1963), Kakiuchi Seiyō 柿内青葉 (1892–1982), Shōji Fuku 荘司福 (1910–2002), Watanabe (Kametaka) Fumiko 渡辺 (亀高) ふみ子 (1886–1977), Yamagishi (Morita) Motoko 山岸 (森田) 元子 (1903–1969), and Yoshida (Migishi) Setsuko 吉田 (三岸) 節子 (1905–1999).

123 "Joshi bijutsu kyōiku no shinkeikō."

124 Ibid.

125 Yamada, "Joshi Bijutsu Gakkō ni okeru yōga kyōiku," p. 132; Kira, *Sensō to josei gaka*, pp. 46–53.

126 Another report from 1907 notes that among the four hundred forty-two students who had graduated from Women's Art School, eighty-five women became teachers and thirteen held other occupations, while the majority of graduates were married or stayed at home, studying or helping with housework. See "Keishū bijutsuka."

127 Tani, "Bijutsuka to naru ni wa." See n. 90 above. Women's Art School established an advanced teacher training program (*kōtō shihanka* 高等師範科) for each track in 1916. Graduates of these programs could receive a certificate to teach at middle school. See Yamada, "Joshi Bijutsu Gakkō ni okeru yōga kyōiku," p. 129.

128 Kokatsu, "Kindai Nihon ni okeru josei gaka o meguru seido," pp. 19, 20, n. 42.

the past and incarnations of the nation.[129] *Yōga*, on the other hand, was considered more injurious to women's decorum: open-air painting necessitated women artists' entry into public spaces, while the study of nude models exposed them to naked male bodies. A comedic guide to schools from 1917 by painter and cartoonist Kondō Kōichiro 近藤浩一路 (1884–1962) specifically derides these aspects of women's practice of oil painting. Two images are included in the section on Women's Art School. The foreground of one of them shows a lone woman who carries a painter's paraphernalia such as a canvas, easel, and parasol for open-air painting (figure 3). Sporting the latest hairstyle and taking long strides in boots and trousers, she walks confidently on a busy street to attract the attention of all-male passersby. The men congregate in the background, forming a crowd. They open their mouths wide and twist their heads to look and point at her, turning the woman painter into an object of laughter and derision. Another image represents a classroom in which three women assiduously sketch a semi-nude male model (figure 4). The accompanying text mocks the students' self-consciousness, remarking that, although the model is partially draped, the students all picture him only from behind purportedly to preserve feminine propriety.[130] A contemporary photograph of a *yōga* classroom at Women's Art School shows otherwise, however. It captures women, with no apparent sign of hesitation or shame, drawing a male model in trunks directly from his front (figure 5).[131] Although Kondō's characterization of students at Women's Art School is intended to be a caricature, it nevertheless suggests that women artists, particularly oil painters, could become subjects of suspicion and ridicule in early twentieth-century Japan.

Figure 3. "Painter's Paraphernalia," page 232 from Kondō Kōichiro, *Kōfū manga* (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1917). National Diet Library. Material in the Public Domain.

129 On the role of women as a "site for inscribing an imaginary national past," see Yoda, *Gender and National Literature*, p. 108.

130 Kondō, *Kōfū manga*, pp. 231–34.

131 In her memoir, Maruki Toshiko notes that she and her classmates requested that the male models be naked, but the men were so shy that they pleaded to have their bottoms covered. In her account, it was the men, rather than the women, who were embarrassed. Maruki, *Shōjō ruten*, pp. 95–97. *Caleçons*—trunks worn by male models in the presence of women artists—were also frequently subjected to caricature in nineteenth-century France. See Garb, *Sisters of the Brush*, p. 90.

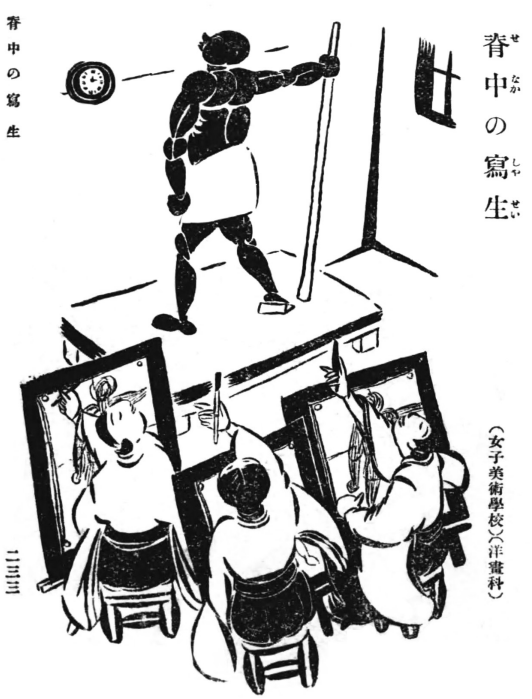

Figure 4. "Sketching the Back," page 233 from Kondō Kōichiro, *Kōfū manga* (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1917). National Diet Library. Material in the Public Domain.

Figure 5. Photograph of a western-style painting (*yōga*) classroom at Women's Art School, ca. 1914. Archives at Joshibi University of Art and Design (Joshi Bijutsu Daigaku Rekishi Shiryōshitsu).

Conversely, pedagogues maintained that art instruction did not involve women's renunciation of their femininity and propriety. They saw it, instead, as an ideal preparation for women's future role in the domestic sphere. The female instructor could, therefore, represent the acceptable side of women's professional ambitions. As noted above, the "good wife, wise mother" paradigm emphasized mothers' innate capacity to educate their children. As an extension of their natural propensity and preordained duty to become home instructors, women were said to make ideal schoolteachers—particularly at the elementary level, since elementary education required less skill than higher education, and since women could be hired at a lower salary than men.[132] Further, women instructors were not necessarily expected to pursue a long-term career. Rather, they were encouraged to gain just a few years of teaching experience before their marriage in order to prepare to instruct their own children. In short, serving temporarily as a teacher was thought to enhance the quality of their mothering. School instruction was conceived as a rite of passage for future mothers. In this way, women's professional work at school was directly linked to their maternal mission at home.[133] Women's occupational and maternal identities were conflated.

Conclusion

In modern Japanese discourse on art and womanhood, women's artistic practice within and for the home was venerated as a virtuous feminine act that aestheticized the institution of the home to serve as a foundation for the state. Bourgeois women gained new roles as home managers and mother-educators who deployed their moral virtues and aesthetic sensibility to cultivate the home, ennoble the family, and civilize the nation. Art was construed as an effective instrument for nurturing feminine virtues and fulfilling domestic duties newly ascribed to middle-class women. In other words, art was seen as a vehicle for enshrining the state ideology of "good wife, wise mother." In this debate on taste, home, and the new middle class, women's engagement with art was sublimated from a frivolous form of personal entertainment to an essential practice of the bourgeois class. Art played a crucial role in shaping ideal bourgeois womanhood.

At the same time, however, women's access to the national art academy—that is, to institutionally sanctioned means of attaining artistic mastery—was negated. Women's artistic practice was, as in turn-of-the-century France, "threatened to be subsumed under the rubric of interior decoration and amateur dabbling."[134] While women's production of art as amateur artisans was actively promoted, women were denied access to specialized training in fine art and architecture at the national academy. Whereas women's engagement in the arts as professional artists elicited suspicion particularly from conservative (male) critics, their pursuit of *shugei*, which mediated between art and craft, professionalism and amateurism, was extolled as a quintessential feminine activity. Assigning domestic utilitarian craft to women and exalting it as a signifier of virtuous femininity solidified the gendered artistic hierarchy that designated high art as a masculine preserve. The coupling of this "seemingly inclusive gesture of valorizing the marginal"—that is, women's practice of art—with the actual negation of their full participation in the art world reinforced the gendered, hierarchical construction of art in modern Japan.[135]

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132 Anderson, *Place in Public*, p. 75; Iwami, *Hirointachi no hyakunen*, p. 37; Nagy, "Middle-Class Working Women," p. 209.

133 Koyama, *Ryōsai kenbo to iu kihan*, p. 76.

134 Garb, *Sisters of the Brush*, p. 109.

135 Yoda, *Gender and National Literature*, p. 108.

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