

How did Japanese art influence the European art in 19th-20th century ?

# The plan

I – The influence of Japanese art on the French Impressionists and Nabis at the end of the 19th century (beginning of the 20th century)

II – The influence of Japanese prints on the Impressionists

# Introduction

When? 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle (start 20th century)

Where?

- Expansion of travel to Asia – cultural tourism X artistic tourism to discover and to acquire new methods of work, drawing, perspective that Westerners do not have and then bring them back to use.
- 1st travel in Japan: the Netherlands at the beginning 1868 and after the Europeans.
- Meiji era : 1868-1912

What?

- Symbol of Asian art: Zen, Buddhism, imperfect nature, flowers (waterlilies, lotus), exotic animals/birds, etc.

Who?

- Impressionists, « Nabis » > influenced by Asian arts like the « Ukiyo-e » movement, or artists such as Utagawa Hiroshige and Katsushika Hokusai (*The Wave off Kanagawa*, 1830)

I – The influence of Japanese art on the French Impressionists and Nabis at the end of the 19th century (beginning of the 20th century)



*Portrait of Émile Zola,*  
Édouard Manet, 1868,  
Musée d'Orsay



« With the universal exhibitions of Paris, that is to say the "Universal Exhibition" of 1855, 1867 and 1878, Japanese Ukizo-e woodblock prints became known. », Michel-Schertges *Asian Journal of German and European Studies*, 2019

*Tempera on wooden panels*, Pierre Bonnard, 1889

« Japanese are often thought not to be intellectual and philosophical, because their general culture is not thoroughly impregnated with intellectuality. This criticism, I think, results somewhat from the Japanese love of asymmetry. The intellectual primarily aspires to balance, while the Japanese are apt to ignore it and incline strongly towards imbalance. » (Suzuki 2010, p. 27).

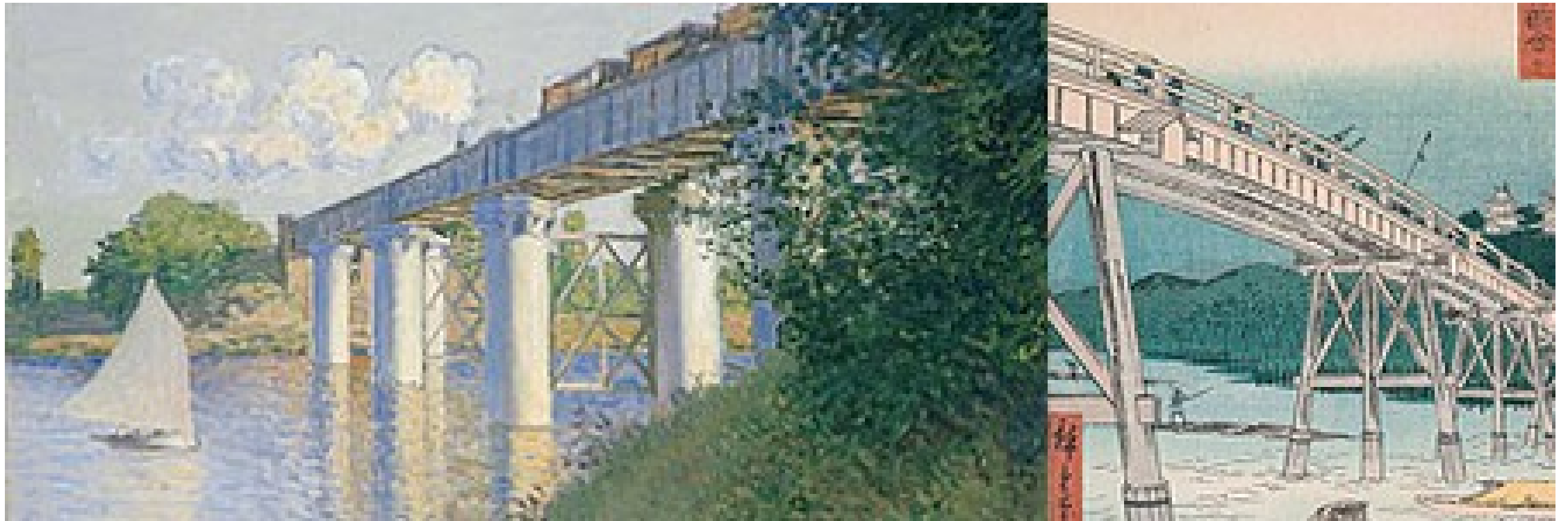


Claude Monet, *Le Bassin aux nymphéas*, 1898, Musée d'Orsay Paris



Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1903, Musée Marmottan, Paris 16<sup>ème</sup>

- Floral patterns: nenuphar from Japan
- Asymmetry and "fuzzy" landscape > imperfection of the landscape
- Reflection of trees in the water > impression of movement



## II – The influence of Japanese prints on the Impressionists

Claude Monet, *Argenteuil Bridge*, 1874 (on the left) / Estampe japonaise, Hiroshige (on the right)



« Look, we love Japanese painting, we've experienced its influence — all the Impressionists have that in common — and we wouldn't go to Japan, in other words, to what is the equivalent of Japan, the south? So I believe that the future of the new art still lies in the south after all. (...) I'd like you to spend some time here, you'd feel it — after some time your vision changes, you see with a more Japanese eye, you feel color differently. I'm also convinced that it's precisely through a long stay here that I'll bring out my personality. The Japanese draws quickly, very quickly, like a flash of lightning, because his nerves are finer, his feeling simpler » (Vincent van Gogh, *Lettres d'Arles à son frère Théo*, 1888)



*Almond branches in bloom*, 1890, Vincent van Gogh

# Bibliography

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2) « Contemporary Asian art and Western societies: cultural  
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