

In pursuit of timeless school of thoughts.....

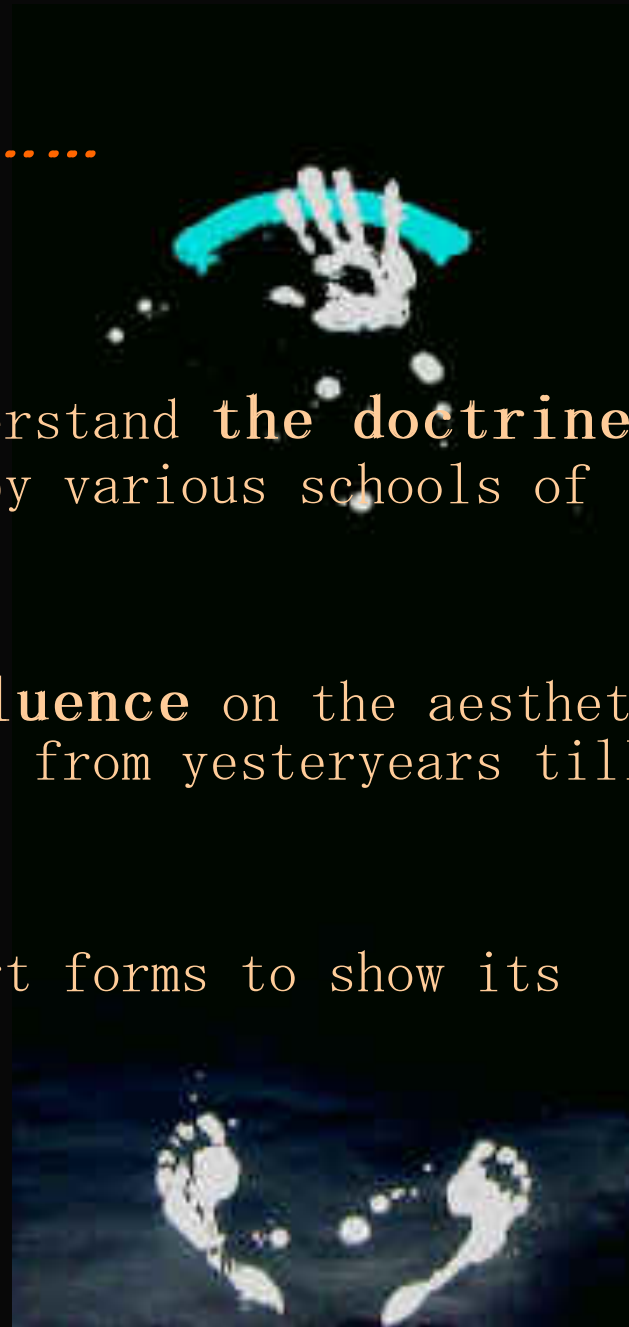
The concept of
aesthetics in ZEN , TAO and
Deconstruction

Special project
Guide : Prof
Bhandari

Ritu Sonalika
01613008

Aim of the project.....

- Project aims to understand **the doctrine principles** propounded by various schools of thought.
- Their **eternal influence** on the aesthetic principles and lifestyles from yesteryears till today.
- Study some of the art forms to show its attributes.

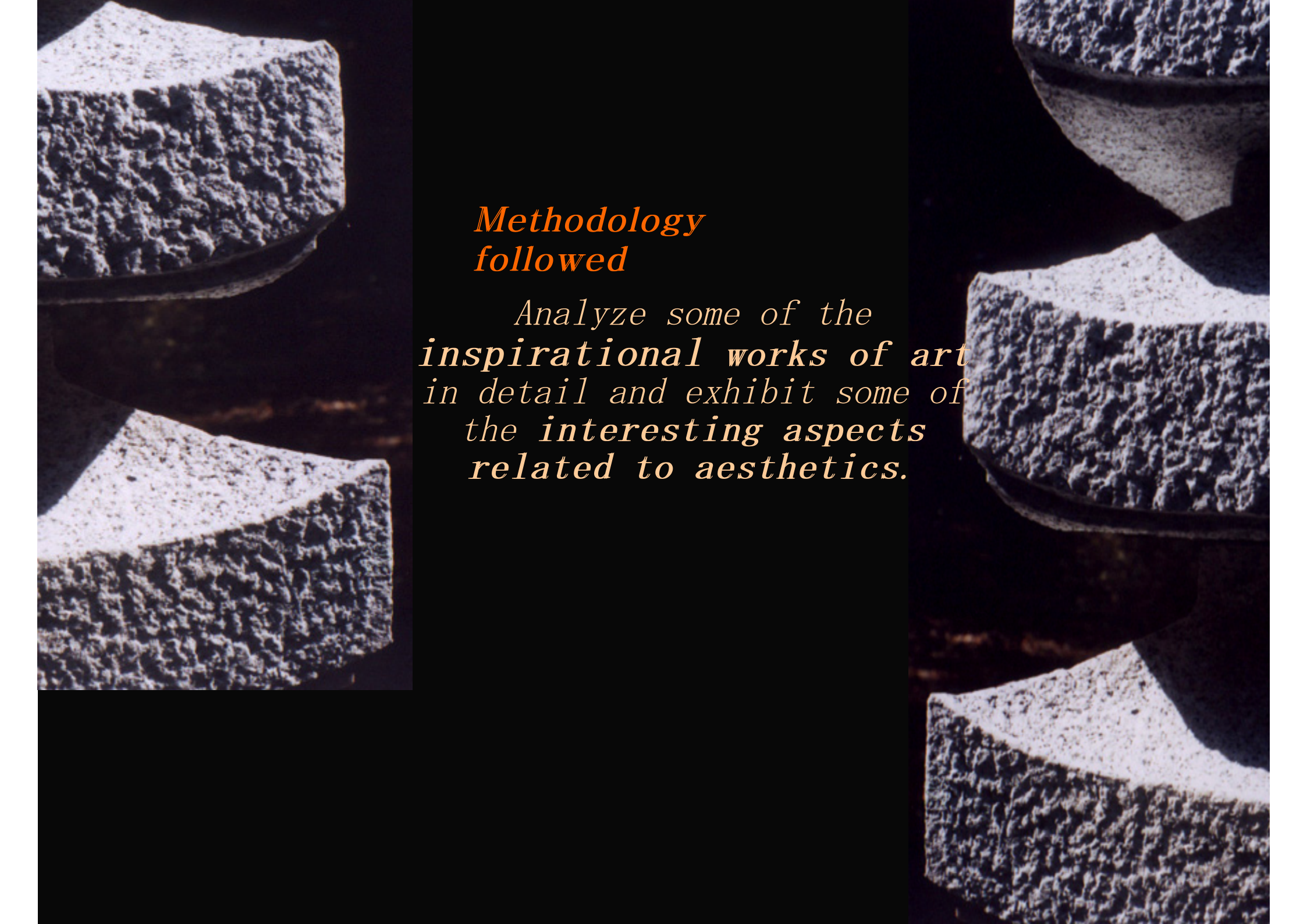




Methodology followed

*Literature reading,
reasoning, pondering,
inferring, discussing and
realizing*

*An attempt to feel the
essence of each doctrine.*

An abstract sculpture composed of several light-colored, textured blocks, possibly stone or concrete, arranged in a geometric pattern. The blocks are set against a dark, almost black background. The lighting creates strong highlights and shadows, emphasizing the rough, pitted texture of the blocks and the sharp edges of the arrangement. The overall composition is minimalist and architectural.

Methodology followed

*Analyze some of the
inspirational works of art
in detail and exhibit some of
the interesting aspects
related to aesthetics.*



Methodology followed

*Identify and analyze various art forms which **associate intimately** with various principles.*



Look into the ZEN history...

Around 475 A.D. Bodhidharma, traveled from India to China and introduced the teachings of the Buddha there.

In China Buddhism mingled with Taoism. The result of this mingling was the Ch'an (Zen) School of Buddhism.

*Around 1200 A.D. Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism spread from China to Japan where it was called **Zen Buddhism**.*

TAO history.....

Taoist ideas (400 BC) are based on two main texts 'Tao Te Ching' and 'Chuang Tzu.' authored by Lao Tzu. Manuscripts believed to be addressing human behavior at metaphysical level yet a practical guide.

“Tao” the way or path.

“Te” virtue or integrity.

“Chuang Tzu” addresses spiritual freedom.

ZEN and TAO

Origin of Zen has been from China.

The essential principles of each are very difficult to distinguish.

Hence, traditional art forms and there expressions are equally difficult to comprehend.

Yet over the centuries, both countries have developed differently. Disciplinary pursuit of principles may have been the key.

DeConsTrucTion

— history

- The end of philosophy
- Introduced by French Critic and Philosopher - Derrida
- It is not in synonym with deconstruction but it is closer to meaning 'analysis' - 'to undo its meaning' and analyze its specificity from itself.
- Expression through text - an inherent approach





Essence of Tao

Tao is 'the way'

Tao is the law of change - it is the sum total of all changes. Space time continuum of beings that change.

Yin Yang

- Active
- Heaven
- Light
- Active
- Form
- Male
- Prosper
- Rise
- Emerge



- Passive
- Earth
- Darkness
- Passive
- Formless
- Female
- Decline
- Fall
- Return

“Creation is a result of interaction of positive and negative energy, form and formless, being and emptiness.”



Essence of Zen

Zen is not a religion

*Zen is an **intuitive understanding***

- trained consciousness

Words, texts, sentences or logic have no fixed meaning and are often irrelevant.

Chief practice- awake innate sense of being - identify ones own self - experience natural state of mind.

*No dependence on words
Direct pointing to the soul of the
man*

*Seeing into one's own nature,
Hence they lay emphasis on
"finding out oneself"*

· *Practicing Zen*

Non formal

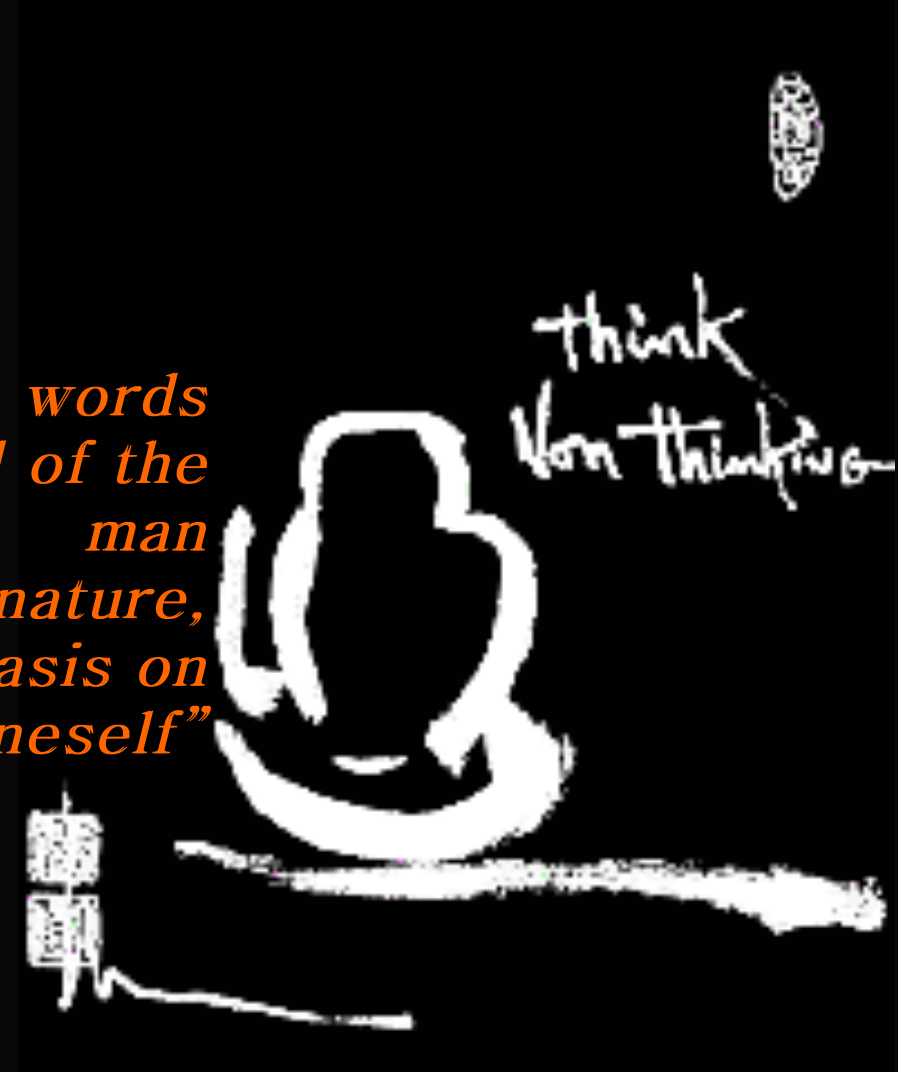
Indirect

Non authoritarian

· *True understanding only through practice.*

Meditative practices

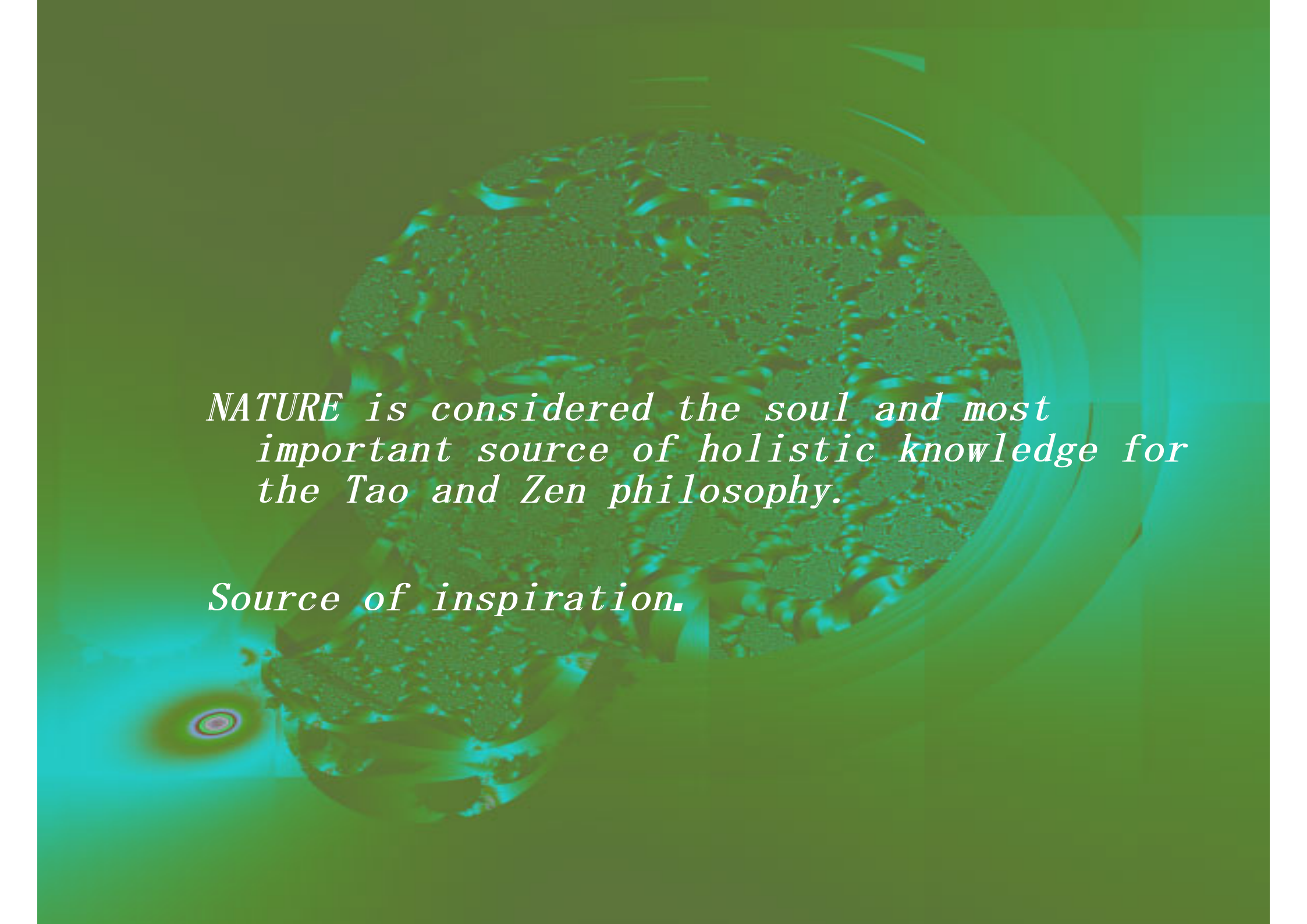
Indulging in art forms



Indirect approach – “koans”

- Challenging questions or incidences are put forward.*
- Tests intuitive mind*
- Tests the depth of understanding*
- Circumvents logic, spontaneity, creates mental impasse.*

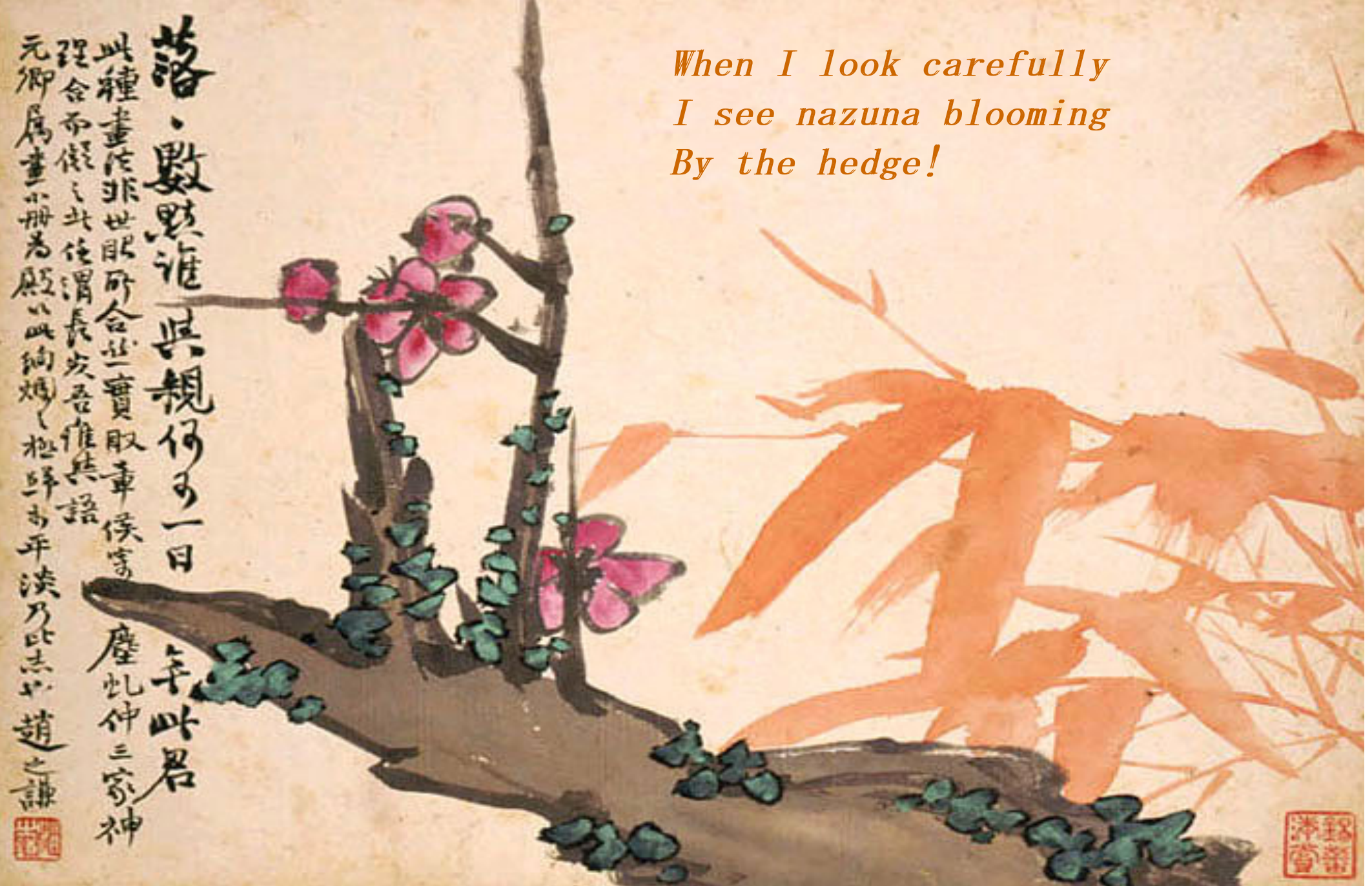
Koan– “Who am I?”, “What is mind?”, and “What is the sound of one hand clapping?”

A green-tinted photograph of a glass filled with water and ice cubes. A small, circular object, possibly a coin or a small bowl, is floating on the surface of the water. The background is a solid green color.

*NATURE is considered the soul and most
important source of holistic knowledge for
the Tao and Zen philosophy.*

Source of inspiration.

*When I look carefully
I see nazuna blooming
By the hedge!*



Will less intuition – almost as if the brush moved on its own. The artist tries to grasp the spirit of flower and leaves from within than from without.

- *Peculiar teaching style*
- *Unique Viewpoints*
- *Methodology*

–Canons of unique aesthetics perceptions

Koans- subtle questions



Zazen – meditative practice



DeConStruction - essence

- Emphasis on growing beyond everyday ordinariness in life
- History of the inquiry into history—breaking a word into its component parts in order to trace its history.
- Way of indulging deeply, differently and analytically to bring out new ideas

DeConstruction

Artist known for "building cuts," in which he cut into and dismantled abandoned buildings to expose layers of architectural history and create new structures in the process



Matta-Clark does not undo the building, he **undoes the architectural analogy** that is contained within it. Words are removed from the edifice of language in a movement that works its way through the building as if it were carefully **removing its semantic backbone.**

common attributes- east and west

- Think beyond the ordinary
 - Question oneself
 - Live authentically
- - Apply to aesthetics
 - Apply to life ??

Insight into Beauty- poetry



Everyone Knows

When everyone knows beauty is beauty,
this is bad.

When everyone knows good is good,
this is not good.

Here the poet wants to suggest that it is **not good to have fixed ideas and thoughts or pre - conceived notions**. Definition of beauty or goodness is subjected to change from one reference to other. Hence one should not take their ideas for granted. This attitude will make the person complacent and lose the ability to adapt to diversity or change.

Insight into Beauty- poetry



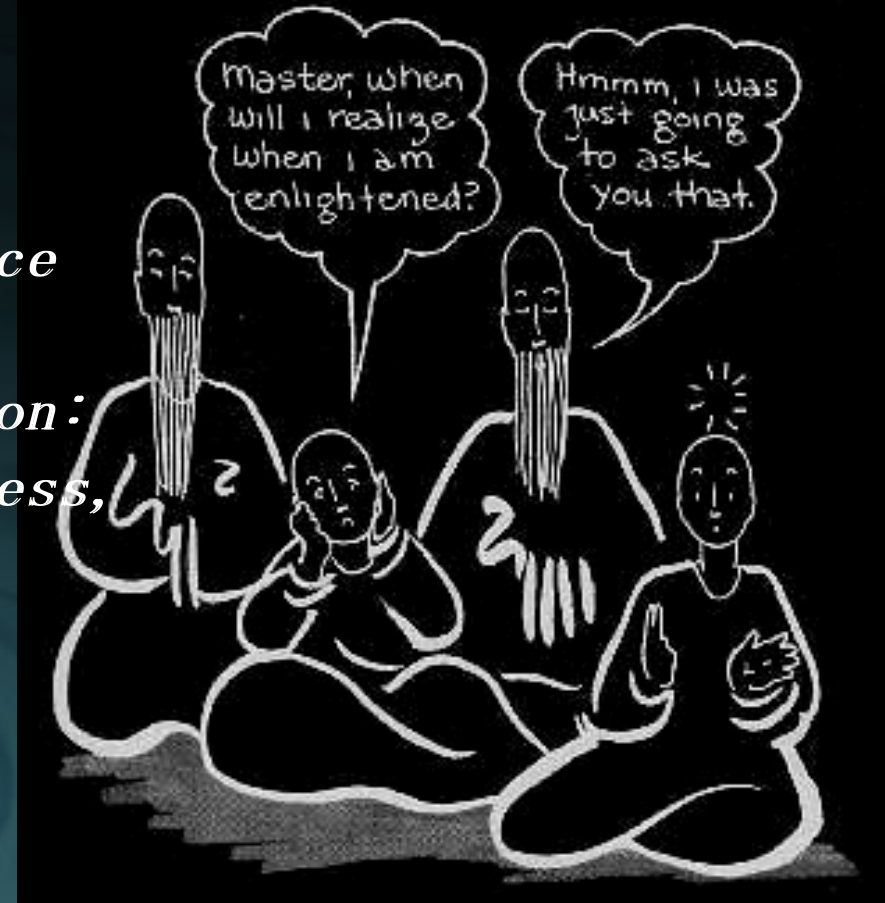
*So being and non being produce each other:
difficulty and ease complement each other,
long and short shape each other,
high and low contrast with each other.*

The following lines represent **the principle of relativity**. This is understood to be the reason people should not have closed minds because the judgments of particular times, places and people depends upon **subjective viewpoints** and therefore are not the same thing as **objective truths in themselves**.

Insight into Beauty- poetry

*So sages manage effortless service
and carry out unspoken guidance.*

*All beings work, without exception:
if they live without possessiveness,
act without presumption,
and do not dwell on success,
then by this very non dwelling
success will not leave.*



Once the sage has understood the above mentioned facts, they can pursue their journey of enlightening others without any hindrances. Hence for each being, success maybe in everybody's grasp, if they follow each and every principle in life. That is, "live without possessiveness", "act without presumption", and "do not dwell on success." This is possible by having **an open and free state of mind.**

Insight into Beauty- calligraphy

- Technique which expresses mind, body and spirit as one.
- Artist tries to grasp life from within rather than without.
- An unparalleled economy of brushwork
- ‘One corner style’ or the convention of leaving the important central space unoccupied.
- Releases the imagination and serves to quiet and still the mind.



Insight into Beauty

- Spontaneity
- Effortless drive
- Simplicity
- Emptiness
- Oneness
- Mind, body and spirit as 'One'
- Natural expression



Insight into Beauty – painting

- ‘The painter is felt the painting ‘- realized its inherent qualities.
- Haze and the mist in the backdrop is not merely unfilled background but an emptiness which is intrinsic to the painting.
- Inherent feeling of calmness and sense of quiet established by the use of similar hues that are merged
- Infinite and the immediate are elegantly merged

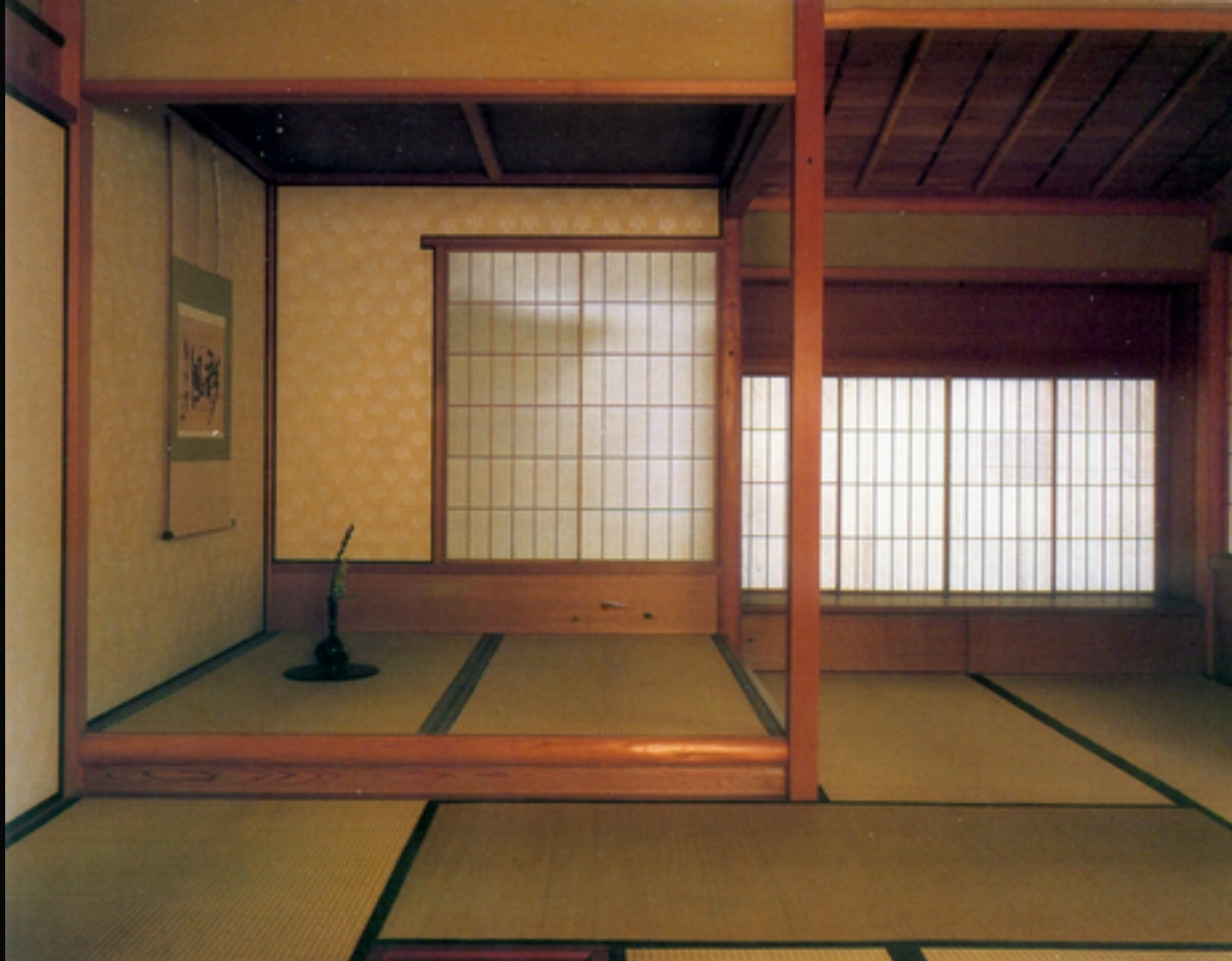


Insight into Beauty – product



‘TATAMI MATS’

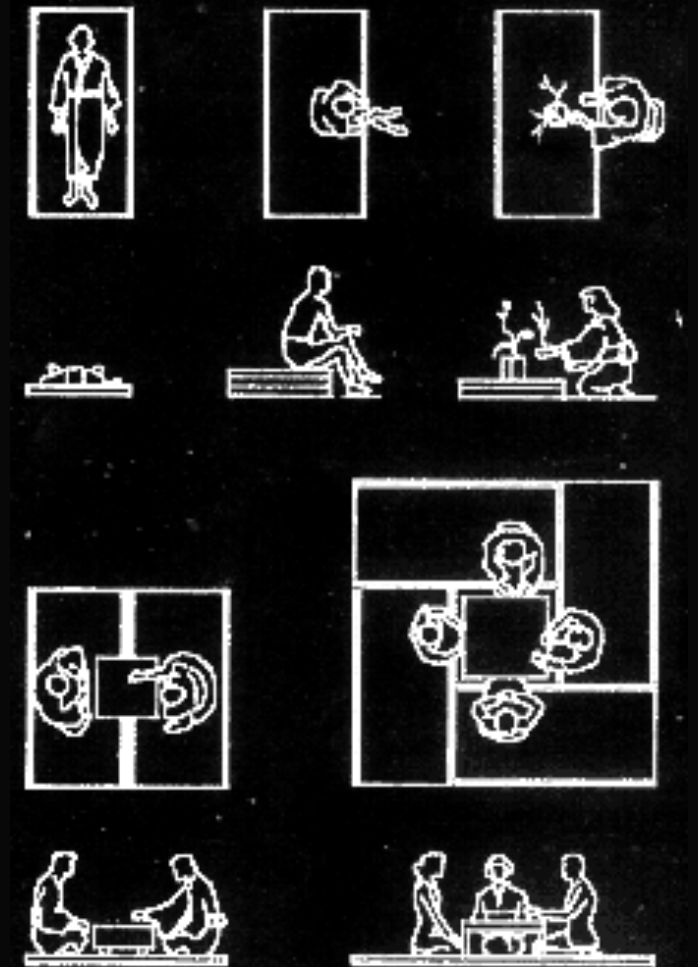
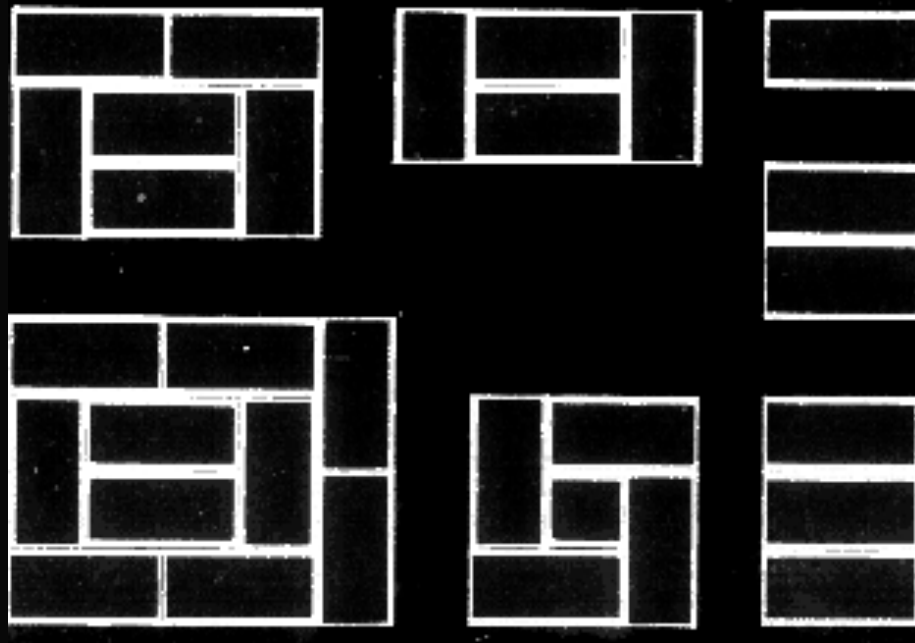
- Timeless elements
–original and
lyrical statement
of past, present
and future.



Insight into Beauty – product

- Tug of war between traditionalism and modernism.
- Provides clean interior look
- “Upon these mats people eat, sleep and die.”

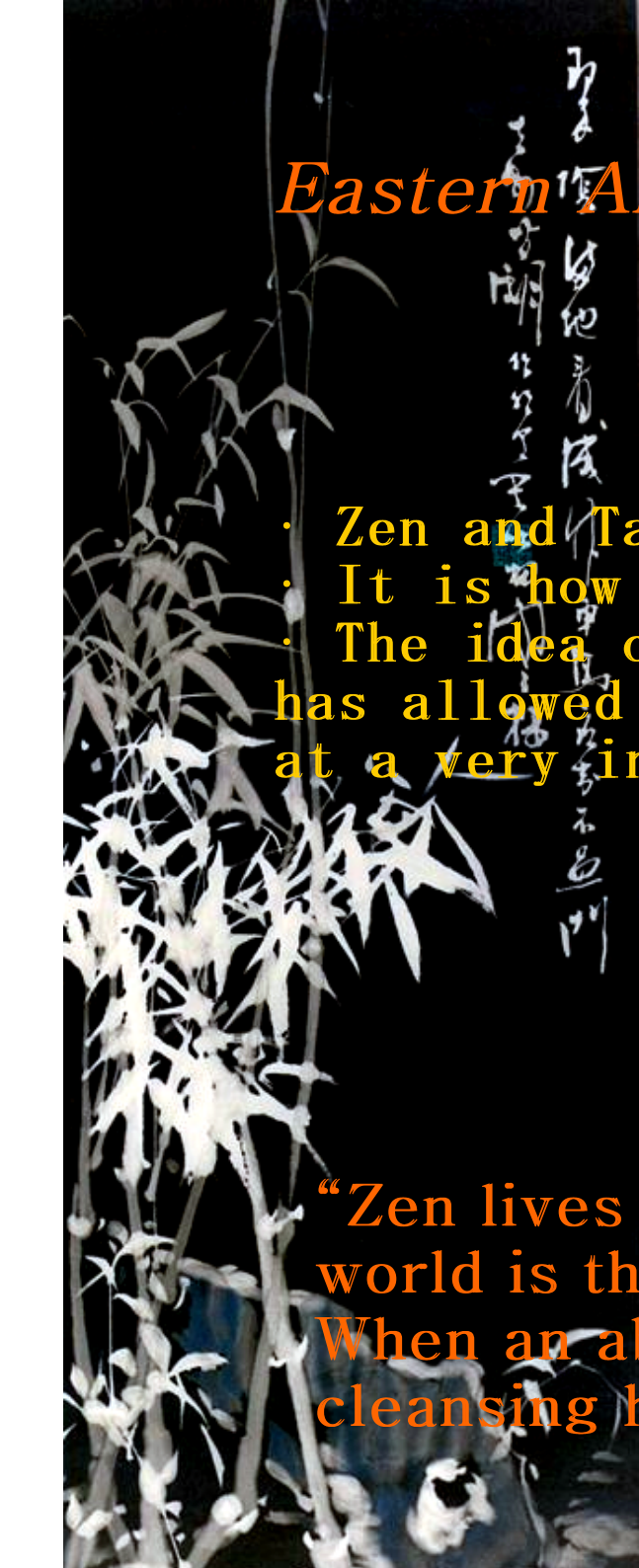
Insight into Beauty- product



- Standardized living spaces
- It speaks for the discipline and health consciousness of the Japanese.
- Impression of simplicity and emptiness.



Gives birth to unique lifestyle.



Eastern Art - Design in Everyday Life

- Zen and Tao are not religion - it's a way of life
- It is how one trains oneself.
- The idea of pursuing the chores of everyday activities has allowed art and its principles to reach individuals at a very intimate level.

“Zen lives in the present moment and therefore this world is the Buddha - paradise.

When an abbot cleans his garden, he is simultaneously cleansing his mind-heart.”

– Yamada Sobin

Art of Tea Ceremony – a living art form

- ☐ *A group meditation - puts participants into different frames of mind.*
- ☐ *Beyond mere social integrity*
- ☐ *Heightened sensitivity towards*
 - *time*
 - *space inside*
 - *space outside*
 - *objects around*
 - *Objects in hand*
 - *the happenings*
 - *state of mind*

If a person thinks he understands Zen but doesn't know Zen art forms, he doesn't really understand Zen' mode of living.

-- Tachibani Daiki



A group meditation - puts participants into different frames of mind.



*Its a
Performing art*

"Teaists become socially adept because preparing and serving ceremonial tea in small quarters develop grace and poise. The circumstances of a Tea Ceremony demand of host and guest a rigid awareness."

Spiritual world of Tea – A revolution in beauty and appreciation.



Repetition

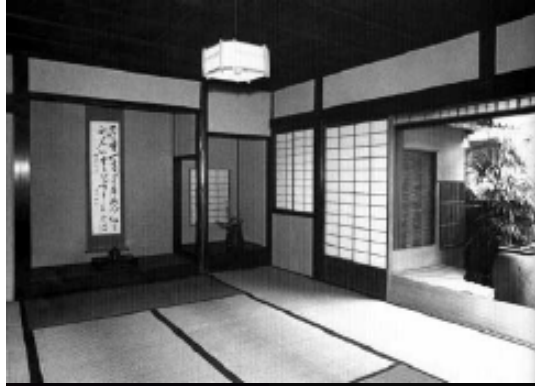
Ritualistic

Common place

Complacent

Every day life and activities play an equally important role.

Very unlike western thought where ritual and repetition are not highly preferred notions.



Art of Tea Ceremony – a living art form

Encompasses art forms -

Painting

Calligraphy

Ceramic

Ikebana

Architecture and interiors

Landscape

Performing artists

- host and guest

United in ONE



Art of Tea Ceremony – a living art form

Scroll paintings – universal identifying elements

- ❑ *scroll– compactness*
- ❑ *vertically aligned*
- ❑ *balance–art within and emptiness around*
- ❑ *doesn't overpower its presence*
- ❑ *only of its kind in the space*
- ❑ *defined niche*
- ❑ *theme based depending upon the host*



Art of Tea Ceremony – a living art form



Scroll paintings – a common entity in all tea rooms

Western style



Difficult to define a common entity

*Art of Tea Ceremony
– a living art form*

*Scroll paintings -
thrust on nature.*

*“art of artlessness,
art of controlled
accident”*





Patient little snail
Slides across the morning dew
In the zen garden

Art of Tea Ceremony – painting and calligraphy

*“study and draw
bamboo for 10 years
until you become a
bamboo, forget all
about copying bamboo,
however when you
finally come to paint
it.”*

Universal guiding factors

- ❑ *Thrust on nature*
- ❑ *Spontaneity*
- ❑ *Common expression*
- ❑ *The overall form and expression speaks about its identity.*



Deconstruction

- **Nature and its direct influence is not there.**
- **Speaks more of individual's style than having commonality between them.**

Ceramic Art



Each art form has developed with a different expression yet with an essence, which is common.



Tea masters worked out the conditions that made a bowl beautiful;

‘beauty is inseparable from laws’

- undecorated and modest in shape
- tea masters liked the fine netting of crackle on bowls
- enjoyed free, rough turning
- high appreciation for the internal volume and curves of bowls
- how the rims of the bowls feel to the lips
- found a charm when the glaze skipped in firing and when “landscape”

- Oneness, simplicity.
- Perfection
- Order in disorder
- Sensitivity towards small, intricate details
 - – form, appearance, material and texture.
- Sensitivity towards user and usage.



Art of Tea Ceremony – ikebana



- ❑ *The key note of Ikebana is live beauty*
- ❑ *“Even twigs, branches, leaves form part of the composition*
- ❑ *Symbolize - ‘heaven’ and ‘earth’*
- ❑ *Exhibits deep sensitivity towards form.*
- ❑ *Allows to always look for and use new materials*
- ❑ *Perfect example of abstraction and asymmetry*

Art of Tea Ceremony – ikebana

- ❑ *Thrust upon – elegant appearance and fine use of colour and odour.*
- ❑ *Lacks in-depth meaning*
- ❑ *Symmetry*



Essence of Ikebana

- *Asymmetrical form*

- *Use of empty space as an essential feature*

- *A sense of harmony among materials.*

- *A sense of harmony between the arrangement and its spatial relationship.*

- *Spontaneity, simplicity, suggestiveness and respect for the natural characteristics of the materials themselves.*



Art of Tea Ceremony – ‘Tokonama’ or tea room

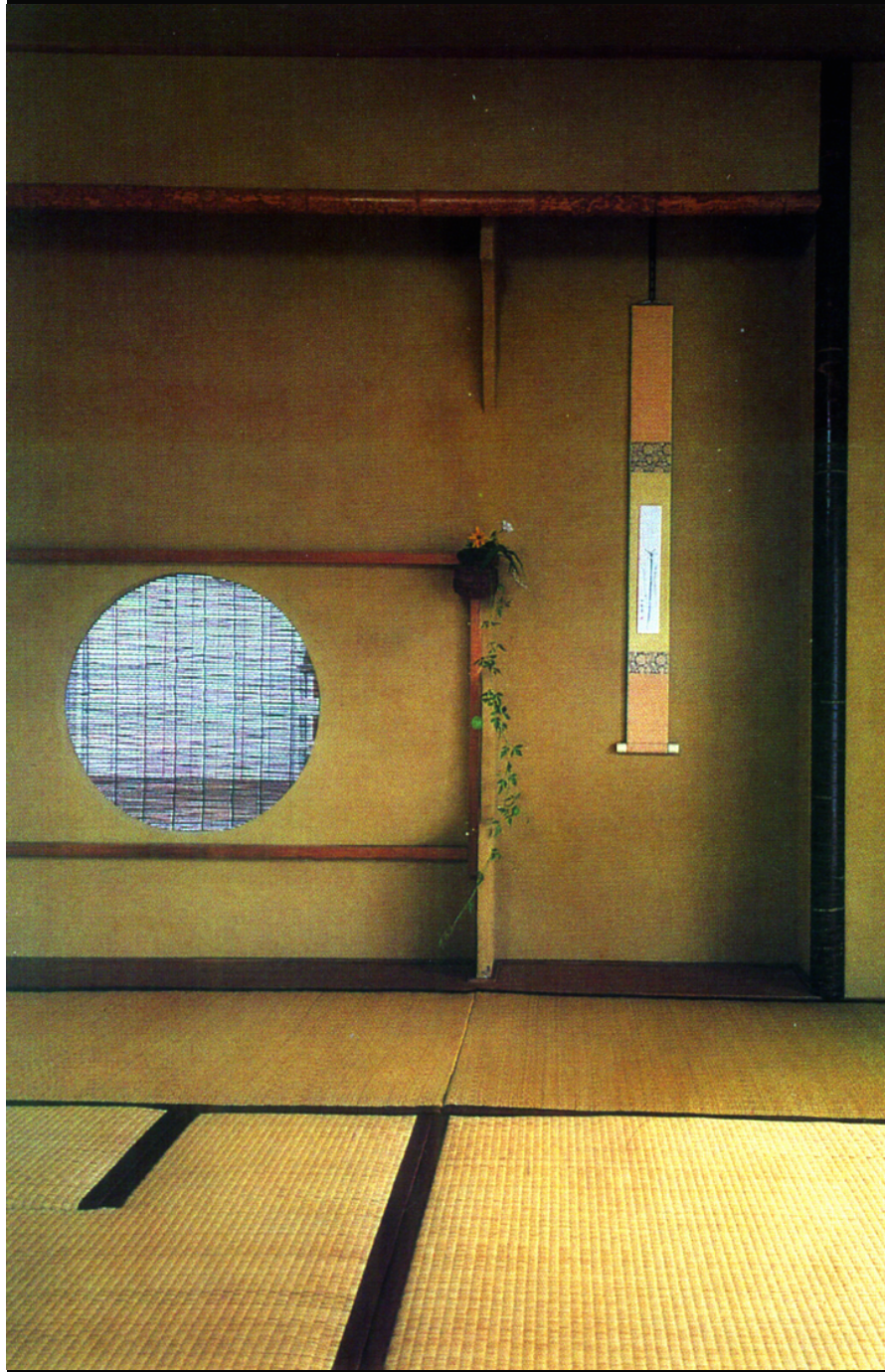


- ❑ *Houses all art forms*
- ❑ *It is located away from the main household to maintain calmness and serenity.*
- ❑ *Inside and outside spaces complement each other.*
- ❑ *Close to nature in all respects.*

‘Tokonama’



‘Tokonama’



Eisenman's deconstruction



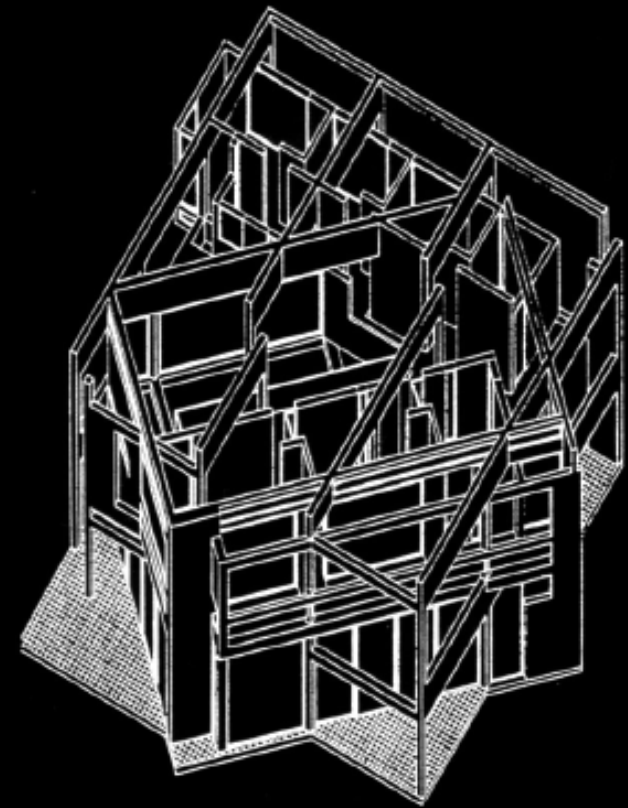
Challenges our usual notion of what a house should be and how it should look. He does this by doubling elements of the house in a such a way that it is unclear to the viewer as to which element is actually structure and which is unnecessary structure.

Deconstruction

*"Deconstructionist art stimulates the viewer to take part in the analysis of the 'between' and explores the possibilities of the frame."
(Papadakis)*

"Eisenman is no longer operating solely on an object level, but instead attempting to alter people's perceptions of the way systems interact with each other."

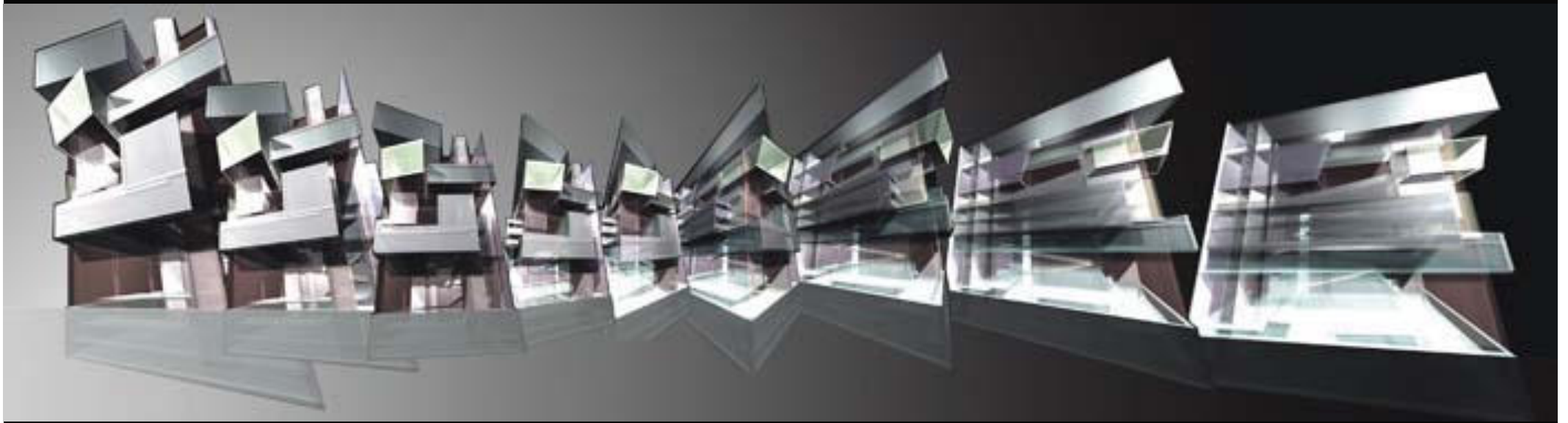
"Eisenman establishes systems of 'not entrances', 'not-windows', 'not-scaffolding', and 'not-etc.'"



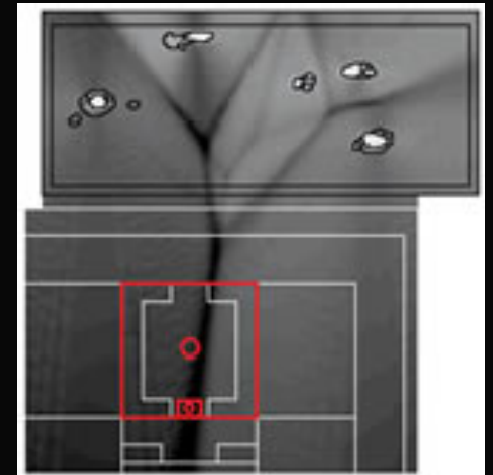
1(c). House III, 1970

Essence of Deconstruction

- *Questions established principles*
- *Complex structural imagery*
- *Juxtapositions of forms, of lines of interaction, and of cultural references are virtuoso compositions*



Zen gardens – an aid for meditation



“Using symmetry calculations the researchers have discovered that the objects imply an image of a tree in the empty space between them that we detect, without being aware of doing so.”

Zen gardens, an aid to understand deeper concepts of Zen



Sand - evokes feeling of water

Zen gardens and symbolism



***Rocks** - mountains -
Blessed immortal souls
Symbol of longevity and continuing health*

French gardens – a perceptible approach



Defined perspective.

Best views and vistas defined.

Path of experience with varying views.

Final impressions.....



Foundation for high level of abstractions as a whole which were metaphysical rather than ethical.

Lack of epic therefore abstraction was more profound.

It has penetrated in art beyond visual form influencing art in varied aspects.

No demarcations between real and imaginary - appealing to all very philosophically inclined to least sophisticated.

Basic grammar of artistic language is
to symbolize and embody continuity of
form in space.

Linear representations are strong -
natural flow - CHANGE, MOVEMENT ,
ENERGY.

Artist himself is not known but the art
is.



Simplicity, spontaneity, and perfection
in art forms. Practicing art forms the
only 'way of realization.'

Nature is been an important source of
inspiration.

There is a methodology or a way of
seeking realization is been developed
through practicing art forms or zazen
or koans unlike the western concepts.

"For deconstruction some archetype is
required to find a common
denominator."



Deconstruction and Eastern thought.

Expression through text - an inherent approach of West.

Text is just one tool. Zen believes Reality is far more complex than just text.



Does not seem to have a clear strategy.

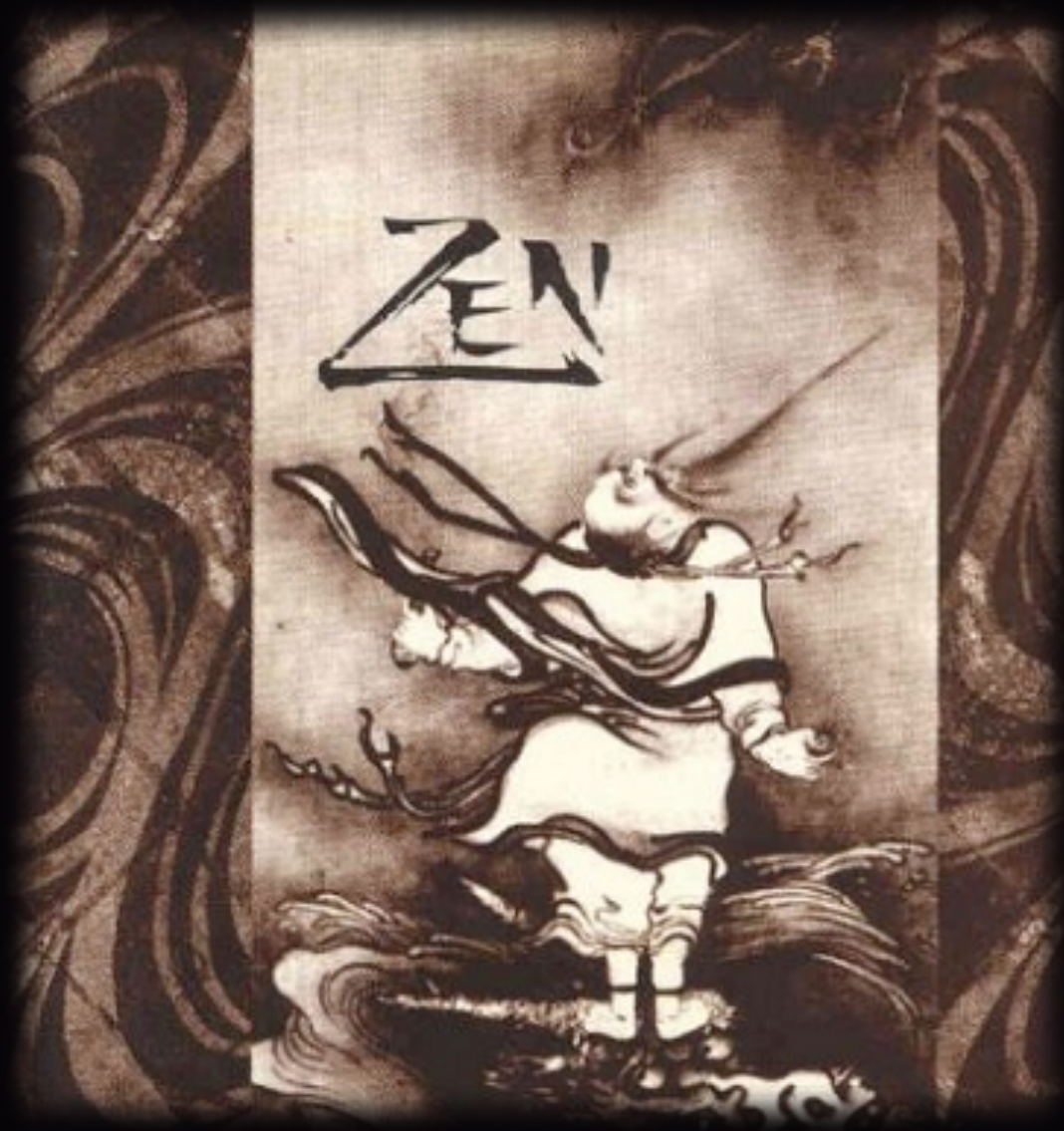
Over the years various art forms have developed clarifying the approach towards Zen and Tao more profound.

Deconstruction and Eastern thought.



Questions fixed biases and there validity.

Its beyond biases and validity - self realization.



*Nothing is what it
seems to be.
Everything is what
we make it.*