

ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ★ GRADUATE SCHOOL

**WOMEN ICON PAINTERS OF THE LATE OTTOMAN ERA AND THE MEIJI ERA:
ARTISTIC LEGACIES FROM İSTANBUL AND TOKYO**



M.A. THESIS

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Department of Art History

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JUNE 2025

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**GEÇ OSMANLI DÖNEMİ VE MEİJİ DÖNEMİ KADIN İKONA
SANATÇILARI: İSTANBUL VE TOKYO'DAN SANATSAL MİRASLAR**

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To all unsung heroines of art history,



FOREWORD

This thesis marks the culmination of my passionate research period dedicated to tell the stories of amazing women artists and reflects not only an academic endeavor but also the support and inspiration I have received along the way from many amazing women I had the blessing of being surrounded with during my study. Embarking on this research was both a challenge and a privilege. The process has deepened my appreciation of rigorous efforts put forth by women whose determination and passion for art making did not yield into the adversities of their time and allowed me to discover a treasure trove they left behind. I am hereby presenting this thesis as a tribute they are owed.

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Lastly, for the sake of month of May, I dedicate this study to all female figures recorded in human history that healed humanity with their presence and guidance throughout ages, to all women who chose to see and made others see the world through the lens of art by leaving amazing works to us as a heritage to bear on our shoulders. It is my sincerest hope that this thesis opens the gates for broader conversations for future art history researchers and contributes to pay a posthumous homage to the selected women artists' courageous souls.

May 2025

Vildan PAPAKER
(Art History Researcher)



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WOMEN ICON PAINTERS OF THE LATE OTTOMAN ERA AND THE MEIJI ERA: ARTISTIC LEGACIES FROM ISTANBUL AND TOKYO

SUMMARY

Western-oriented modernity is undoubtedly deemed a part of art history as much as it is of sociology. In light of a Western-directed Modernization, the periodical shifts and variations in art productions of certain Eastern women artists constitute the base of this study. The content of this research is expanded on the triangle of the Japanese, Russian and Ottoman Empires with the aim of crossing the paths of featured women artists, from the imperial capitals like Istanbul and Tokyo, who went through a similar process non-simultaneously within a physically vast distance yet artistically close.

Transition from Edo Period where the rule was highly influenced by the samurais to Meiji Period is taken as the core of Westernization Period in Japan. Yamashita Rin (1857-1939), while she was a student receiving education in traditional arts field, made her first encounter with Western art offered by Western tutors as she enrolled in *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō* (Technical Fine Arts School) which was founded on the purpose of providing Western-style art education.

Women artists selected for depicting the scene on the transition period of Ottoman Empire to Republic of Türkiye; Olga Petridou (1898-1980), Viktoria Lintridu (1905-1968), Egli Zografu-Simalaridou (1911-1999), Eleni Laskaratou (1912-1990) were students of the co-educational *Devlet Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi* (State Academy of Fine Arts) (1928) which was a direct continuation of *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* (The Imperial School of Fine Arts for Girls) opened in 1914 as a separate branch of the first state-sponsored fine arts academy *Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* (The Imperial School of Fine Arts) that was established in 1882 and opened in 1883 to provide art education for men only. These Ottoman-Rûm women artists were tutored by the most prominent Ottoman-Turkish artists, primarily in the field of Western-style painting.

The scope of this dissertation begins with the establishment of fine arts institutions for women as part of the broader modernization initiatives undertaken by the countries under study. It further encompasses the religious painting genre in which the selected female artists actively engaged. Regrettably, the artists examined herein remain largely unrecognized, even within their respective countries where they were born and educated, and are conspicuously absent from contemporary art historical narratives in both Japan and Türkiye. By integrating artistic and cultural elements from both ends of Asia, through the lens of imperial centers such as İstanbul and Tokyo, this thesis also seeks to illuminate how the Ottoman Empire and Empire of Japan responded to significant socio-political transformations and strategically implemented policies aimed at cultivating female students as the next generation of professional artists.

The women artists featured in this study owe their access to formal art education, in part, to the advancements brought about by the first wave of feminism. The 19th century thus represents a critical turning point in the recognition of women's artistic production. Subsequent waves of feminist thought and activism continued to contribute positively to the advancement of women in the arts. Feminist theory is briefly referenced in this thesis, primarily to acknowledge the foundational movements that secured women's rights to art education, which in turn facilitated the participation of the selected artists in the student bodies of leading fine arts institutions. While many of these artists also worked within secular genres, this study focuses specifically on their contributions to the field of religious painting. It addresses the historical marginalization and exclusion of women from religious art production as a consequence of gendered structures but does not engage extensively with feminist theory in this regard, since such an exploration would exceed the scope of this thesis and enter a field of inquiry too expansive to be fully addressed herein. This way there is left a vast area of research for future art historian candidates.

This research was conducted based on thematic method from the aspects of modernization efforts, gender and icon paintings. While the religious themes depicted by these women artists often adhere to established ecclesiastical conventions, the individual interpretations and visual executions are marked by notable variation and artistic distinctiveness. Biographical information on the artists was primarily gathered from secondary sources, including scholarly books and journal articles. The research process revealed that the Rûm artists have been largely excluded from the Ottoman or Turkish art historical discourse, and that Yamashita Rin too has received minimal attention in Japanese art historical sources. Furthermore, the Western art historical texts, consulted during this study, many of which focus on canonical figures, make no mention of these women artists. In light of this omission, this thesis serves a necessary academic function by bringing their contributions to the fore and advocating for their rightful inclusion within broader art historical narratives.

The artistic trajectories of these women were profoundly shaped by the socio-political conditions of their respective eras, societal factors that have often been neglected in conventional art historical narration. This oversight underscores the necessity of bringing their names and religious art productions to the forefront, with the primary aim of contributing to the enrichment and recognition of the cultural heritage they helped to preserve and advance. Hoping that the narration of the stories of these women artists who defied not only the rigid confines by practicing religious painting in their exclusive stylizations but also zealously fulfilled the possibilities of their time to pursue an artistic career serves both as a powerful homage to their memory and as a meaningful duty of art historiography.

GEÇ OSMANLI DÖNEMİ VE MEİJİ DÖNEMİ KADIN İKONA SANATÇILARI: İSTANBUL VE TOKYO'DAN SANATSAL MİRASLAR

ÖZET

Modernleşmenin ön koşulunun Batılılık olarak esas alındığı bir dönemde, Doğu dünyasına ait kadın sanatçıların üretimlerinde dini betimin izini sürmek bu çalışmanın çıkış noktasını teşkil etmektedir. Japon İmparatorluğu, Rus İmparatorluğu ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu üçgeninde geliştirilen konu içerikte, çeşitli kadın sanatçıların sanat üretimi için verdikleri mücadelenin, onların yollarını gerek fiziksel alanda farklı tarihsel zamanlarda kesiştirmeleri gerekse de sanatsal mesafe olarak birbirlerine aslında ne kadar yakın olduklarının ortaya konulması amaçlanmıştır.

Edo Dönemi'nden (1603-1868) Meiji Dönemi'ne (1868-1912) geçiş, Japonya'da modernleşme devrinin özü kabul edilir. Dezavantajlı şartlardan gelen samuray kökenli bir ailenin kızı olan Yamashita Rin (1857-1939), geleneksel sanatlar üzerine eğitim alan bir öğrenciyken, Meiji Dönemi'nde ülkede ilk defa Batılı anlamda güzel sanatlar eğitimi veren kurum olarak açılan *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō* (Teknik Güzel Sanatlar Okulu) (1876)'da eğitim alarak çeşitli alanlarda üretimde bulunmuş ve sanatsal yaşamı onu, İstanbul'a da uğradığı bir deniz seferi ile Rusya topraklarına kadar taşımıştır. Olga Petridou (1898-1980), Viktoria Lintridu (1905-1968), Egli Zografu-Simalaridou (1911-1999), Eleni Laskaratou (1912-1990) gibi isimler ise Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun eğitimde modernleşme faaliyetleri neticesinde, *Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* (1882/1883)'nin bir uzantısı olarak başkent İstanbul'da genç kızlara özel açmış olduğu *İnâs Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* (1914) olarak kurulmuş, sonrasında *Devlet Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi* (1928) adını almış eğitim kurumunun tedrisatından geçerek, benzer çeşitlilikte sanatsal üretimlerde bulunmuşlardır. 19. yüzyıldan 20. yüzyıla geçişin adaptasyon sürecinde Asya kıtasının iki ucunda farklı coğrafyalardan bu isimler, dînî alanda icra ettikleri sanat eserleriyle Doğu-Batı sentezinde, geleneksellikten moderniteyi dengeleyen жанрlar bağlamında birer köprü vazifesi görmüşlerdir. Sadece dînî resim alanında kendilerine özgü stilizasyonlar geliştirerek katı kuralları da bir yandan kırmakla kalmayan ayrıca sanatsal kariyerlerini ileriye taşımak için yaşadıkları zamanın kendilerine sunmuş olduğu imkanların hakkını büyük bir gayretle vermiş bu kadın sanatçıların yaşam hikayelerini aktarmak, hem kendilerinin hatırasına gösterilmiş derin bir hürmet sunma fırsatı sunacak hem de sanat tarihçiliğine dair anlamlı bir görevi yerine getirmiş olacaktır.

Doğu dünyası, Batı'yı sadece sanayi ve teknolojiye model almakla kalmamış, sanatsal üretimde de Batı'nın değişim ve dönüşümünden etkilenmiş ve bunu kendi kültürü içerisinde de bir aşama haline getirmiştir. Burada fark yaratan husus, Batı Avrupası'nın kendi sanatsal serüveninde birçok engembeli ve tartışmalı aşamadan geçmiş olması ve sonucunda bu mücadeleye uygun sanat üretimlerinin ortaya çıkmış olması iken Doğu dünyası henüz bu zorlu aşamalardan geçmeden Batı'daki bu gelişmeleri daha ziyade ithal etmeye yönelmiş ve esasen sancılı bir süreç olsa da

kaçınılmaz olarak yerelleştirme yöntemine başvurmuştur. Bu demek değildir ki Doğu dünyası salt kopyacılıktan öteye gidememiştir. Bilâkis Batı'dan aldıklarını kendi geleneksel sanatları üzerine ekleyerek ya da müstakil şekilde kendi özgün yorumuyla düzenleyerek esasen daha zenginleşmiş versiyonlar ortaya koyabilmiştir. Doğu dünyasının Batı'daki bu yüzyıllar boyunca değişime uğramış sanatsal pratikleri ve kurumsal gelişmeleri kısa sürede kendilerine adapte edip işlevsel hale getirmiş olmaları da ayrıca önemli bir başarıdır. Bu araştırmada, Doğu dünyasının iki ayrı ucunda muhafazakâr toplumsal yapılarıyla dünya kültür tarihinde de özgün bir konuma sahip Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Japon İmparatorluğu'nda yaşanan Batı eksenli Modernleşme faaliyetlerinin sanatsal yönünün irdelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Seçilen sanatçıların icraat dönemleri kronolojik olarak eşlenik olmasa da, konu edilen dönemlerdeki ilgili gelişmeler birbirleriyle yakın zaman dilimleri içerisinde yer almaktadırlar. Bu sanatçıların hayatları biyografik olarak derlenmiş kitaplardan ve makalelerden oluşan ikincil kaynaklardan derlenmiştir. Türk-Japon ilişkilerinin 100. yılına atfen seçilen Japon kadın sanatçının üretimleri ile Türk resim sanatında çığır açmış eğitimci yetiştirilmiş Osmanlı-Rûm kadın sanatçıların üretimlerinin birlikte konu edildiği bu çalışma, benzer janrlar altında üretilmiş eserleri toplumumuza tanıtmak amacıyla tematik metot üzerinden işlenmiştir. Sözkonusu tematik karşılaştırma modernizasyon faaliyetleri, cinsiyet seçimi ve ikona resimleri üzerinden gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Sosyo-politik koşulların belirleyiciliğinde vuku bulmuş ve sanat tarihi araştırmalarında göz ardı edilmiş bu sanatsal serüvenlerin kültürel zenginliğin pekiştirilmesi gayesiyle ön plana çıkartılmalarının gerekliliği gözetilmiştir. Yamashita Rin, bağlı olduğu kilisenin ikona üretimine ihtiyaç duyması nedeniyle, manastır dahilinde ikona yapmayı öğrenmesi için Rusya'ya eğitime gönderilmiştir. Bu sayede bölgedeki kilise ve manastırları ziyaret etme fırsatı bulan sanatçı, Ermitaj Müzesi (St.Petersburg)'nde yaptığı gözlemlerde büyük ustaların yapıtlarıyla tanışmıştır. Manastırda karşılaştığı, teolojik öğretilerin şematik halde panolara aktarıldığı Rûm betim tarzını benimsemekte zorlanan sanatçı, eğitimi üzerinden aşına olduğu İtalyan sanatının etkilerinde üretimde bulunarak ikonaları resimleştirmek istemiş fakat direnişle karşılaşmıştır. Bu zorlayıcı dönem esasında kendisinin Japonya'ya dönmesi ertesinde ona özgün bir stil oluşturmalarının yolunu açan bir tecrübe fazı olmuştur. Bugün eserleri Japonya'da sadece kiliselerde değil müzelerde de yer alan Yamashita Rin'in sanatsal üretimi, hem Ortodoks Hristiyanlık hem Japon sosyal normları perspektifinde kadının yeri de göz önünde bulundurularak, sanatçının kendi milli ve kültürel geçmişi üzerinden ele alınmıştır. Çalışmanın kapsamındaki Olga Petridou (1898-1980), Viktoria Lintridu (1905-1968), Egli Simalaridou (1911-1999), Eleni Laskaratou (1912-1990) gibi Osmanlı-Rûm kimlikli sanatçıların bu araştırma konusu için seçilmelerinde belirleyici rol oynayan kıstas Osmanlı doğumlu olmaları ve *Devlet Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi*'nde Türk resim sanatının duayen hocalarının öğrencileri olmaları, ayrıca kendilerinin kendi ülkelerinde yeterince tanınmıyor, sanatsal üretimlerinin de yeterince bilinmiyor olmalarıdır. Bu kişilerin hangi yaşta dini resmetmeye başladıkları tam olarak bilinmemekte olup kendilerini doğdukları kimlikleriyle yani Osmanlı-Rûm olarak tanıtmak Cumhuriyet dönemi öncesi olası

sanat icraatlerini de hariç tutmamayı sağlamıştır. Bir diğer husus da kendilerinin hem profan yani din dışı resim yanında kutsal betim kategorisinde Hristiyan görsel sanatının en önemli öğelerinden olan ikona sanatını yetkin bir şekilde icra etmiş olmalarıdır ki bu da iki tarafın sanat yapıtlarını sunarken janr bağlamında anlatımsal bir bütünlük ortaya konulmasını sağlamıştır. Bu bağlamda, Avrupa ülkelerinde olduğu gibi 2.Dünya Savaşı ertesinde dinî resim kategorisinde değerlendirilen ikonaların birer sanat eseri olarak görülmeye başlanmasına Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde de benzer bir yaklaşıma dair gelişmelere de değinilmiştir. Ayrıca Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda *Tanzimat Fermanı* (1839) ve 2. *Meşrutiyet* (1908) ertesinde kadınların eğitim haklarında yaşanan dönüşüm, Avrupa'da başlayan kadın hareketlerinin Osmanlı dünyasındaki yansımaları, din dışı eğitimde gerek ülke içindeki kurumlarda gerek yurt dışına öğrenci gönderilmesi konusunda Osmanlı sisteminin Müslüman-Gayrimüslim ayırımına gitmediği gibi hususlara da yer verilmiştir. 1882 yılında kurulan ve 1883 yılında faaliyete başlayan, Osmanlı'nın ilk devlet güzel sanatlar akademisi sayılan *Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi*'nin kız öğrencilere yönelik olarak bir uzantısı sayılan 1914 yılında eğitime başlamış *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* üzerinden temellendirilen çalışmada bu iki kurumun daha sonra birleşerek *Devlet Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi* haline dönüşümüne kadar olan dönemde yaşanan gelişmelere odaklanılarak bir arka plan bilgisi sunulmaya çalışılmıştır.

Günümüz dünyasında ileri medeniyetler addedilen ülkelerde kadınlar henüz erkeklere denk eğitim hakkı edinememişken hem Osmanlı ve Erken Cumhuriyet döneminde hem de Japonya örneğinde gözlemlenen durum iki ülkenin bugünkü modern dönemlerinde bile gurur kaynağı sayılabilecek başarılarıdır. İki tarafın da resmî düzeni Avrupa'dan eğitmenlerin getirilmesi ve öğrencilerin gönderilmesinden yana tercihte bulunmuş ve iki kültürde de kız öğrencilerin sanat eğitimi için çalışma planına dahil edilmeleri, sosyo-kültürel alt yapının dikte ettiği haliyle dirençle karşılanmıştır. Seçilen sanatçıların aldıkları eğitimin hakkını verdiklerini tasdikler nitelikteki yetkin üretimleri hem var olan potansiyellerinin efektif şekilde gerçekleştirmeleri üzerinden tüm zamanların sanatçılarına ve sanat öğrencilerine rol model oluşturacak bir ortam sağlar hem de karşılaştıkları protokol bazlı yönlendirmelere rağmen kendi özgünlüklerinde ısrarcı oluşlarıyla da kadının dahlinin görece geç olduğu sanatsal eğitim dünyasında kendilerine ait bir duruş sergilerler.

Seçilen sanatçıların Japonya'nın ve Türkiye'nin sanat tarihi yayımlarında yeterince yer bulamamış olmaları bu araştırma için verimli bir motivasyon kaynağı oluşturmuştur. Her iki ülkedeki modernizasyon inisiyatifleri ile şekillenen kız öğrencilerin sanat eğitimine dahil edilmelerinin neticesinde edindikleri yetkinlik neticesinde ortaya konan bu değerli eserlerin, bir yandan da dini resim sanatında kökleşmiş birtakım kanonik kısıtlamaların ötesine geçişin de somut birer belgesi haline gelmesine de değinilmesi tartışmaya farklı bir boyut da kazandırmıştır. Bu sayede daha sonraki sanat tarihi araştırmacılarına esin kaynağı olabilecek genişletilmiş bir alan bırakılmıştır. Tez kapsamında, seçilen sanatçılar sanat eğitimine dahil edilmelerine feminizmin ilk aşamasının ne ölçüde olumlu katkıda bulunduğuna ve ayrıca cinsiyet ayrımcılığının dini resim icraatında ne tür rol oynadığına değinilmiş olsa da feminist teoriye sadece

temel düzeyde değinilmiştir ki bu durum da sonraki sanat tarihi araştırmacıları tarafından geliştirilmeye açık bırakılmıştır. Sanat icraatları ile adeta birer kültürlerarası köprü vazifesi görmüş bu sanatçıların eserlerini bu tez aracılığıyla akademik kapsamda sanat tarihi yazımına kazandırmak kültürel mirası zenginleştirmek, korumak ve gelecek nesillere aktarmak adına değerli bir görevi yerine getirmiştir.





1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Thesis

There were multiple motives bringing the Turkish and the Japanese cultures together from this extraordinary aspect. The core motive was to focus on the inclusion of women into the art education sphere and showcase their superb skills in their religious art painting, a genre where female presence was highly limited historically. Such a big transition could not have been read without touching on the political turmoils of the time when it deals with two representatives of the patriarchal powers in the world; the Turks and the Japanese. These two Eastern profiles hold a distinguished historical position in the history of Asia by shaking off the colonisation attempts meant to be laid by the Western powers thus taking great military pride in not being colonised. Both sides however were not immuned from, especially commercially-based, concessions in order to prevent themselves from potential agonies that could be imposed by the West causing unwanted changes on the political and geographical structures. As a Western origination, the Modernism represented the mildest version of these encroachment policies which often times played a receptive role in its destinations such as the Ottoman and Japanese realms. Among the social impacts it ushered, the most palpable success was measured in education, the art education particularly. Not only the scope of education was fully Westernized but also were both genders clustered together at the same physical environment. The religion dimension of the social transformation fueled by the Modernist movements too provided a very enlightening perspective while writing up this thesis because both countries had succumbed to the missionary activities of a religion, namely Christianity but in different versions. The story presents a versatile backdrop in this regard especially for the Ottomans because Christianity was not an alien religion to the Ottoman realm. It was actually the official religion of the Roman Empire since the Edict of Thessalonica under Theodosios I, upholding the Nicene Creed. The Roman Empire was the predecessor of the Ottoman Empire on the acquired land. Since the Ottomans' imperial thinking did not involve the need to issue an edict determining the religion of its subjects, the Roman

population, inherited by the Ottomans, enjoyed their freedom of religion also after the ruling system was converted into Turkish Republic which accorded The Rûm Church to represent its centuries old cultural identity. The word “Rûm” was coined to refer to Orthodox Christianity, particularly of Anatolian peninsula. It is actually an Arabic-influenced pronunciation of the word “Roman” which has been widely adopted in the Muslim realm. Japan, on the other hand, had its encounter with Christianity at a more intense level and in a different version than the Ottomans. When the Spanish and Portugese Catholic missionaries made their way from China to Japan, they were not welcomed by the Japanese rule of the era. Their conversion activities on the local peoples of Japan alarmed the Edo officials resulting in the prohibition of Christianity until the ban became defunct in 1873. The Protestants did not pose a high existential threat to the native culture of Japan because they adopted more of a secular approach, keeping the religion and business separate, since their activities were simply consisting of commercial engagement. The Orthodox Christianity however entered Japan through the Russian Orthodox Church, who presumably bore the standard bearer of Orthodoxy when the Eastern Roman Empire was absorbed by the Ottoman Empire. In Japan, the same imperial system still exists to this day without intercession and the official state religion has been strictly kept within the confines of Buddhism and Shintoism (Jarves,1918,p.55). Russian Orthodoxy was received warmly in Japan and the reason behind this was tied to the fact that Russian Empire was a major actor in Asia. Also the priest they sent for the mission, named Father Nicholas (Ivan Dimitrovich Kasatkin, Nicholas of Japan), followed a method of localizing firstly himself by learning the Japanese language and the native culture. Thus his modest attitude positioned him positively apart from the Western figures that might have adopted a more superior manner toward the locals. He is regarded as the first saint of The Japanese Orthodox Church.

The auxiliary motive for this study was the role played by women during the transitional periods, such as Modernism that emerged during the late 19th century. Selecting women icon artists who could embody the traditional and modernist inheritances simultaneously to the best of their potential was no simple task. Picking names that were not even adequately known in their own countries hopefully counts as a posthumous homage paid not only by the writer but also by the readers too. Yamashita Rin representing the Japanese side of this thesis was born into a poor

samurai family who chose not to yield into the financial and social difficulties of her time and pursued her artistic career regardlessly. The enthusiasm she nurtured for art primarily landed her in Japan's first governmental fine arts school called *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō* (Technical Fine Arts School). The next phase in her life took her to the cultural capital, St.Petersburg, under the austerity of the Japanese Orthodox Church which has been the local entity name for Russian Orthodox Church in Japan. Though Yamashita produced prolifically under non-religious genres as well, the twist of fate confined her artistic performance to ecclesiastical depictions, mainly the icons and other devotional items. It is debatable whether that was a mandatory choice or a voluntary one but what mattered significantly is that she found ways to speak her own stylization in her religious art production despite the core content was dictated by centuries-long protocols. Making such perseverance worth to be conveyed to the modern day audience has indeed induced a compelling desire to complete this thesis. The Ottoman front was represented by four women icon artists who were Ottoman-born and received art education at a state-owned fine arts academy of the newly founded Turkish Republic. Subject academy was actually the direct continuation of the Ottoman Empire's first fine arts school providing girls and boys with art education regardless of their religious background. So these selected names constitute a distinguished position not only by bearing the heritage of both ruling systems, as Rûm and Ottoman, but also depicting religious paintings that would be an applicable match to draw a close comparison to the Japanese counterpart Yamashita Rin's productions for a better articulation. The similarities on their educational backgrounds and the thematic integration of their works of religious art thereby could compensate for the chronological gap in terms of the life spans of the featured artists on both sides. With its focus on women icon painters, such an under-explored area in arts, this thesis holds a substantial potential to fill a gap in art historiography. With its key aim to bring the recognition of underpublicized women artists and their works of art to culturally-savvy societies, this thesis aims to fulfill a civic duty in an arts-based approach. To supplement the aforementioned motives, Edward Said's famous book called "*Orientalism*" provided a deep understanding of what ignited the Oriental flame in the Western mind during the course of research on this study. There are vast implementations derived from Modernism which successfully found its places in the East especially in the art fields. Offering a real-life alternative to the Western world's imaginative stories, this thesis seeks to tamper with the notion of the Western

“*Orientalistic*” by voicing these successful adaptations, at least from the perspective of religious painting.

1.2 Scope and Methodology

The scope of this thesis starts with the establishment of fine arts institutions for women under the modernization efforts of featured countries and extends to the religious painting genre which the featured female artists performed in. The names selected for this thesis are unfortunately not widely recognized even within their own homeland and not appropriately accorded any space in modern day Japanese and Turkish art history sources. The artistic journey of Yamashita Rin, who is emphasized in the sources as the first Japanese female icon artist, had such a layered depth given the zealot she put forth to pursue her artistic endeavors and the self-emancipation she conceived defying the societal dictates of her time. Her story is featured along with the outcomes of the transformational period when the Empire of Japan went under the Meiji Rule. The subsequent consequences situated her in the heart of the art sphere shaped by the socio-political climate in the Empire of Russia where she went to a monastic institution to further her painting studies. Life bestows a unique destiny on this humble lady and the way she literally knits the nets across empires through her artistic skills definitely deserves to be placed at the high ranks of art history archives. Bridging cultures most likely was not her original intention but the circumstances rendered her to be a conveyor of artistic legacies from one place to another. During her time in St. Petersburg where she was sent for icon making education, she actually cultivated a personalized blend of Italian art and Eastern Roman art. Returning to her home country Japan, she gracefully managed to convert her ever more expanded skills into an exclusive form of religious art, enabling her leaving an astounding legacy behind. In the first quarter of 20th century, the Russian Empire went through a tough period under the Communist Regime where religious art was severely persecuted. On the Japanese front, however, the religious art directed by the Russian church itself was protected safely and securely. Yamashita Rin rightfully has the merit for being embraced as one of the sustainers of such heritage. Yamashita initially displayed propensity and acquired motivation toward Italian art thanks to the Meiji government’s educational reforms where they invited artists to teach at their newly founded *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*, the first government-operated fine arts school. The hardships of life led

her in a direction where she became affiliated with the Japanese Orthodox Church by conversion and this experience paved the way for her to seek icon making education in Russia. There, she confronted with harsh restrictions when she attempted to follow an individual style because the icon production was rigidly regulated by the long-standing ecclesiastical protocols. The assertion that had she not gone down that path, she could have become a much more prolific artist on the profane front of the art of paintings sparks a founded debate, but it also creates a unjust hierarchy across the genres.

Discovering the fact that Rin paid a quick visit to Ottoman Istanbul on her way to Russia's St. Petersburg required further research to locate whether there was any Ottoman counterparts corresponding to the array of her arts. What yielded out of such research was truly exciting although the identified names were not precise contemporaries. Narrowing the female artists, featured on the Ottoman front, down to four names based on their birth dates allowed for presenting them as Ottoman-born. Since there is no exact information on when they actually started painting religious art, by introducing them as Ottoman- Rûm ensured including their religious paintings which were potentially made before the Republican Era. Their educational background also enabled them to be successfully linked to the student body of the Ottoman Empire's first state-sponsored art school for girls *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* (The Imperial School of Fine Arts For Girls), opened as a branch of *Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* (The Imperial School of Fine Arts), which initially operated under the notion of Westernization. Preferring those who practiced Orthodox Christian icon painting among the Ottoman-born Rûm women artists created an opportunity to match Yamashita's icon paintings at a thematic level which immensely helped to draw comparisons across the cultures and make references to both parties' religious works of art. The Ottoman-born Rûm women artists; Olga Petridou, Egli Zografou-Simalaridou, Eleni Laskaratou, Viktoria Lintridu are all Istanbulitan non-Muslim artists who were tutored at the first state-run art institute. Knowing that some of their icons are still being used in the churches of Republican Türkiye enriches the deep-rooted pride attributed to being an Istanbulitan even in the mindset of today.

Blending the elements from both sides of Asia with the orientation of imperial capitals like Tokyo and Istanbul, subject thesis also served to give an idea of how the Ottoman Empire and Empire of Japan adapted to major socio-political shifts and managed to

implement policies to groom female students as future artists. Selecting one Japanese artist was based on her distinction in the sources as being Japan's first icon painter and her unique story that carried her to the imperial city Istanbul as well as a major commercial port city Izmir only a few years after Japan officially expressed interest in forming diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire. Such commitment epitomizing the yen for emancipation in order to pursue her innate artistic talent is a promising venture that could embolden generations to come. The Ottoman-Rûm women artists, whose paths were meshed with intricate legacies of Ottoman and Rûm backgrounds, embody a unique treasure not only by their respective artistic skills in their icon paintings but also by the cultural composition they bore on their shoulders. Introducing the under-studied contributions of the selected Ottoman- Rûm artists and one Japanese artist to the world of art does give a feminist dimension to this study. Because the featured women artists owe their rights to art education to the first wave of feminism. That is why 19th century has been a turning point for women artists' recognition for their productions. The subsequent waves of feminism also made positive contributions. Yamashita Rin gained recognition in Japan after the feminist movements induced a scholarly curiosity toward women artists as of 1960s and 1970s. The initial attempt to introduce Yamashita to the art world in Japan in the 1960s is originally owed to Isaburo Oka (1914-2010) and Hideo Oda (1911-2003), the latter being her close relative.

The feminist theory, however, is only mentioned to allude to the initiatives that formed the basis of women's rights to art education which enabled the participation of selected names in the students bodies of chief art institutions. Although these women artists produced under non-religious art genres too, subject study particularly deals with their religious art paintings. It partially touches on the repression and exclusion women, throughout history, faced in religious art making just because they were women however such aspect is not carried into the discussion of feministic theory as it is a vast field that transcends the confines of this thesis.

This research was conducted based on thematic method. The thematic resemblances are kept within the aspects of modernization efforts, gender and icon paintings. The religious themes these women artists featured are quite identical because there is an ecclesiastical protocol but the variations in their depictions are substantively distinctive. Details regarding the lives of the artists were compiled primarily from

secondary sources, mainly books and articles. This research process revealed that neither Rûm artists were accorded a place in the Ottoman or Turkish art history discourse nor Yamashita Rin was sufficiently cited in the Japanese sources. The Western books featuring the world's leading artists that were scanned throughout this study do not mention of these women artists either. Therefore this thesis rightfully fulfilled its duty to make these artists' name heard in an academic attempt. A comparative synthesis of featured visual works principally centers on religious works of art. Selecting the Japanese female artist Yamashita Rin has also enhanced her position as a bridge-maker across cultures due to the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Turkish-Japanese relations in 2024. The Ottoman-born Rûm female artists who were pupils of the pioneering painter-and-educators that transformed what is named as Turkish painting today present a diverse perspective on the composition of the Republican period that completed its anniversary in 2023. Their artistic journeys were shaped under the influence of socio-political conditions of their time which were often overlooked in art historical research. This thus necessitated to bring their names and religious art productions into the spotlight, with the main goal of contributing to the enrichment of cultural heritage they carried out.

1.3 Literature Review

The part of the thesis dealing with Yamashita Rin is more abundant with sources. The visual and literary references for the lives and the works of Olga Petridou, Egli Zografu-Simalaridou, Eleni Laskaratou, Viktoria Lintridu are unfortunately quite limited. The reason why the Ottoman part of the research had to be kept more concise is due to the lack of archival sources since there took place a huge fire where the records of *Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* and its continued affiliations were stored in 1950s. The Fener Rûm Patriarchate stated that they could share personal data of members of Rûm community with the immediate family members only. The permission to make a visit and take the pictures of the selected women artists' icon paintings in the designated churches was not granted.

One of the most intriguing sources for this study has been a 1859-printed book by Mrs.Ellet named "*Women Artists in All Ages and Countries*" where the author makes only a passing mention of Ottoman damasks and Japanese screens. The content of the

book technically defies the title of it because the most Eastern reference one could find in it in terms of what is established as artistic creation is Greek and the geographical span of the book expands to only the U.S. besides Europe. This lack elevates the need for more art historian women who identify as Eastern to introduce the artists from their respective Eastern regions or countries, to produce more written sources in English in order to initiate an awakening on a global scale. Thanks to the research period for this thesis, it was discovered that there was another covert bias to deal with; the artistic productions of women outside of European identity is also not being accorded in art historiography adequately either.

The book named "*Women of Early Christianity*" published in 1908, with parts written by Alfred Brittain and Carroll Mitchell, provided clarification on what reinforced the gendered hierarchy within Jewish religious and social structures, presumably informing Early Christianity which eventually affected the gender segregation in icon making.

Surprisingly, the book from 1918 named "*A Glimpse at the Art of Japan*" written by James Jackson Jarves does not enlighten the reader on the genres of Japanese art and does not mention of institutional ventures that introduced Western art into Japan. But at least it makes references to Buddhism and Shintoism to lay out the basis the national building seeks as a foundation.

To capture a general perception regarding the socio-political dynamics that evolved from Edo Period to Meiji Era, Horie Hiedichi's article from 1952 named "*Revolution And Reform In Meiji Restoration*" has been a very informative source.

Tamon Miki's article from 1964, named "*The Influence of Western Culture on Japanese Art*" provided key elements on how the cultural dynamics were influenced in a period starting with religious missionary activities, resulting in expanding its sphere of influence into arts.

Isaburo Oka's article from 1969 titled "*The Twelve Sacred Events by Yamashita Rin Owned by Hakodate Orthodox Church*" provided both a textual and a visual reference regarding her icon paintings of the iconostasis, the ecclesiastical name for the physical partition inside a church dividing the heavenly realm from the worldly one.

Another outlying notion featured in this study was to raise awareness toward the fact that women were in a disadvantaged position throughout history to verbalize their

existence in the art sphere. They were not accorded space in the male-dominated mainstream narration until the 19th century. Borrowing insights from the institutional attitudes in Europe as to when they admitted women as students was immensely supportive of this argument. Linda Nochlin's "*Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?*" (1971) has been another source that reveals the structural hinderances and unfavouring educational limitations on women. Because she delves into the fact that the institutional structures and biased standards were actually precluding women's contribution to the art from being examined.

As for the comparison of involvement of women in education under each rule, Mara Patessio's book named "*Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan: The Development of the Feminist Movement*" published in 1975 has been a source indicating a thorough examination of the progress on the Japanese side.

Comparing cultures is indeed a versatile venture which calls for grounded insight to support arguments. When this attempt particularly deals with the East, one has to skim through Edward Said's "*Orientalism*" (1978) in order to grasp the underlying *donnees* in the Western eye and the Eastern mind. Subject book has been immensely helpful to understand why the West needed to paint the East with a broad brush and to see if that was intended to feed a naive curiosity or to fulfill potential ulterior motives. The West of the Modern era labeled the East as mystic and exotic. But unfortunately this inquisitive nature of the historians or travelers may ignite some sort of vanity causing them to see the East inferior to themselves. It was an unjust stance because the East has not gone through neither Renaissance or Reform in the Middle ages but it had its own transformational periods which found its reflections in the arts as well. The collectivist mindset of the East fundamentally sustained the traditionalism in the East and the effects of this traditionalist tendency founded its correspondence in the arts in form of a strict adherence to long-standing protocols. Subject book also enlightens the reader that the Eastern culture has its multi-facets ranging from Balkans to the Far East and does not necessarily comprise of Arab cultures. This thesis aims to bring the similarities into the readers' mind in light of the vast geographical variations consisting of Japanese, Ottoman and Russian realms and focuses on the modernization activities and its impacts on the art education.

"*Women Artists in History : from Antiquity to the Present*" published in 1985, written by Wendy Slatkin makes no mention of women artists from the East despite the name

of the book. That is why studies of this sort are needed at a greater capacity to make the relevant historiographic field leveled.

Michael Sullivan's book from 1989 named *"The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art"*, to me, is incomplete without mentioning of Yamashita Rin while bearing such a broad title but it does lay out the educational shifts during Meiji Era art education.

Hans Belting's book *"Likeness and Presence – A History of The Image Before the Era of Art"* from 1990 has been a rich source to comprehend the norms and reasons that led and regulated the veneration of icons. Judith Herrin's book *"Women and the Faith in Icons in Early Christianity"* from 1995 was helpful to grasp the underlying notions in this regard.

For a more general reference to a brief comparison between the two countries' common cultural tendencies, Selcuk Esenbel's article from 1994 titled *"Everyday Lives of the Meiji Japanese and the Ottoman Turks During the Nineteenth Century"* has been a beneficial source.

Another supportive source, a master's thesis from University of London written by Natalia Kostotchkina in 1994 under the title of *"The Baroque In Seventeenth-Century Russian Art"* aided in articulately explaining how the Russian traditional art took a European turn despite its deep-seated traditionalism and how the stylizations of Baroque-influenced religious painting Yamashita Rin had observed at Hermitage Museum while staying in St. Petersburg shaped her artistic creativity.

The oldest article in English referring to Yamashita Rin, both covering her life story as well as her passionate journey to become an artist, is from 1995 written by Michail Uspensky under the title of *"An Orthodox Icon By Yamashita Rin- The Japanese Painter Of The Meiji Period"*. He focuses on one specific icon that earns Yamashita Rin a remarkable distinction throughout her life. That icon was made as a gift to the then-heir Nicholas II (Nikolai Alexandrovich Romanov) in memory of the Resurrection Cathedral that opened in Tokyo, Japan in 1891 during his visit to Japan that year. He received the icon rather as a well wishing gift instead of a birthday gift in Kobe on the board of a naval ship named Pamyat Azova where he was on medical rest because he was physically assaulted in Otsu, Japan.

Semavi Eyice's article from 1996 titled "*Virgin Mary - Sumela Monastery Near Trabzon*" has been an enlightening source laying out how the Ottoman state mind protected the heritage of Orthodox Christianity.

Robin Cormack's narration under part "*Women and Icons, and Women in Icons*" in the book named "*Women, Men, Eunuchs*" published in 1997 helped me better understand how being confined to the interior might have caused an intense devotion the women had toward the icons within their households.

Among the theses utilized within the scope of this study, a doctoral thesis from Glasgow University featuring this issue from a feministic perspective "*Feminist Art History and Female Portraiture in the 19th Century France and Britain*" written by Georgia Toutziari in 1999 provided an expansive view that the root of the problem came all the way from Ancient Greek with their idea of natural inferiority of women which later on cemented itself with the Evangelical Revival. Passing through French Revolution, women's gaining more civil rights paved the way for establishing their deserved presence in the social arena. The wave of progressive attitude within Europe eventually found its place in the Ottoman Empire, the Japanese Empire and the Russian Empire, and laid the foundations to enable women in the formal education including arts-related branches. This thesis does not primarily aim to put forth a feminist agenda but has to resort to feminist historiography to incorporate the contributions made by the feminist movement. Because the academia still uses the term "female/women artists" in modern times too, although there is not a corresponding term as "male /men artists" which poses a query that the prevailing attitude is still relatively solid.

One of the core tenets of this study seeks to lay emphasis on is the selected artists' icon painting skills. This part requires to inform the reader on the meaning of icon from a spiritual perspective and the function of icon as a ritual instrument. Prof.Dr. Evangelia Şarlak's PhD thesis from 2001 titled "*Post-Byzantine Icons Unattached From Wall In Istanbul Greek Orthodox Churches*" explains the icons starting from their ancient roots including an icon's making process, icons' devotional aspects, the stylistic phases icons went through over the ages. Subject thesis also constitutes one of the very few sources pertaining to the lives and icon productions of two of the selected Ottoman-Rûm artists. The other sources for icons are two books; one is named "*Orthodox Icons*" written by Prof. Dr. Tayfun Akkaya in 2014 and the other one is named "*Icons*" written by Şinasi Başegmez in 1989. Evangelia Şarlak's subject thesis

has been a great source also to locate the churches and the icons that were painted by two of the selected Ottoman-Rûm artists housed in those churches.

In terms of gaining insight to how the first state-funded technical school operated its design-related curriculum, Yoshinori Amagai's article published in 2003 under the title of "*The Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō and the Beginning of Design Education in Modern Japan*" has been a helpful reference.

The most prolific source that enabled to furnish this thesis with distinctive elements not only by literary references but also with abundance of images is an exhibition catalogue named "*Yamashita Rin and Her Era - Japan to Russia, Female Icon Painter Who Lived in the Meiji Era*" issued by Hakodate Museum of Art in Hokkaido in 1998, where Yamashita Rin's relative Hideo Oda substantially contributed to the content on biographical basis under the part named "*Yamashita and Her Era*". Dogo Takagi in the same book provided information about her review of traditional icons under the part named "*Yamashita and Her Encounters with Medieval Icons*". Some visual examples made by Yamashita included in this source are reserved in the appendix section due to their religious content other than the icon concept. This book's editions were not available but Dr. Miyuki Aoki Girardelli contacted one of the living family members of Yamashita Rin and showed the courtesy of bringing the book from Japan to Türkiye in person.

Mayda Saris' book titled "*The Greek Painters of Istanbul*", mentioning of the biographies and artistic productions of Ottoman-Rûm women artists, was published only in 2010. This thesis is technically the first academic venture to introduce Yamashita Rin and Olga Petridou, Egli Zografu-Simalaridou, Eleni Laskaratou, Viktoria Lintridu in a blended fashion to the art history enthusiasts. Yamashita Rin was not a known name within the borders of Türkiye until she was introduced within the scope of this thesis completion at two occasions held in Istanbul; in August, 2024 at Theotokia Festival and in October, 2024 at Istanbul University Graduate Symposium. The former occasion gave me the chance to introduce Yamashita Rin to an international audience including clerical guests from Greece. The latter occasion created the first academic opportunity to present not only Yamashita Rin but also the Ottoman-Rûm women artists to fellow Istanbulitans as well.

John Pickhardt's master thesis from University of Hawai at Manoa in 2012 , titled "*Competing Painting Ideologies in Meiji Period*" provided a solid reference to the attitude toward Westernization and a thorough look on the developmental periods.

Whitney Chadwick's "*Women, Art and Society*" (2012) was an effective source to explain why terms like decorative or sentimental were largely associated with femininity. As the research also suggested, women's artistic productions were deemed more appropriate when involved more household-related stuff like decorations, embroideries, etc. This makes it more easily understandable what a revolutionary attempt the selected women artists committed by engaging in sacred depictions during their time. This book reserved relatively a larger space to put an accent on the historical conditions the selected women artists were exposed to while producing their works of art. It does however have very poor references to the non-European art sphere and mentions of, for example a German woman artist drawing influences from Japanese art, not introducing the Japanese art itself or artists hailing from Japan. In terms of the Orient, she refers to the imaginatively produced depictions of the Ottoman domain.

Among the articles that features Yamashita Rin's artistic repertoire was Michitaka Suzuki's "*Icons in Japan Painted by Rin Yamashita - Anonymity and Materiality*" which was published in 2014 listing the major icons she painted along with their ecclesiastical importance. He also touches on the function of icons and the concept of anonymity in producing icons. This thesis also discusses whether or not her devotion to a painting practice where anonymity is strictly observed throughout ages led her in a direction curtailing her artistic proliferation. She however still managed to speak her independent stylization into some of her works of religious painting as laid out in this study. Some icons she produced have profound significance for Orthodox Christianity as also mentioned in Michitaka's article. As he points out, Yamashita kept one of the icons for personal prayers. To be able to better emphasize subject icon's story, the article named "*Nativity of the Virgin Mary Kozelshchynskyi Monastery in the Poltava Region:an assessment of architectural heritage and contemporary challenges*",written by Halyna Osychenko and Oleksandr Khliupin,was helpful to corroborate his claims. *The Catalogue of The St. Elizabeth Convent Cathedral in Minsk* was too referred to in order to stress the importance of a certain icon which was marvelously copied by Yamashita Rin in her series where she depicted Virgin Mary and the Child.

Marie Roesgaard's paper "*Globalization in Japan: The Case of Moral Education*", delivered at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies - Rethinking Japanese Studies from Practices in the Nordic Region : Overseas symposium in Copenhagen, in 2014 made me comprehend the foundational elements of education that extended from pre-Meiji eras.

The doctor of philosophy thesis written by James Magruder from Johns Hopkins University in 2014 titled "*Byzantine Cameos and The Aesthetics Of The Icon*" gives information about the flat surfaces employed in icon making and its potential links to spirituality. The book called "*The Faiths of the World: An Account of All Religions and Religious Sects*" by Reverend James Gardner was a source to see the applicable connection to the belief system the study dealt with. This source also helped expand the perspective of Early Christianity's restrictive attitude toward women across the ecclesiastical body.

An article released in 2015 by Kaname Yanagisawa under the title of "*Historical Background of the Japanese School*" enabled following the flow of changes in the school systems pertinent to different rules Japan went through.

While researching on Otsu incident, an unexpected information emerged showing the scene of this unfortunate event depicted on the wall of a local Ottoman-Rûm merchant's house in Nevşehir, Türkiye. Yıldırım Özbek's article "*A Historic Subject in the Wall Paintings of Sinasos (Mustafapaşa): The Case of Otsu*" published in 2017 made it possible to include a clear photograph of it in this thesis.

"*Cultivating Femininity: Women and Tea Culture in Edo and Meiji Japan*" by Rebecca Corbett, published in 2018, laid out the primary differing dynamics of differing rules in Japan which enabled a better understanding how educational policies took shape through the centuries.

Another source specifically focusing on "Resurrection of Christ" icon is from a master thesis titled "*Characteristics and Stylistic Development of Yamashita Rin – Iconological Study of The Resurrection of Christ*" from 2019 written by a Divinity Faculty student Zlatko Divjakovski who pursued his graduate degree at Kanazawa University in Japan under the advisory of Japanese academics. His details on Yamashita's visit to Istanbul and Izmir and the sketches she made at Hagia Sophia church-turned-mosque during her quick stay made a valuable contribution to the

content of this research. To ensure a coherence in the mind of the reader, this thesis also gives a basic knowledge on how Orthodox Christianity entered Japan by giving a chronological layout of Christian missionary activities in Japan from Edo Period to Meiji Era. A PhD thesis from Oxford University written by Olga Puznova under the title of *“Nikolai Yaponsky and the Russian Orthodox Mission to Japan during the Meiji Period: Encounters and Tensions between Russia, Japan and the West”* in 2020 has been a beneficial source for this. The sources were mentioning of another icon Yamashita Rin made for then-heir Nicholas II’s cousin Prince George as a gift. It was the icon of Holy Theotokos. But it does not have a surviving preliminary sketch, the icon itself has not yet been discovered. I have contacted Royal Collection Trust with the Buckingham Palace if they could provide me with any visual reference by any chance but I have not heard back. I have also located the travel log of Ukhstomsky, the closest company to then-heir Nicholas II during his train trip from Russia to the other parts of Asia including Japan via sea fare but there was no mention of the icons gifted to Crown Prince Nicholas II or his cousin Prince George.

The part named *“Seeing Toponymic Icons Hierotopically”* written by Annemarie Weyl Carr in the book called *“Icons of Space-Advances in Hierotopy”* issued in 2021 offered a different angle to look at the naming of icons when especially associated with a territory and enhanced the discussion of one of Yamashita’s icon paintings connected to modern day Kozelschyna, Ukraine.

The four-year research project launched by AWARE(Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions) in 2022 aiming to compile women artists in Japan in between 19th-21st centuries has been a great online source to look in order to identify fellow Japanese female artists contemporary with Yamashita Rin for making a comparison among their artistic tendencies and productions. The results called for a further research on the counterpart names and quite enriched the content of the study.

To have a more in depth understanding on the Ottoman side and the developments regarding the art education in general, several master’s and PhD theses like *“Education, Fine arts and Women in The Context of Otoman Modernization: A Study on the Imperial School of Arts for Women”* by Uğurgül Tunç from Istanbul Technical University in 2018, *“The Imperial School of Fine Arts for Women Alumni”* by Banu Paşalıoğlu from Marmara University in 1996, *“First and Leading Women Artists in Turkish Painting Art Until The Republican Era (1908-1930)”* by Sebahat Akçay in

2015, *“Looking at the Image of Woman from Modern to the Tradition:An Assessment with the Selected Examples from Arts of Türkiye”* by Gözde Yıldız in 2019 did contribute to this study substantially. But unfortunately none of these theses feature non-Muslim women artists that received education at subject art school or at its affiliated continuations.



2. MODERNISM AT THE TURN OF THE 19TH CENTURY ON BOTH ENDS OF ASIA AND ITS REFLECTIONS ON THE ART EDUCATION: THE EMPIRE OF JAPAN AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The Eastern world has taken the Western world as a role model not only in terms of industry and technology but also in the field of artistic transformations. Integrating these influences into its own cultural context did constitute a distinct phase in the East. What differentiates the two sides is that the Western Europe experienced numerous challenging and contentious stages in its own artistic journey, which in turn gave rise to artistic productions reflective of those struggles. In contrast, the Eastern world, without undergoing such arduous processes itself, tended more toward importing these developments from the West and, though it was essentially a painful process, inevitably resorted to the option of localization. This is not to suggest that the Eastern world merely engaged in imitation (Said, 1978, p.160). On the contrary, by incorporating what it had received from the West into its own traditional arts or by reinterpreting them independently through its own unique lens, the East managed to produce more enriched and nuanced versions. Furthermore, the fact that the Eastern world was able to swiftly adapt and execute the West's artistic practices and institutional developments, which had been shaped over centuries, it is a significant achievement in and of itself.

The artistic dimension of the Western-oriented modernization efforts in the Ottoman Empire and the Empire of Japan, these two states being geographically situated at the opposite ends of the Eastern world, portrays an exceptional accomplishment given both parties' conservative social structures and culturally unique places in the world history. Although these developments did not occur during precisely overlapping chronological periods, they did unfold within relatively proximate historical intervals.

The 19th century was a period in which male identity dominated the public sphere through politics, commerce, religion, and academia, while women were confined to the private sphere, an arrangement that became ingrained as a social doctrine. Due to cultural constraints, women artists were naturally unable to access the same

experiences as their male counterparts. However, this unjustly imbalanced order was not enough to deter the decisive women from pursuing their artistic aspirations. The initial wave feminist movement took effect in mid 19th century by the women demanding equal legal rights and right to education to exercise their talents. British and French realms were the trailblazers of such movement (Toutziari,1999,p.40). The transition from the 19th to the 20th century marked a period of adaptation in the Eastern world. In the conservative societies of the East, sociologically entrenched resistance made this process relatively painful. This was particularly evident in cultures such as the Ottoman Empire and the Empire of Japan where women, partly due to the lack of an Industrial Revolution, were still largely perceived as part of the domestic sphere rather than public life (Yıldız,2019,p.38). Even in gender-segregated classroom settings, the inclusion of women in art education was seen as a challenge to the traditional norms. While the state-supported initiatives in both empires helped to ease the transition, it is often overlooked that the roots of this transformation were, at least in part, nourished by earlier periods of cultural accumulation.

2.1 Modernism In The Empire of Japan: The Meiji Restoration and The Art Education

The term “*Meiji*” translates to "enlightened rule" which reflects the ideological foundation of the period known as the Meiji Restoration, led by Emperor Meiji (Fig.2.1-Fig.2.2). During this era, Japan gradually transitioned from an agrarian society to a technologically advancing nation, accompanied by a shift from a decentralized feudal structure to a centralized governmental authority. It formally

abolished distinctions between social classes, causing the samurai class losing its traditional privileges.



Figure 2. 1: Emperor Meiji - Mutsuhito, Prince Sachi (1852-1912) in traditional royal robes,1872. [URL-1]



Figure 2. 2: Emperor Meiji - Mutsuhito, Prince Sachi (1852-1912) in Western-style uniform,1873. [URL-2]

Shinto is actually a Chinese term meaning “the way of spirits” (Jarves,1918,p.47). Shintoism was Japan’s indigenous religion and The Meiji emperor was regarded as the spiritual leader of Shinto. Shintoism was dismantled as the state religion following the World War II, but during The Meiji Period it was elevated to the status of state religion, aimed at fostering a national unity. A comprehensive national education system was established to promote literacy and civic values across all social strata, with a particular focus on moral education, reinforcing a collective identity rooted in the imperial ideology. But the Meiji government still had to make strategic concessions to Western

powers in pursuit of diplomatic recognition and integration into the international community (Corbett,2018, p.123).

This was also the era when Western elements formally enter the Japanese world. This gradual transition was actualised in multiple phases having its roots in former periods. The most comprehensive phase, “*yōga*” (Western-style Painting), gained prominence during the Meiji era as part of Japan's broader initiative toward modernization and cultural engagement with the West. It is “*yōga*” that signified a marked transformation in Japanese art. This phase was characterized by a systematic and government-supported adoption of Western artistic conventions, reflecting the Meiji administration’s pro-Western orientation. “*Yōga*” thus represented not merely an artistic evolution but a deliberate institutional effort to align Japanese visual culture with Western aesthetic ideals, in keeping with the nation’s broader modernization and reform agenda. “*Yōga*” painting has been the key concept of Western art teaching at *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*, the first state-run Western-style art education school in the country, initiated by the Meiji government. “*Nihonga*” has been the phase where “*yōga*” paintings were technically localized catering to the Japanese sense to convert it into a genre that corresponds to Japanese style painting as a counter part of “*yōga*”. “*Nihonga*” became a genre that incorporated all kinds of Japanese painting dated as of Meiji Period within the frame and format of Japanese tradition (Sullivan,1989,p.151).

2.1.1 Transition from edo period to meiji period

Japan underwent a profound transformation in its pursuit of modernization, a process historically intertwined with Westernization (Esenbel,1994,p.146). This transition was far from seamless, as it constituted a form of forced opening following over two centuries of self-imposed isolation under the Tokugawa Shogunate. The samurai class viewed the Shogunate's concessions to Western demands as a national humiliation thus required radical political and social reform. During the Tokugawa period, Japan possessed a remarkably high literacy rate, which directly facilitated the success of the Meiji Restoration (Patessio, 1975,p.34). A commercial economy was already in place and contributed to the socio-economic groundwork necessary for modernization (Hideichi,1952,p.33). Educational opportunities for commoners existed in the form of privately operated “*terakoya*” (temple schools), while feudal domains maintained schools primarily for the sons of samurai, where instruction emphasized Confucian

moral philosophy. As such, Tokugawa-era education was heavily influenced by Chinese intellectual traditions rather than indigenous Japanese ones. This longstanding engagement with foreign systems of thought may have eased Japan's subsequent transition to Western educational models (Yanagisawa,2015,p.42).

The Meiji Restoration initiated a profound societal transformation in Japan. To understand Yamashita Rin's educational background, it is essential to examine the broader historical and socio-political context in which she was born and educated. At its core, the Meiji Restoration marked the transfer of political authority from the decentralized rule of feudal lords to the emperor, symbolizing a return to imperial sovereignty.

The state's official commitment to industrialization created a favorable environment for the establishment of technical and vocational schools, reflecting a broader shift toward modernization (Sullivan,1989,p.37). The political sphere at the time saw a contest between two coalitions: on one side, an alliance of wealthy farmers and lower-ranking samurai; on the other, elite samurai and proponents of the feudal order. Yamashita Rin hailed from the lower samurai class, a social position that both shaped her educational opportunities and situated her within the broader transformation of the Meiji society.

The initial phase of the Western influence on Japanese art was closely tied to the spread of Christianity. In 1549, Francis Xavier (1506-1552), sent by the Jesuit order, arrived in Japan with the aim of propagating the Christian faith. As part of this missionary effort, religious paintings were introduced to Japan where some Japanese artists were trained as a part of this activity. However, the influence of the Western artistic ideas remained limited due to the persecution and eventual banning of Christianity under the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1867), which significantly curtailed the cultural exchange with the West.

Japan's modernization, and its concurrent adoption of the West as a role model, was a culturally challenging process. Subject transformation unfolded within a complex triad of Westernization, Modernization, and Europeanization (Esenbel,1994,p.147). This shift was particularly difficult for a culture that, during the Edo period, had remained largely closed off from the outside world. The abrupt opening of the country to external influence was not only a cultural shock but also a politically destabilizing force which led to the outbreak of internal conflict, ultimately creating the conditions necessary for the Meiji Restoration (Pickhardt, 2012,p.30).

2.1.2 Establishing the first public technical fine arts school of the Japanese empire: *kōbu bijutsu gakkō*

The Japanese government, while particularly influenced by the Anglo world in adopting role models for fine arts education, made a deliberate choice to recruit instructors from Italy. This might have stemmed from Italy's long-standing position in art education as the world's first fine arts academy, The Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze, was founded in 1563 by the Medici Family in Florence, Italy. The embassy in Japan also expressed interest in assisting Japan with their formal arts education venture.

The Japanese government sought no gender segregation in admitting applications to its first state fine arts school although there was observed an initial resistance toward inclusion of girls. During the Meiji period, political tendencies prioritized engaging in international exchange as a means of initiating modernization, while simultaneously preserving national values. In Meiji Japan, the modernist movement operated under the motto "Rich Country, Strong Army" (*Fukoku kyōhei*), which aimed to protect Japanese national identity and consciousness, and to secure national unity (Roesgaard, 2014, p. 176). Over time, this made the decision-making bodies to adopt increasingly nationalist policies.

One of the pivotal moments in the history of the Western-style painting in Japan was the admission of women to *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*. It is worth noting that this situation was not entirely unique to Japan, as similar gender-based educational restrictions were evident in Europe during the same period (Amagai, 2003, p. 20). In France, the Royal Academy (1648) made the admission requirements too hard for women and after it got transformed into *Ecoles des Beaux-Arts* in 1863, the school did not admit girls as students until 1897. *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō* was opened in 1876 and seems to have started to admit girls into its student body earlier than France. Of the sixty students enrolled at the school upon its opening, six were female, marking the first time women in Japan had gained access to such a level of higher education (Uspensky, 1994, p. 38).

Most female painters who gained recognition in the arts in modern patriarchal societies were often supported by their fathers or husbands and owed their success largely to the socio-cultural environment in which they were raised. Yamashita Rin, however, presents a distinct contrast to this typical narrative. Coming from a humble

background, Yamashita's story deviates from the norm. She and her close circle of peers relied solely on their passion for painting as their driving force, without the financial or institutional support that many of their contemporaries received from male sponsors. Yamashita Rin started school life under the Edo Period and she received a higher level of art education at *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*, a technical fine arts school established during the Meiji Restoration.

The establishment of *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō* in 1876 was driven by Japan's growing interest in Western scientific and technological civilization. Following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the Japanese government embarked on a rapid and comprehensive effort to assimilate aspects of Western culture, including in the realm of visual arts. The school concentrated exclusively on Western artistic methods, offering formal instruction in drawing, oil painting, and sculpture, thereby positioning Western art education as a vital part of Japan's broader modernization agenda.

To ensure high-quality instruction, the government invited Italian artist-teachers to Japan, who specialized in painting and sculpture. These foreign educators played a crucial role in introducing European artistic techniques and traditions to Japanese students, thus fostering the development of a modern artistic culture in Japan. Responding positively to Italy's willingness to take the lead in this domain, the Japanese government invited Antonio Fontanesi (1818-1882) (Fig.2.3-Fig.2.4) for the Painting Department, Vincenzo Ragusa (1841-1927) for the Sculpture Department, and Giovanni Cappelletti (1889-1964) for the Architecture Department. These foreign educators brought with them essential equipment that was difficult to obtain in the Japanese market at the time (Amagai,2003,p.23).



Figure 2. 3: Antonio Fontanesi with male students at *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*, 1878.
[URL-3]



Figure 2. 4: Antonio Fontanesi with female students at Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō (Yamashita Rin- far right, front row), 1878. [URL-4]

Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō was also Japan's first official art institute dedicated to “*yōga*” (Western-style painting), marking a significant shift in the nation's artistic landscape. The term *bijutsu*, which appears in the school's name, refers specifically to “fine art” encompassing both sculpture and painting. The leading name under “*yōga*”, which corresponded to Western-style oil painting in Japan, was Antonio Fontanesi.

Fontanesi, an accomplished landscape painter, was known for his expressive brushwork and the use of thick pigment. His compositions, marked by their formal balance and atmospheric depth, left a lasting impression on Japanese artists of the period. Thoroughly trained in the European academic tradition, Fontanesi arrived in Japan well-equipped for instruction, bringing with him plaster casts, instructional texts on perspective and anatomy, as well as a variety of art materials, including oil and watercolor paints, pigments, *conté*, *fusains*, and canvases. His artistic contributions played a crucial role in shaping the early development of Western-style painting in Japan. Fontanesi, personally designed the curriculum at *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*. It was at this institution that students of oil painting would first be introduced to the principles of classical Western depiction. His curriculum included both basic and advanced landscape drawing, sketching from plaster casts, sketching from nature, oil painting in landscape, geometry, perspective, decorative drawing, shading, and anatomy. Although male and female students were placed in separate classes, there was a notable emphasis on geometry in the male students' curriculum, while the female students' program focused more heavily on oil painting. *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*, where students received instruction from both local and foreign instructors, remained active between November 1876 and January 1883.

2.1.3 Inviting the european art tutors into kōbu bijutsu gakkō

The process of inviting the European art tutors into *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō* was initiated by Ito Hirobumi who engaged in diplomatic communication with the Italian diplomat Alessandro Fè d'Ostiani. The primary objective was to found an art school in Tokyo, bringing in Italian instructors to teach painting, sculpture and architecture.

Antonio Fontanesi was a renowned landscape painter, celebrated as one of the great European Romantic artists. His influence on the artistic development of his students, particularly Yamashita Rin, is clearly evident in their works. Especially on figural representation, Fontanesi was meticulous in his attention to anatomical accuracy and perspective which found reflection on Yamashita's icon paintings.

2.2 Modernism in the Ottoman Empire: The Tanzimat Era and the Art Education

The struggle for women's social rights in the West found resonance within the Ottoman world with the *Tanzimât Fermânı* (The Imperial Edict of Reorganization) of 1839 marking a pivotal moment in the Westernization initiative. In 1859, the first "rüştiye" (girls' secondary school) was established, followed by the "Dârülmua'llimât" (Women's Teachers' Training College) in 1870. *Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* was founded in 1882 and was opened in 1883, and finally *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* was opened in 1914 for female students. These institutions were later merged in 1928 to form *İstanbul Devlet Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi* (State Academy of Fine Arts). The Ottoman- Rûm women artists examined in this study were students during this period (Paşalıoğlu, 1996, p.15). The shifting dynamics of the 19th century enabled girls to access education, paving the way for the emergence of competent female painters in the years that followed. The establishment of *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* in 1914, dedicated to providing fine arts education for female students, was a direct result of this broader movement. During this period of adaptation, the Ottoman Empire even sent female students abroad to receive art education in Europe which counts an

indicator of the progressive strides being made despite the prevailing conservative social fabric.

2.2.1 Establishment of *sanâyi-i nefise mektebi* (the imperial school of fine arts)

The beginning of modernization efforts in art education in the Ottoman Empire's capital, Istanbul, is marked by the establishment of *Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi* in 1882 and opening in 1883, which was a pivotal moment in the history of Turkish painting (Tunç,2018,p.63). It was modeled after the *École des Beaux-Arts* which was the later version of the original academy known as *Académie Royale* that opened in 1648 in Paris, France. *Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi* initially offered education to male students only (Fig.2.5). After the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the painters who had been sent to France, Germany and Italy for art education were compelled to return home and subsequently took up teaching positions at this institution. Although Osman Hamdi Bey (1842-1910) had spearheaded the establishment of *Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi* in 1882 during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II (1842-1918), he did not live to witness the return of prominent artists such as İbrahim Çallı (1882-1960), Nazmi Ziya Güran (1881-1937), Hikmet Onat (1882-1977), Ali Sami Boyar (1880-1967), and Feyhaman Duran (1886-1970), nor their subsequent roles as art instructors in this institution. These artists, influenced predominantly by the Impressionist movement, prioritized the depiction of natural sunlight and the color effects created by light in their works. Rather than adopting a mimetic approach to nature, they favored a personalized artistic style, emphasizing the need for balance not only in composition but also in the application of color. One of their significant contributions was the incorporation of figural compositions and portraiture into the realm of Turkish painting. Among these artists, Çallı, İsmail, Duran and Onat also established their own studios. (Paşalıoğlu,1996,p.25).

At *Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi*, drawing instruction in charcoal was provided by the Polish artist Joseph Warnia (1850-?), while oil painting courses were taught by the Italian painter Salvatore Valeri (1856-1946). It is believed that the delay in establishing such an institution was primarily due to the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877. Archival documents confirm that the foundation of a fine arts education institution had originally been proposed in 1877 by Münif Pasha (1830-1910), then head of the Ottoman Ministry of Education. The proposal envisioned departments of painting and

architecture and was to be directed by the French artist Pierre Guillemet (1827-1878), who had been invited to Istanbul by Sultan Abdülaziz (1830-1876). The school initially operated in a building adjacent to the Tiled Pavilion (Çinili Köşk), located within the present-day grounds of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums. However, due to insufficient natural lighting, the school was eventually forced to relocate (Paşalıoğlu, 1996, p.21).



Figure 2. 5: Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi (TISOFA), 1906. [URL-5]

2.2.2 Establishment of inâs sanâyi-i nefîse mektebi (the imperial school of fine arts for girls)

With the proclamation of the *Tanzimât Fermanı* in 1839, women began to gain Western-style social rights and statuses, which expanded significantly in the 2. *Meşrutiyet Dönemi* in 1908, granting women access to higher education. In this context, one of the most significant developments in fine arts education was the founding of *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* in 1914, a dedicated institution for the education of women in the arts.



Figure 2. 6: *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi* (Imperial School of Fine Arts for Women) students and tutors, from Taha Toros' Archives. [URL-6]

Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi represented a pivotal institutional development in legitimizing women's participation in the visual arts, marking a significant step toward their formal inclusion within the professional artistic sphere (Fig.2.6). *Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi* was modeled after the *École des Beaux-Arts* which began to admit female students in 1897. *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi* was established as an affiliate of *Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi* to provide art education specifically for female students. The leading figure in this phase was the artist Mihri Müşfik Hanım (1886-1954), who played a pioneering role. *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi*, which had to relocate several times throughout its existence, began its educational activities in two rooms located on the second floor of the Zeynep Hanım Mansion, formerly situated on the grounds where Istanbul University's Faculty of Science and Letters stands today. Since the sight of women painting outdoors was not yet socially tolerated, it was sometimes deemed necessary for police officers to accompany instructors and students during outdoor sessions. The school's first director, Mihri Hanım, made significant efforts to ensure that female students received the most effective education possible. She sought female models by reaching out to local bathhouses and arranged for statues from the Archaeology Museum to serve as male models; in some instances, a very old age man was used as a live model (Uğurgül,2018,p.63).

Considering the difference in timing, the progress in the Ottoman world appears to have occurred at a remarkably rapid pace. In an imperial system where religious affiliations formed the basis of class divisions, these structures became more fluid under the republican government. Nevertheless, in both periods, art transcended these

boundaries, and the system adopted an approach toward artistic education that emphasized inclusivity and integration.

With the advent of industrialization in Europe, the demand for women's more active and productive participation in public life increased, prompting growing advocacy for the recognition and implementation of women's rights. These social transformations, particularly those initiated in France, found resonance in the Ottoman society through media channels, which played a crucial role in bringing such issues to public attention. One pressing concern was the exclusion of young women from advanced art education, a phenomenon not limited to the Ottoman Empire. In general, this policy was eventually overturned by a regulatory reform, and the co-education of men and women in the arts became increasingly normalized after the 1920s.

In the Ottoman context, *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi*, a significant milestone, merged with *Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi* in 1926, marking a critical step toward integrating women into the formal art education system (Paşalıoğlu, 1996,p.62). *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi* played a pivotal role in enabling talented young women to enter and contribute meaningfully to the evolving field of Turkish painting during a formative period in its history. Nearly all of the pioneering female artists who later assumed prominent roles in Republican Türkiye's art world were alumni of this institution. Among these trailblazers was Mihri Müşfik Hanım, a distinguished painter and educator, who was instrumental in securing a legitimate and respected position for Turkish women within the broader community of professional artists. Her contributions not only advanced the cause of gender equality in the arts but also helped shape the emerging identity of modern Turkish painting.



Figure 2. 7: İstanbul Devlet Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi (Istanbul State Academy of Fine Arts) with its tutors and students after becoming co-ed, 26 July 1933. [URL-7]

Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi, which began with 33 students, was the precursor to this institution. Of the students, 27 were Muslim and 6 were non-Muslim. Female Muslim students were required to attend classes wearing the full-body and head veil, while non-Muslim students participated in lessons either wearing hats or with their heads uncovered (Akçay,2015,p.94).

Following the *Tanzimat* reforms, while the Ottoman system left the establishment of religious educational institutions to the discretion of individual religious communities, it did not impose any religious discrimination in the enrollment of students in official schools. Similarly, when the state sponsored students to study abroad, it did so without regard to religious affiliation. *Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi*, which commenced education in 1883 and reached an enrollment of 195 students by 1895, produced some of the most prominent artists and instructors of the Republican era. The school was comprised of departments of painting, architecture and carving, and offered a comprehensive curriculum that included courses such as art history, ornamentation, perspective, elementary arithmetic, design, geometry, history, antiquities, anatomy, and even bookkeeping methods. *Înas Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi*, which was established primarily to train female painters and art instructors, did not include an architecture department and excluded mathematics and geometry courses. However, during the directorship of Namık İsmail (1890-1935), the two schools were merged, and in 1928, the institution was renamed *Devlet Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi*. (Fig.2.7). Since 1983, it has continued its educational mission under the name *Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Fakültesi* (Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University).

The fundamental socio-cultural and functional distinction between *Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi* and *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi* is in their respective missions. While the former primarily aimed to support the educational and professional needs of male artists mastering Western painting traditions, the latter provided women, who had been largely excluded from public life, with a space for social participation and artistic representation.





3. CHRISTIANITY UNDER NON-CHRISTIAN DOMAIN AND ICON MAKING IN THE HANDS OF WOMEN ARTISTS

Orthodox Christianity, which was the state religion of the Eastern Roman Empire, was protected by the ruling Muslims Turks and the activities of the Christian institutions were safeguarded by the state authorities not only after Constantinople became Konstantiniyye as the Ottoman imperial capital city in 1453 but also after the country transitioned to the Republican Era in 1923.

In Japan, Orthodox Christianity emerged as a result of missionary activities by the Russian Orthodox Church. During the Edo period, a stance of opposition to Christianity was taken primarily due to the perceived threat that Catholic missionary activities posed to Japan's national identity (Puznova,2020,p.21). However, from an artistic perspective, these missionaries made a notable contribution to the Japanese culture through their use of Western-style perspective and shading techniques in their religious paintings. These artistic techniques were employed to facilitate the process of Christianization, as they sought to present religious imagery in a manner that aligned with Western traditions, thus influencing the artistic development of Japan at the time (Miki,1964,p.380).

By the early 17th century, Japan began engaging in trade with the Dutch, marking a new phase of exposure to Western art. Initially, Dutch artistic imports were considered of lesser value due to their limited presence and low visibility. However, as interest in the Dutch language and culture grew, so did appreciation for their artistic contributions. Unlike the Portuguese and the Spanish, the Dutch refrained from proselytizing, focusing instead on commercial relations and maintaining a clear separation between religion and trade which enabled them being held in favor.

Japan entered a prolonged period of isolation from the 17th century to the 19th century. This seclusion ended in 1854 when Japan re-established international relations through trade agreements with Britain and the United States, initiating the “*Kaikoku*” (opening

of the country) period (Esenbel,1994,p.149). This new phase began with the arrival of American Commodore Matthew Perry in Edo Bay and was followed by the opening of the ports of Shimoda and Hakodate the following year.

Notably, the city of Hakodate played a significant role in the establishment and expansion of Orthodox Christianity in Japan. Following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Russian Empire positioned itself as the rightful heir to the Eastern Roman Empire and, by extension, the protector and continuation of Orthodox Christianity. Russia capitalized on this religious legitimacy to strengthen its political and cultural authority and increasingly employed Orthodoxy as a means of religious outreach, particularly in East Asia, including Japan.

The Hakodate Orthodox Church was established in 1793 during the Edo period by a Russian Orthodox missionary, though it operated under the name of the Japanese Orthodox Church, with clergy recruited from among the local Japanese population. The arrival of a Russian envoy in Hakodate in 1793 marked the beginning of formal relations between the city and the Russian Empire, initiated through efforts to establish trade agreements (Puznova,2020,p.59). Hakodate's significance stemmed from its status as an international trading port, a gateway that had already facilitated Japan's interactions with the United States, Great Britain, France and the Netherlands. In this context, it is reasonable to suggest that Russia's religious engagement through the Orthodox Church was not solely rooted in evangelical motivations but also served as a strategic tool to gain political influence and expand its presence in the region. Russia's first consulate building in Japan as well as the first Church of Russian Orthodoxy, still standing today, houses the highest number of Yamashita Rin's icon paintings. Icons of "*Juni Taisaizu* (The Twelve Great Feasts)" are among Yamashita's most notable works depicted on canvas as oil paintings, each by 330 cm x 256 cm (Isaburo,1969,p.17). These scenes consist of "*The Nativity of the Virgin Mary*", "*The Presentation in the Temple of the Virgin Mary*", "*The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary*", "*The Nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ*", "*The Meeting of the Lord with Shepherds*", "*Baptism of the Lord*", "*The Transfiguration of the Lord*", "*The Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem*", "*The Ascension of the Lord*", "*The Coming of the Spirit*", "*The Assumption of the Virgin Mary*", "*The Elevation of the Cross of the Lord*" themes. Japan designated subject church (Fig.3.1) with its iconostasis (Fig.3.2) Important Cultural Properties in 1983.

During the Meiji Period, when missionary activities of the Western religious institutions were allowed, the Russian Orthodox Church also took action and established the Japanese Orthodox Church under the leadership of Nikolai Kasatkin (1836–1912). In Japan he was known by the name “Nikolai Yaponsky” (Fig.3.3). In 1860, he became the head priest for Japan in 1906 (Puznova,2020,p.107). This institution would later sponsor the artist Yamashita Rin, to send her to Russia for religious painting education.



Figure 3. 1: Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church of Hakodate,Hokkaido,Japan, current site dated from 1916. [URL 8]



Figure 3. 2: Iconostasis of Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church of Hakodate, Hokkaido, Japan displaying works of Yamashita Rin. [URL 9]



Figure 3. 3: Father Nicholas , The First Saint of Japanese Orthodox Church. [URL-10]

In 1891, a cathedral named “Resurrection” was opened in Tokyo. One of Yamashita Rin's most famous works is an icon commemorating the visit of then-heir Tsar Nicholas II (1868-1918; reign: 1894-1917) (Fig.3.6), which was planned for the opening of this cathedral (Uspensky,1995,p.48) (Fig.3.4-3.5). Subject icon was originally intended to be presented to the crown prince in Tokyo as a birthday gift (Fig.4.15). However, due to an attack he suffered in Ōtsu, Japan that prevented his arrival to Tokyo, it was instead delivered to him while he was recovering inside a military vessel in Kobe, Japan. The unfortunate incident, which caused a national uproar in Japan in 1891, was even depicted and is till on display as a wall painting in the home of an Ottoman-Rûm merchant, currently located within the city of Nevşehir, Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) (Özbek,2017,p.360)(Fig.3.7). Subject icon became the property of the Hermitage Museum following the October Revolution in Russia and it remains preserved within the institution’s collection to this day.



Figure 3. 4: Holy Resurrection Orthodox Cathedral in Tokyo, Japan (known as Nicholai-do/Nikorai-do in honor of St. Nicholas of Japan), taken before 1923- Great Kanda Earthquake ,1891. [URL-11]



Figure 3. 5: Holy Resurrection Orthodox Cathedral in Tokyo, modern day look. [URL-12]



Figure 3. 6: Depiction of Tsar Nicholas II in a saintly manner, date unknown. [URL-13]



Figure 3. 7: Wall painting in Nevşehir, Türkiye featuring the scene of Otsu Assault in Japan at Tradesman Sultanidis' House, date unknown. [URL-14]

The incorporation of icons into the collection of the Louvre Museum in France and the initiative of the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow to establish a museum collection centered on icons occurred during similar periods. In the period immediately following the World War II, the Republic of Türkiye did not remain indifferent to these trends and decided to establish an icon museum within the Hagia Irene Church, under the administration of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums. However, due to organizational shortcomings in the effort to collect icons from various regions of the country, the initiative unfortunately did not yield effective results. The painter Halil Dikmen (1906-1964), who was appointed by the Ministry of National Education to oversee the collection of icons, served as a lecturer at the Istanbul State Academy of Fine Arts and played a significant role in the founding of the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture. In a statement, he emphasized that the failure to open the museum represented a missed opportunity of considerable importance (Başegmez,1989,p.21).

Icons are paintings created through the process of painting on wood, depicting the sacred figures of Christianity in accordance with religious texts, and are considered sacred as a result. One of the most prominent Church Fathers, Ioannes Chrisostomos describes the church as it represents the celestially on earth. A church cannot be defined as a proper Orthodox church without having icons in it (Şarlak,2001,p.6). These works are typically illuminated by candles placed before them or are venerated by kneeling in front of them during worship. The misinterpretation where paying homage to icons was seen an act of superstition resulted in Iconoclasm

(Gardner,1858,p.13). The prototypes of icons are believed to originate from the depictions found on the coffins of mummies in the Fayyum region of Egypt, which were created during the 2nd-3rd centuries AD, under the Roman rule (Başgömez,1989,p.9) (Fig.3.8). These depictions, made in the eclectic style of Egyptian-Greek-Roman art, were portraits of the deceased created while they were still alive and placed inside the coffins, representing the earliest forms of icon-like imagery. Using such images predate the Greco-Roman world. This representative role of imagery made the gathering of cults much easier as they aided in portraying a divine intercessor readily present on the worshipping site. This might have a direct impact on why imagery in Christianity did suffer from a strifle due to the Mosaic ban on images (Belting, 1990,p.7).



Figure 3. 8: Examples to Fayyum Portraits,c.50-250. [URL 15]

The purpose of setting strict rules in icon making is to protect the depictions' originality. There were specific councils that gathered to lay these rules in order to avoid arbitrary variations. The church has always been the sole authority directing the composition and the depiction. This actually means the artists' role would simply consist of creating the icons tangibly as directed and subsequent artists would only get involved in the act of copying the existing icons. But eventually it will be hard to keep a unity in the styles because not all artists have the same painting skills and there will arise inevitable variations. Honoring the mandatory concept of "*Acheiropoietos*" (not made by hands) results in a mechanical version which may possibly compel Yamashita Rin to forgo their artistic creativity to a certain degree.

But Yamashita showed great endurance to make that sacrifice and found a way to incorporate her own stylization, a manner which she also observed in the Western religious painting examples displayed in Russia, and chose to express herself in her icon productions in a beautifully composed and subdued way. This kind of

individuality may not serve the purpose of an icon but she had been an advocate for self-expression all along her art journey. That is why choosing a path in such strictly coded area of art might have hindered her very own potential to create more exclusive pieces of art in more versatile parts of the art sphere. She might also have seen this challenge as an obstacle to overcome and ended up yielding into it. Analyzing from her existing repertoire, the shifts in her artistic expressions at a larger extent is quite indicative that she could fulfill the potential of versatility had she gone down a different route other than her self-chosen religious painting category.

Icons are the most significant sacred objects housed in the churches. The new churches built in Istanbul after the Tanzimat period saw the need to meet the religious ritual needs of Ottoman citizens identifying with the Christian faith. As Christianity was under Ottoman protection not only confined to the physical borders of the capital city Konstantiniyye (now İstanbul), but allover the imperial borders, there were issued special edicts to accord extended privileges to monasteries in Mount Athos (Greece), Sinai Monastery (Egypt) and Sumela Monastery (Trabzon,Türkiye). An exhibition held in modern day Turkish capital city, Ankara's CER Modern Museum in September, 2021 reserved a special unit to feature how Mother Mary (Meryem Ana) was held in such high esteem in the Ottoman state mind. Inscriptions, along with symbolic icons of Mother Mary, in that unit informed the visitors that the first Ottoman ruler of Istanbul, Sultan Mehmed II, purportedly had his own day-and-night candlelit "*Virgin and The Child*" icon which was kept in his private chamber (Fig.3.9).

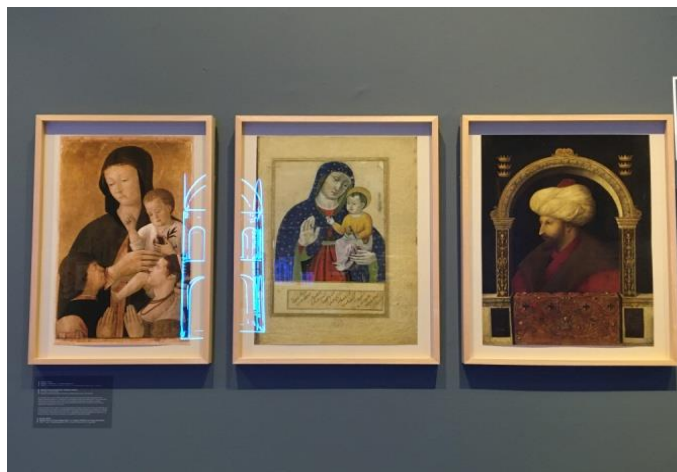


Figure 3. 9: The unit of the exhibition at Ankara CER Modern Museum reserved for featuring the narration of the Virgin and the Child icon purportedly held in the private chamber of Sultan Mehmed II (referred original icon is non-extant) [21 September 2021, photo taken by the author]

The sanctity of the icons is a manifestation of Christian doctrine. Evaluating icons in an artistic context became a subject of discussion in a more modern era. Within the dynamics of the time, the progress of women in art education paved the way for female artists who had trained at the academies of fine arts to create proficient works in the field of religious painting also. The depictions in icons are essentially a continuation of ancient cultural currents which places them in a unique position within the context of culture and art. While the color and composition techniques used in icons bring them closer to a purely artistic context, it is important to remember that these practices are deeply rooted in a mystical and symbolic background. Icons were regarded by Christian clergy as sacred elements that function as windows between the material and spiritual realms (Akkaya,2014, p.138). This belief has, for centuries, necessitated the adherence to various canonical practices in iconography. The term “*icon*” refers to painting, image or representation, and in this study, the focus is on icons used independently of wall contexts (Şarlak,2001,p.6). The flatness of an icon was seen as a negation of the focus on representing nature in the Classical world thus was interpreted as a testament to spirituality (Magruder,2014,p.174).

Icons, as a visual legacy that connects various medieval cultures through religious identity, have also been central elements in the interaction between the notion of civilization and the functionality of art. These artistic elements, which include both technical processes and aesthetic perspectives, often incorporate period-specific references. From an art historical standpoint, they have yet to fully achieve the desired recognition as they are currently only being confined to limited contexts under liturgical and mystical headings where they are reduced to the dominance of religious authority. In the Ottoman world, these works were not only preserved within the physical boundaries of religious institutions, palaces or the tombs of saints and religious martyrs, were also used in the homes and shops of Christian believers. Even today, the fact that these icons are found in museums in countries where Christianity is prevalent is a topic that remains open for further discussion and evaluation.

Russian Empire imported the traditional icon making technique from the Eastern Roman Empire world. It was called egg tempera technique where powdered egg yolk was mixed certain color earth pigments. Specific tree types were used to create the frame as well as the plank board wrapped with a certain type of linen cloth with a particular way of adhesion. This support board became relatively flat as of the 17th

century. The background got mostly covered with gold leaf but in Russian form it was not much used. Before drawing the outlines of the composition, the main lines were delineated with black paint forming a sketch, afterwards they were covered with a colored layer to make these outlines obscure. When the thin layers dried up, a drying oil varnishing was applied penetrating into underlying layers thus making the icon more durable.

The influence of Catholic realistic style icon painting on Russian icons dates back to 16th century. It increasingly became visible and more pronounced during the Westernization Era in Russia, in the 18th century, under the orders of Peter The Great. Icons mainly made by tempera technique applied on boards later evolved into oil painting on boards, and eventually into oil paintings on canvas in late 17th century (Kostotchkina,1994,p.116). The expressive style was not too emphasized initially, mostly shadings on figures' faces were being applied realistically. But gradually there was adopted a more academic version of expression. In 1880s, when Yamashita was studying in Russia, it was the onset of a period when Russia was trying to shift from imitating the Italian-inspired religious painting to Eastern Roman version which was viewed as the origin of the tradition.

Icons constitute an essential element of the church interior and play a functional role within liturgical practices. Icons are painted in prayer, with prayer, for prayer. Contrary to common misconception, they are not objects of worship themselves. They rather serve as conduits for prayer, guiding the faithful in their spiritual engagement. Icons also act as visual reminders of the sacred deeds attributed to the holy figures they portray. Historically, these images were not intended for public exhibition, which meant that only regular churchgoers would have been familiar with them. In the cultural context of Japan, where Christianity had limited reach, the likelihood of encountering icons was particularly low. Moreover, as sacred images, icons are intended to be faithful reproductions of established prototypes. This inherent requirement of replication often placed them outside the interest of modernist artists, who generally favored originality and innovation, even if the general public may have been aware of their existence.

Icons, until the late 19th century and even into the mid-20th century, did not receive much recognition as an artistic element across Europe. A similar situation prevailed in Orthodox Europe, where icons were seen primarily as sacred objects used in homes or

churches for worship. European museums did not show much interest when the Soviet government, after the October Revolution of 1917, put important icons from the Russian church on the market to generate revenue. This lack of interest was due to the canonical regulations, which led these museums to distinguish these icons from other artistic compositions they were familiar with since the Renaissance, considering them separate from what they defined as fine arts. The rise in interest toward icons coinciding with the growing fascination with Eastern Roman architecture, wall paintings and mosaics cannot be seen as a mere coincidence. By the 20th century, icons had evolved beyond being historical artifacts and began to be recognized as works of art, with European museums and collectors beginning to acquire them.

In the context of this study, the selected female artists have merged their production of sacred images with the cultural mission they carry. The selected Ottoman- Rûm artists were actually the conveyors of icon tradition in Istanbul that was performed throughout the ages in the very same city. They were the sustainers of a native visual heritage. While they represent the aspect of this mission passed down to them, the featured Japanese artist achieved this position through her own efforts, the patronage of the church in Japan and the education she received in Russia. Although the artists from both sides were not contemporaneous, their overlapping aspects have been examined and a comprehensive narrative has been attempted within the scope of this research. Assessing icon making as a form of art or not doctrinally belongs to the field of theology but since this study deals with the icon painting skills of women artists where they were deliberately limited to perform in, it becomes necessary to briefly touch on why women confronted a restriction in this field.

In a realm where women's devotion to sacred images was taken as a reflection of emotional vulnerability or theological inadequacy, implying a reliance on visual reassurance, men themselves engaged in religious expression through institutional roles such as clergy or monastic life. Not all women had access to or could pursue the monastic ideal. Opportunities for women for expressing religious devotion within the secular sphere were significantly constrained. As their daily lives often lacked institutional spiritual validation, many sought solace and a sense of divine approval through their close attachment to icons. Their daily lives being restricted to the confines to their houses, they most likely had to resort to icon devotion to appease their religious fervor (Herrin,1995,p.68). These sacred images offered a tangible connection

to the divine, serving as a vital spiritual anchor in an otherwise limited religious landscape. This all resulted in placing women largely outside of the scope of core affiliation within the church service which has always been a male-dominant field. But women were still involved at least indirectly in the creation of icons by their patronage (Cormack,1997,p.42). Women were, however, able to perform auxiliary activities especially in fields that were considered more suitable to them. There are also examples of silk or textile icons produced by women. But paintings traditional icons was a sensitive topic. Since the item itself is considered holy, those who are making it come to existence should be a purified being as well. The church teachings which substantially borrowed from existing sources like Old Testament were indicating an over exclusion of women. Even in modern times, nuns that are on their period are allowed to pray in the church however they cannot attend the Communion and they cannot kiss the icons. Early Christianity forbade women even from the altar part in the church (Gardner,1858,p.72). Women on their period are generally in many religions still might be deemed impure from a clerical standpoint, based on the idea that their presence may stain the purity of the holy sites. From the Old Testament, Leviticus 15: 19-33 suggests not only was the menstruating woman is deemed impure but any person coming into contact with her would become impure. Although this verse may refer to physicality only but this mentality naturally severs the inclusion of women contacting instruments used in the rituals in an environment where there is sought excuses to exclude them from the ecclesiastical scenes. The old writings often reflect the inferior status assigned to women, portraying them as subordinate not only in their intellectual capacity but also in their inherent nature (Chadwick, 2012,p.36). Women were traditionally considered to possess minds of a lesser order, which rendered them incapable of fully understanding or appreciating the spiritual privileges and religious aspirations that men were encouraged to pursue. This perception reinforced the gendered hierarchy within Jewish religious and social structures, presumably informing Early Christianity (Brittain and Carroll,1908,p.9).

In addressing the structural barriers to artistic and intellectual development, Nochlin (1971) emphasizes the central role of education and institutional frameworks. She asserts that the obstacles faced by women are not rooted in biology “*not in our stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles, or our empty internal spaces*” but rather in the limitations imposed by social institutions and systems of education. Nochlin’s critique

underscores the extent to which gendered disparities in artistic recognition and achievement are socially constructed rather than naturally determined. The making of an icon by women cannot be interpreted without touching on this aspect. The initial resistance for keeping the labor of making icons within the confines of male engagement has also its roots in this kind of institutionalized thinking.

As put forth, the debate around whether or not the icons are part of the art production or should they be regarded as forms of art is not expanded across this study since it is part of a greater theological discussion but the skills in icon making clearly does not recognize a gender separation as seen in the chosen examples in this thesis demonstrate. Hoping at least bringing these old aspects helps emphasizing that the selected artists' icon paintings should not be only appreciated by their artistic value but also representing a particular accomplishment attained by the women as their works of icons embellish the walls of many churches today both in Türkiye and Japan and function as a part of religious rituals. This outcome stands to sustain the legacy these women carried out by being bridges across periods in time and cultures.

Although these artists were not contemporaries, their overlapping artistic trajectories and cultural roles are analyzed collectively. A compilation of their contributions has been assembled to provide a cohesive narrative within the study. Selected female artists have emerged as cultural agents who integrate sacred image production with the formal art education they received. While Ottoman-Rûm women artists represent a continuation of a legacy passed down to them, the Japanese artist examined here achieved a similar role through her own efforts, supported by the Orthodox Church's presence in Japan and the training she received in Russia.



4. A JAPANESE ARTIST OF MANY WORLDS: RIN YAMASHITA

Rin Yamashita (1857-1939) (Fig.4.1) was born in the region now known as Kasama City, Ibaraki Prefecture of Japan, during the final years of the Edo Period. She was the eldest daughter of Shigetsune, a lower-ranking samurai family affiliated with the Kasama clan (Fig.4.2). She demonstrated an early recognition of her artistic abilities however the lack of qualified art instructors in her hometown compelled her to make the bold decision to leave home without parental consent and travel to Tokyo at the age of fifteen in pursuit of formal artistic training. Although her family initially intervened and brought her back, she eventually succeeded in convincing her parents to permit her return to Tokyo to continue her studies in the arts.



Figure 4. 1: Photo of Rin Yamashita (1859-1939), 1883. [URL 16]



Figure 4. 2: Rin Yamashita (1859-1939)(far right) and her family,1883.
[URL 17]

Her artistic education unfolded across four principal stages: initial training in the traditional Japanese painting; apprenticeship under Nakamaru Seijūrō (1840-1895), a famous “*Nanga*” (Chinese literati painting-inspired ink painting genre) artist who later switched to Western art. She received higher education at the Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō whose formal instruction was to teach Western art in Japan (Fig.4.3). And lastly she specialized study in icon painting in St. Petersburg, Russia under the sponsorship of Japanese Orthodox Church (Fig.4.4).

Yamashita’s initial artistic aspiration was to pursue the ukiyo-e tradition, a direction clearly reflected in the early stages of her development. “*Ukiyo-e*”, known as the art of the floating world depicted in colorful woodblock prints, was the popular art genre of Edo Period. Several ukiyo-e paintings preserved among her personal effects date from this formative period, offering valuable insight into her early engagement with subject genre. Her artistic trajectory holds a unique position in the history of Japanese art which culminated in her recognition as Japan’s first female iconographer. Although she underwent training in Western art at Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō, Japan’s first public art school founded in 1876, her professional path eventually diverged from Western artistic conventions. As one of only six women in the inaugural cohort of students at the institution, she is regarded as a pioneering figure among Japan’s earliest female art students. According to school records, Rin Yamashita was ranking 10th out of 26 students overall, making her the only female student with the top score (Uspensky,1995,p.38).

Despite her early support for the modern Japanese art movement, she ultimately dedicated herself to the practice of medieval icon painting. At the time of her application to *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*, she lacked the financial means to pay the tuition but still wished to take the entrance examination as a measure of her artistic abilities. Her exceptional performance on the exam resulted in her admission to the institution, with her tuition subsequently sponsored by Teiyasu Makino, a former feudal lord. This institution also opened up a new opportunity for Yamashita. Her classmate from *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*, Masako Okamura, who was later baptized as “Barbara”, was already connected to Japanese Orthodox Church as a convert to Christianity. Both Yamashita and Okamura were daughters of samurai families. Okamura received support from the Orthodox Church after she entered the church dormitory in Kanda Surugadai in Tokyo and with the help of Father Nicholas, she entered *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*. She later introduced Yamashita to the church clergy. Initially, Masako was nominated for receiving icon-making education in Russia because she had learnt icon painting techniques as well as lithography from Father Nicholas. However she had to drop out from school after she got married and started to run a lithography business with her husband. The offer then had been made to Yamashita Rin instead, she ended up getting the scholarship for icon painting education in a convent in St.Petersburg, Russia. Yamashita too eventually converted to Orthodox Christianity and received the baptismal name “Irina”. It was from this point that her deep commitment to sacred art began to take shape. Recognizing her exceptional artistic abilities, Father Nicholas arranged for her to pursue a formal training in iconography at The Novodevichy Monastery St. Petersburg, Russia (Uspensky,1995,p.46) (Fig.4.6). This marked Yamashita’s first departure from Japan. Her sea journey, which began on December 12th,1880, departed from the port of Yokohama and included stopovers in Izmir on January 24th,1881 and and Istanbul on January 26th,1881 (Zlatko,2019,p.15) (Fig.4.5). A study focusing on a specific icon created by a theology student in Russia as a gift for then-heir to the throne Nicholas II, notes that Yamashita Rin’s first experience to wear a Western-style clothing was during her time in the city of Izmir, a port city in Türkiye. The same study also records her visit to Istanbul, where she toured Hagia Sophia and produced a series of sketches based on her observations. Unfortunately on her way back to Japan, she lost one of her luggages where she stored many of her sketches and belongings.

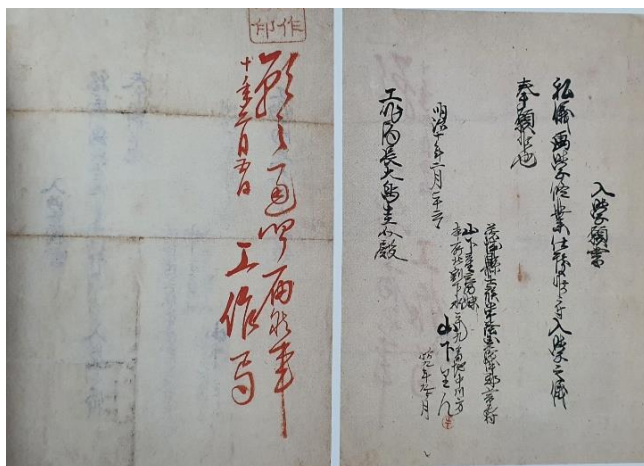


Figure 4. 3: Yamashita Rin's application for admission to Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō, 1877. (source: Hakodate Art Museum Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

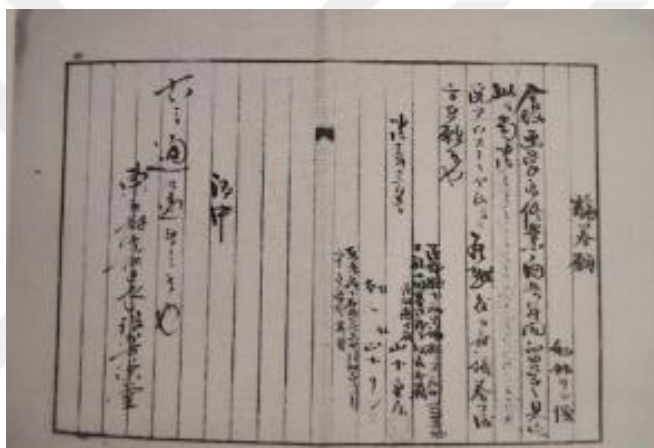


Figure 4. 4: Yamashita Rin's passport application request. (source: Hakodate Art Museum Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 5: Yamashita Rin's voyage route from Yokohama, Japan to St. Petersburg, Russia. [URL-18]



Figure 4. 6: Novodevichy Convent in St.Petersburg,Russia, date unknown. [URL-19]

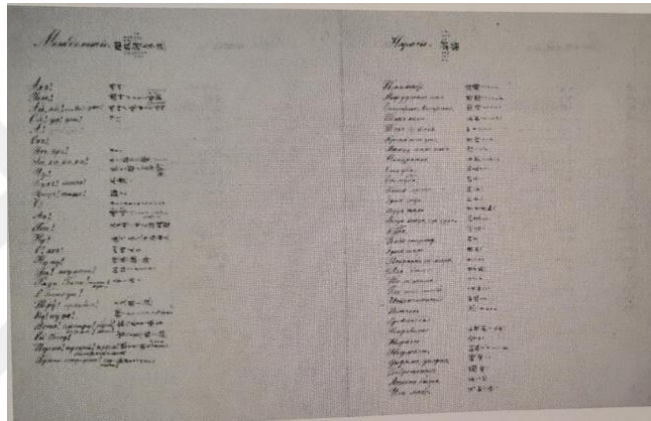


Figure 4. 7: Yamashita Rin's Russian language study paper. (source: Hakodate Art Museum Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era,1998)

Her journey from Japan to Russia took approximately three months, marking the beginning of a five-year period of intensive study in the heart of the Russian Orthodox tradition. Her life at the convent was not an easy period. She was studying to depict sacred paintings with nuns. Mr.Iordan, the head of the art institute, was quite impressed by Yamashita's painting skills and he decided to send her to The Hermitage Museum for making observations and practice copying as a part of the learning process. Yamashita in fact had a deep yearning for depicting Western painting where she could even develop her unique style of icon painting in a Westernized way. But that did not seem to be an option since she was surrounded with nuns who were rigidly following the traditional sacred paintings as a style. Yamashita's strong will in what she desired to do hindered her ability to accustom herself to the study culture around her. She started to have communication issues with her surroundings at the convent due to

language barriers (Fig.4.7). She was getting so homesick and to appease that she was wearing traditional Japanese kimono in the convent. Apart from intense stress, her physical health too deteriorated due to severe cold weather. She had to return to Japan after two years. For the following forty years, she continued painting sacred images at women's seminary where the second floor was reserved for accommodation and as studio (Hideo,1998,p.11). She returned to her hometown Kasama after she got cataracts. Until then, she met the interior needs of churches in the country by producing her uniquely styled religious icons, she also dealt with the restoration of icons located throughout the country.

Yamashita Rin demonstrated a high level of proficiency in both traditional and Western art forms. Despite the doctrinal dictation on replication as the copying canonical models was the norm for icon-making, she still managed to manifest her creative expression within the field of religious art. In addition to sustaining her own artistic practice, she also had trained students. Her copying skills were established under Fontanesi's tutelage and set her apart. The copies she made from the masters' works at Hermitage Museum were demonstrated her talent. Such skill set also immensely aided her in icon making as some of her icon paintings were superb copies. But most of them did reflect her fond attitude toward self-stylization.

Upon her arrival in St. Petersburg, Russia in the spring of 1881, Yamashita Rin took residence at the convent and during this period, the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts was under the directorship of Feodor Ivanovich Iordan from 1880 to 1883. He was a prominent figure in the Russian art world. Iordan was also recognized as a master of printmaking and engraving. He secured his professorship at the Academy through his acclaimed reproduction of Raphael's "*The Transfiguration*". Another of his well-known works is Egorov's "*The Flagellation of Christ*". These pieces were highly

valuable to Yamashita as she used them extensively as instructional materials during her artistic training and demonstrated her excellent copying skills (Fig.4.8).

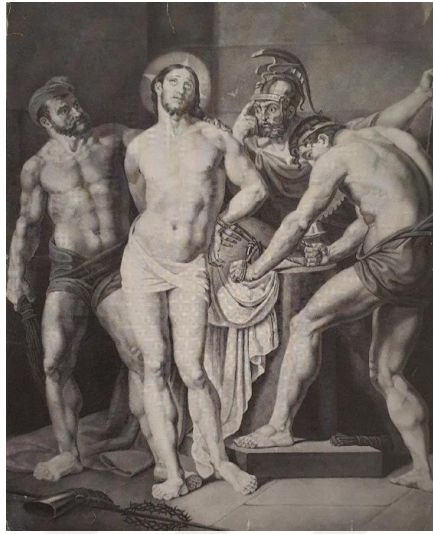


Figure 4. 8: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Flagellation of Christ*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 9: Alexey Egorov, *The Icon of The Flagellation of Christ*, 1814, oil on canvas, 250x207 cm, Russian Museum. [URL-20]

Jordan's tenure proved fortuitous for Yamashita, as he granted her permission to access the Hermitage Museum. This opportunity provided her with invaluable exposure to canonical works of Western and Russian art, significantly enriching her understanding of religious iconography and contributing to her artistic development during her stay. Getting granted the visits to Hermitage Museum was a remarkable chance for Yamashita Rin as she was being exposed to the best

works of Western art since the Renaissance, ranging from Raphael to Guido Reni. When she was visiting The Hermitage Museum under Jordan's guidance, Yamashita made three oil paintings: "*Painting of the Church*", "*Painting of the Virgin*", "*Painting of the Cross of the Christ* (Christ Carrying the Cross)".

Most of the icons Yamashita painted in Japan were based on examples brought from Russia. While in Russia, the artist had the opportunity to further develop her proficiency in Western art and she was instructed in the practice of icon painting directly by church personnel (Uspensky,1995,p.45). During her stay in St. Petersburg, she visited various local churches and became acquainted with the works of great masters through her observations at The Hermitage Museum. However, she found it difficult to embrace the traditional iconographic style which she encountered with in monastic settings. She found them overly schematic. Influenced by her academic training in Italian art, the artist attempted to render her icon-making in a more painterly fashion, a pursuit that was met with resistance at the convent. There, she was having difficulty getting along with two leading nuns, Feofania and Apollonia.

During her visits to the Hermitage Museum, Yamashita's eagerness for copying from Western European paintings drew criticism. According to the monastery authorities, these activities disrupted her focus on her primary area of training which was the traditional icon painting. As a result, she was banned from further museum visits. This tension between the Western influences in her icon production and the traditional icon painting practices could have played a significant role in shaping her artistic journey where she challenged the boundaries between tradition and innovation.

As she also mentions in her diary, Yamashita Rin was quick to detect a contrasting style between the icons and the Western religious paintings, especially comparing the icon paintings performed at the convent to Italian-inspired versions at the museum and she was aware of the discontent at the convent triggered by her propensity towards the Italian style (Michitaka,2014,p.64). Late 19th century saw the rising of Russian Nationalism which tended to opt for church-style religious paintings since the Italian-style religious paintings became out of favor for being deemed as bourgeois possessions. During the rule of subsequent emperors, for example Emperor

Nicholas (1796-1825), known to hold a strong sway in arts-related affairs, was a fan of The Bolognese School therefore prioritized Russian Romanticism in his taste of religious paintings. As an example from The Bolognese School, Yamashita Rin copied (Fig.4.10) Guido Reni's "*The Penitence of Peter*" (Fig.4.11). As for a reference to Russian Romanticism, a copy of Fedor Antonovich Bruni's "*Prayer of the Counts (Christ of Gethsemane)*" (Fig.4.14) which was one of his masterpieces copied by Yamashita Rin when it was brought to Japan (Fig.4.12, Fig.4.13). As of late 18th century, with the impact of an onset of the Westernized mindset of the era, not only profane, non-religious works of art field was receptive to individualistic styles and imagination skills but also were the icons were allowed to reflect the same based on the theme they depicted. Depictions of Christ and saints done by the Bolognese School, for example Raphael's "*Madonna*" and pieces from Guido Reni, were welcomed as icons. Yamashita's icon making places her in a unique position since she also proved her superb copying skills which she presumably owed to her tutor Antonio Fontanesi. She has demonstrated excellent copying talent as seen in the famous themed icon "*Christ in Gethsemane*" and it is easy to detect a slight animateness added to the composition by her color preferences and use of light effect compared to the very original reference by Bruni.

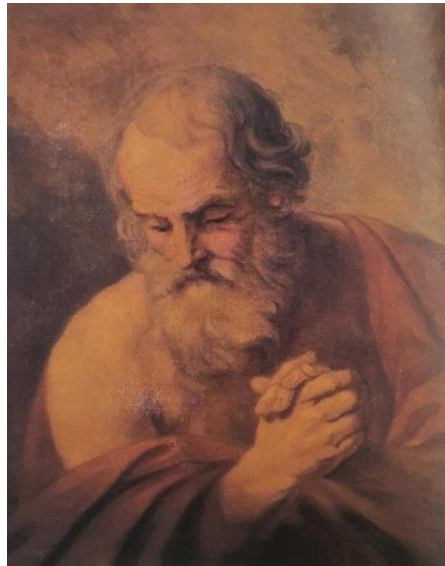


Figure 4. 10: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Penitence of St.Peter*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era,1998)



Figure 4. 11: Guido Reni, Icon of Penitence of St.Peter, 1635, oil on canvas, 73x56 cm, Hermitage Museum. [URL-21]



Figure 4. 12: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Christ in Gethsemane*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 13: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Christ in Gethsemane*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 14: Fyodor Bruni, *Icon of Christ in Gethsemane (Agony in the Garden)*, 1834-36, oil on canvas, 71x54 cm, Hermitage Museum. [URL-22]

Although Yamashita progressed by copying Western and Russian works, she could not refrain from incorporating elements of originality. For instance, she would often simplify the facial features of figures, adapt them to the physiognomy of her own region or reduce the spatial depth of compositions. These choices may have stemmed from her familiarity with “*ukiyo-e*”, the Japanese woodblock print aesthetics. Her preference for lighter, more pastel

tones as well as her expressive use of light and emphasis on white aligns with her desire to connect with Japanese Impressionism. Her color choices were closely tied to this intended connection. Ultimately, Western Impressionism had also been influenced by traditional Japanese arts, particularly the “*ukiyo-e*” prints, and the fusion of these two styles was most effectively represented in *yōga* paintings, a field in which she was already experienced. Due to the trust placed in Yamashita's proficiency by Father Nicholas, she might have been granted some flexibility in terms of stylization. However, despite this, she was still working within constraints that limited her freedom, as icon creation required adherence to specific protocols. According to her, there were two styles in icon painting: the Italian style and the traditional church style. The first style represented the Western style supported by the Russian imperial court and aristocracy while the second style rather represented a more traditional aspect rooted in the Eastern Roman Empire. The second style was also motivated by the national sentiment which had gained prominence during the later years of the Russian royal family, especially after the tensions with the Ottoman Empire. The icons in the style of Eastern Roman painting were the icons that were favored and revived in the imperial court at an era when nationalism was on the rise due to The Ottoman-Russian War.

The second half of the 19th century especially marked a more complex period in Russian icon painting. What had once been an individual process was now a collaborative effort, produced in workshops by a select few artists, while remaining faithful to the Russian traditional style. On the other hand, there was an undeniable influence of the Western European style on Russian art since the second half of the 17th century (Kostotchkina,1994,p.14). This influence had spread not only to secular art but also to religious-themed artworks, making it apparent in iconography. As a result, elements like light and shadow as well as linear perspective, which were characteristic of Baroque painting, began to appear in icon art. The Russian royal family, with its Western-influenced tastes, championed this approach to religious art, much to the dismay of the church, which was not particularly fond of these new stylistic shifts. This period thus marks a significant moment in the evolution of Russian icon painting, where the tension between tradition and Western influence came to the forefront. The royal family's support of the Western style in religious paintings presented a challenge

to the established norms of iconography, reflecting broader socio-political changes. As of 1880, with the rising nationalism, traditional Russian icon styles, hailing from the Eastern Roman period, made a comeback. They gradually replaced the icons of the Renaissance-styled Italian painting. Yamashita's arrival to Russia was within this period. Yamashita also held a dislike for the traditionally-inspired church versions. She noted in her diary during her stay in St.Petersburg regarding the critique she confronted from the nuns in the monastery: *"Today I heard many discussions about icons. It seems that they dislike Italian painting. It is very sad to notice that they like Byzantine paintings which is ghost painting"* (Michitaka, 2014, p.64).

In fact, the opportunity for Yamashita to observe firsthand examples of religious artworks inspired by the Renaissance and Baroque movements from Western art, both in the icons sent from Russia to Japan and in the paintings she directly encountered in Russia, all reinforced her success in copying. This exposure provided a crucial opportunity for her to refine her skills. Upon her return to her homeland, Japan, the artist completed her famous work *"The Resurrection of Christ"* for then-heir Tsar Nicholas II, a monumental piece that is still regarded as one of her finest works. The design of it originally belongs to V.S.Kryukov, who was not a widely recognized artist but a graduate from St.Petersburg Academy of Fine Arts (Uspensky, 1995, p.47) (Fig.4.17). One of the distinctive aspects of this icon was that it was created using both oil on canvas and the *"maki-e"* technique (Fig.4.16), a Japanese lacquer decoration technique, done by makie-shi Takai Yasuji, for the frame which made it a unique piece in its genre (Uspensky, 1995, p.48). The script on the back side reads (Zlatko, 2019, p.18) :

"Его Императорскому Высочеству, Наследнику Российского Императорского Престола, Государю Цесаревичу и Великому Князю Николаю Александровичу, почтительнейшее приношение Японской Православной Церкви, в знак усерднейшей ея молитвы, о здравии и благоденствии его /6 Мая, 1891 года, Токио 露西亞国寶位ノ皇儲明ノ主 重熙ノ王タル大候ニコライアレキサンド"

ロワイチ殿下ノ剛健仁壽ヲ祈願スルノ誠ヲ表スルカ為メ日本正教會敬テ 之ヲ獻

ス基督降生一千八百九十一年日本明治二十四年五月十八日 /

(To His Imperial Highness, Heir to the Russian Imperial Throne, Tsarevich and Grand Duke Nikolai Alexandrovich, a most venerable offering from the Japanese Orthodox Church, as a sign of an eager prayers, for his health and prosperity. 6 (19 NS) May, 1891, Tokyo)”



Figure 4. 15: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Resurrection of Christ* gifted to then-heir Tsar Nicholas II, Oil on Canvas and frame worked in Makie, 32x26x4x2.6 cm., Hermitage, St. Petersburg, 1891. [URL-23]



Figure 4. 16: Yamashita Rin, *Maki-e* made frame and multilingual back side of the icon of Resurrection of Christ gifted to then-heir Tsar Nicholas II, 1891. [URL-24]

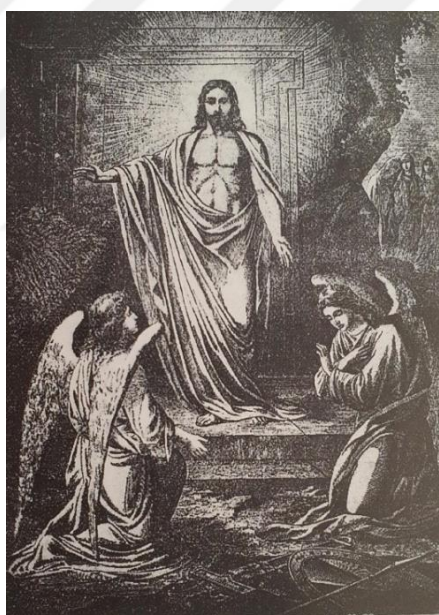


Figure 4. 17: Kryukov's original illustration, "*Illustration Christian Orthodoxy*", published in 1902. [URL-25]

This work demonstrated a remarkable fusion of Western compositional techniques with the teachings and symbolism of the East. The artist skillfully applied the orderly light distribution and clarity of figures, elements borrowed from Renaissance art (Fig.4.18), to create a piece that transcended the boundaries of the Western and Eastern traditions. This blending of traditions not only highlighted her mastery in the crafts but also marked a significant moment in the

evolution of iconography, where the influence of both Western and Eastern artistic legacies came together in a harmonious expression of religious and artistic significance. This icon was of focal point at the exhibition held in Vladivostok, Russia in 2016 in honor of Yamashita Rin (Fig.4.19).



Figure 36 Kryukov's Resurrection detail



Figure 17 Yamashita's Resurrection Detail

Figure 4. 18: Comparison of Kryukov's and Yamashita Rin's Icon of Resurrection of Christ. [URL-26]



Figure 4. 19: The Russian State Duma Speaker Sergey Naryshkin viewing the icon of Resurrection of Christ made by Yamashita Rin at an exhibition held in Vladivostok, Russia, 2016. [URL-27]

Yamashita's had a diary mentioning of the themes of her works. For example one line was reading: *"This day I will be painting another oil painting of the Virgin Mary (March 23,1882)"*. Her depiction of the icon of *"The Virgin and the Child"* (Fig.4.20, Fig.4.21, Fig.4.22), demonstrating her technical proficiency in reproduction, incorporates the chief elements of Renaissance-style painting like the anatomic accuracy, realism, well-balanced figure composition, equally dispersed use of light, the clear and expressive effect in the facial and hand gesture as well as the posture, delicate details of the drapes like in real life distinction and the naturalistic tendency preferred in the background where the light is originally employed as a holiness effect is rather blended with a touch of nature.



Figure 4. 20: Yamashita Rin , *The Icon of The Virgin and the Child*, pre-1939 (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era,1998)



Figure 4. 21: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of the icon of The Virgin and the Child*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 22: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of The Virgin and the Child*, interior of Holy Resurrection Orthodox church of Hakodate, Hokkaido, Japan, pre-1939. [URL-28]

Yamashita Rin became familiar with the story of the “*Icon of the Mother of God Kozelschina*” (Fig.4.23-Fig.4.24) during her time in St. Petersburg. As the narrative goes, the daughter of a local count from the Kapnist family was afflicted with a severe spinal condition and was miraculously healed through the

intervention of this icon, which had been gifted to the family and kept on their estate. Following several similar healings, a hospital for individuals with paralysis was established in the region under the supervision of nuns. The icon was later installed in a chapel for public veneration, and the site eventually expanded to include both a church and a convent for women (Khliupin and Osychenko,2024,p.12). Yamashita’s reproduction from the Russian litograph (Fig.4.25) example appears as if she gave life to the depiction through her combination of naturalistic and realistic stylization with the use of light,colors and gestures. This icon alludes to the assertion that toponyms of this sort on icons compose a sense of kinship for the spaces creating a spatial linking (Carr,2021,p.236).

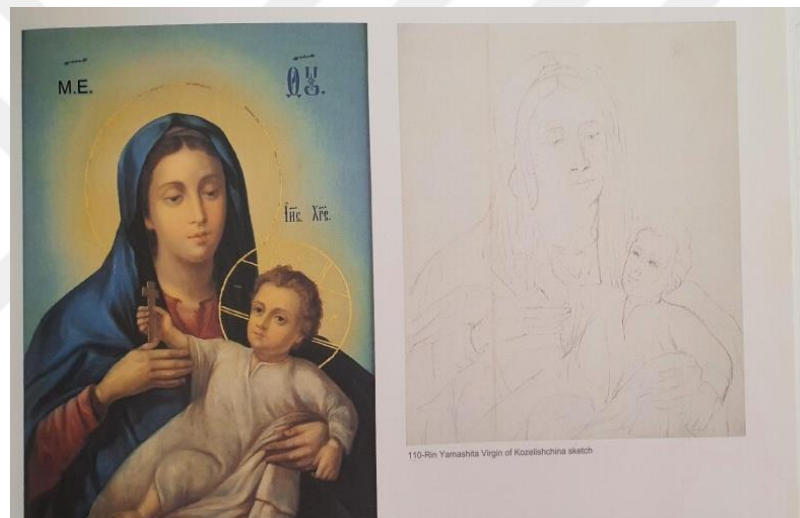


Figure 4. 23: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Kozelschina Mother of God*, Yanaihara Orthodox Church, Okayama Prefecture, Japan, 1896. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era,1998)

Figure 4. 24: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Kozelschina Mother of God*, Yanaihara Orthodox Church, Okayama Prefecture, Japan, 1896. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 25: Russian lithograph Icon, *Kozelschina Mother of God*, Hakurinkyo, Kasama, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan, after 1891. [URL-29]

Regardless of how Yamashita Rin perceived the traditional style in Russia, she still created the copies of the icons in accordance with the stipulations. Russian icons made as oil paintings and as lithographs were also brought to Japan to be used in the churches. Sketches of these remain in Yamashita's belongings where it is detected that she used trace paper transferring the design where she pierced small holes and rubbed the pigment along the outline while creating the icons. Also, among her belongings, she had Russian reference sources with illustrations of holy figures and sacred compositions (Fig.4.26, Fig.4.27) as well as visual references directly obtained from Europe (Fig.4.28) where she may have drawn her individualized inspirations when she chose to render her paintings toward the Western style.

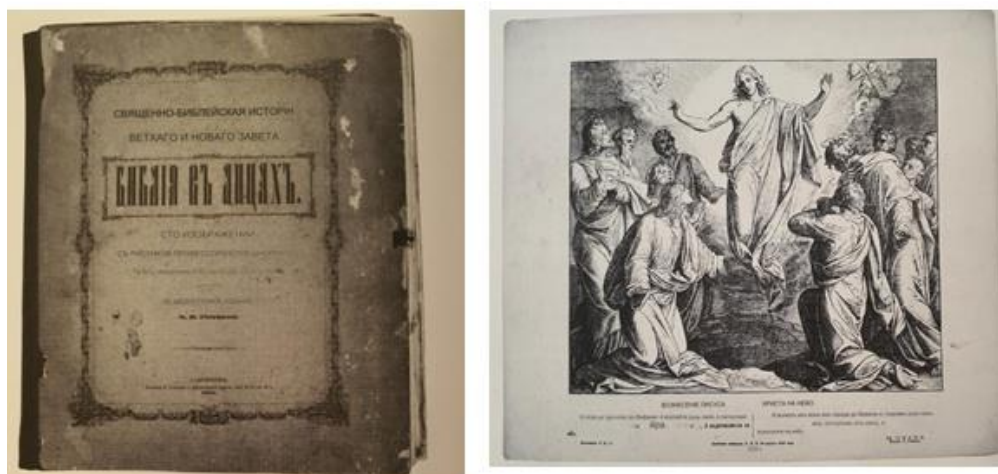


Figure 4. 26: Schnoll – Russian Original Illustration: Old Testament and New Testament Stories-1, formerly owned by Yamashita Rin. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

Figure 4. 27: Schnoll – Russian Original Illustration: Old Testament and New Testament Stories-2, formerly owned by Yamashita Rin. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 28: Photo of Madonna di San Sisto, formerly owned by Yamashita Rin. (source: Hakodate Art Museum Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

The icon of “*Vladimir Mother of God/ The Virgin of Tenderness/The Virgin Eleousa*” (Fig.4.22) and the icon of “*The Mother of God of Smolensk/ Mother of God Hodegetria of Smolensk*” (Fig.4.24) are two famously venerable icons of Virgin Mary dated to the

Eastern Roman era, associated with Istanbul which served two world empires as a capital city. Yamashita rigidly followed the originals while designing them yet she made her copies in a way that demonstrates tinges of Italian paintings with the help of oil brush strokes. These two examples can be counted as her works that oscillate between being exact replicas and being close to Renaissance era oil paintings. It is actually what sets apart Yamashita's works because they cannot be categorized as to form a unified version when it comes to icon painting (Michitaka,2014,p.67). When the icon of "*Vladimir Mother of God/ The Virgin of Tenderness/The Virgin Eleousa*" is contrasted with its Russian counterpart (Fig.4.30), it is easily detectable in Yamashita's work that the use of light and gestures in a naturalistic tone can radiate a captivating vibe without disturbing the identical composition.

The icon of "*Vladimir Mother of God/ The Virgin of Tenderness/The Virgin Eleousa*" represents, thematically and technically, the first depiction within this context to emphasize a compassionate portrayal. In this work, the artist adopted a stylistic approach more closely aligned with the Eastern Roman tradition, preserving a sense of spiritual intensity in the figures' gazes, a quality that sets it apart from her otherwise Western-leaning aesthetic. At the same time, she sought to introduce a naturalistic and relaxed visual treatment in the depiction. The original icon is housed in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow and is historically associated with a 12th century dynastic marriage between the Komnenos family of the Eastern Roman Empire and the ruling house of Kievan Rus. This reproduction is the only icon among Yamashita's works to bear her signature (Fig.4.29). According to accounts from Rin's family members, it was also used in her private devotional practice at home (Michitaka,2014,p.60).



Figure 4. 29: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Vladimir Mother of God*, oil painting, 15.1x12.1 cm, Hakurinkyo, Kasama, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan, 1901. [URL-30]



Figure 4. 30: Russian Icon, *Icon of Vladimir Mother of God*, Okutama Orthodox Church, Iwate Prefecture, Japan, 19th century. [URL-31]

Smolensk, a city near the border of Belarus, lends its name to the “*The Mother of God of Smolensk*” icon, which was believed to have protected the city from the invasions of Batu Khan. The Hodegetria motif, in particular, has been associated with multiple narratives: one legend claims that the icon guided the blind, another recounts its use as a talisman by Eastern Roman emperors during military campaigns, while another describes that sailors were praying before that icon in churches near the coast to avoid losing their way at sea. According to historical accounts, the Eastern Roman emperor Constantine IX Monomachos blessed his daughter Anna with this icon upon her

marriage to a Russian prince named Vsevolod Yaroslavich of Chernigov. It was later inherited by their son, Vladimir Monomakh, who deemed it fitting to enshrine the icon in the Cathedral of Smolensk in 1097 (Convent Catalogue,2025). Rin’s depiction of “*The Mother of God of Smolensk/ Mother of God Hodegetria of Smolensk*” (Fig.4.31) bears a slight inanimateness in the looks and gestures which draws it to the traditional style however it is still identifiable that the bright colors and the fine depiction of drapes along with the naturalistic application of the view on the background where the solid religious references are disrupted rightfully puts the composition within her individual stylization.



Figure 4. 31: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Mother of God Hodegetria of Smolensk*,1911.
[URL-32]

Yamashita Rin had a tendency to disassociate herself with the traditional icon style that drew its roots from the Eastern Roman Empire. She was taught and trained by the European artist Antonio Fontanesi, the instructor at *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō* teaching Western-style painting. Rin’s preference toward favoring the Italian-style religious painting was relatively understandable because she was primarily exposed to produce through the lens of Western realism where her traditionally and culturally aspired animistic sensibility found a conducive ground. The representation she was tasked to depict was unfamiliar to her, given the non-optimal proportions and poor perspective details. But she had to come to terms with the idea behind this traditional way of icon making. Because there, aesthetic value was not of primary concern, rather what meant to be emphasized was to portray a content and convey a message using pictorial

expression. When compared to a Renaissance painter Granacci's work (Fig.4.33) featuring a sacred theme, the same featuring can be seen in Yamashita's style with a very successful rendition with the compositional fitting and usage of a graded technique in the background adding depth to the linear perspective with a touch of sfumato in the foreground (Fig.4.32).



Figure 4. 32: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Virgin Mary, John The Baptist and Child Jesus*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 33: The Madonna and Child with the Infant John the Baptist, Francesco Granacci , 82x76 cm, 16th century. [URL-33]

Her talented use of color combination enhances the depiction with a Baroque touch while keeping the entirety more in the favor of Renaissance style. Overall, regardless of compositions with singular or double or multiple figures, Yamashita had a rigid adherence to follow the compositional order of Renaissance with the harmonious use of the layout where figures are distributed on the picture plane in a centered balance without tampering with the anatomical accuracy (Fig.4.34- Fig.4.41).



Figure 4. 34: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Theotokos*, Shirakawa Orthodox Church, Japan, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 35: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Resurrection of Christ-1*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 36: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Resurrection of Christ-2*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 37: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Holy Trinity*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 38: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Holy Trinity-1*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 39: Icon of Holy Trinity, formerly owned by Yamashita Rin, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 40: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Holy Trinity-2*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 41: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Holy Theotokos and Child Jesus*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

Given examples (Fig.4.42-Fig.4.49) display the diligent work on the finest details including the clothing drapes in both sketches and the colorless versions with an emphasis on the sharp contours, reflecting the symbolic narration by the gestures and mimicks and by placing the light in its rightful context.



Figure 4. 42: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Christ Savior of the World*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 43: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Gospel of the Theotokos*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 44: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Gospel of the Theotokos*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 45: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Michael the Archangel-1*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 46: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Michael the Archangel-2*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 47: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Michael the Archangel-2*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 48: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Crucifixion-1*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 49: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Crucifixion-2*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

Juxtaposition of figures with contrasting postures add depth to the composition which showcases a tendency toward Baroque. The firm straight frontal posture portrays the insistence toward Renaissance style and creates a more conducive picture plane to emphasize the spirituality of the features figures with their facial expressions as well as their ability to impose through the eye contact (Fig.4.50, Fig.4.51).



Figure 4. 50: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of St. Peter and St. Joseph-1*, 1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 51: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of St. Peter and St. Joseph-2*, pre-1939 (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

Yamashita shows great talent in keeping the unity of the theme in crowded compositions, be it either Baroque-style where she used the power of light to put on accent the main character or distributing the light effect evenly in accordance with the Renaissance-style. She used the body size of the important figures by placing them in the fore front (Fig.4.52).



Figure 4. 52: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Coronation of Mary*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

Yamashita Rin chose a path that diverged from the dominant trends of her time, dedicating herself to devotional painting instead. Her commitment to religious art in Japan coincided with a period of significant transformation in art education. She was neither born into a house where painting was being practiced professionally nor was she able to live and receive education in Italy where the fundamental elements of Renaissance and Baroque paintings originated. Yet she managed applying naturalism in icons as the core motive and successfully using the light effects. Rin used sfumato competently where she adjusted it to varying degrees that placed her icon paintings somewhere between Renaissance-inspired and Baroque-inspired styles keeping the foundational elements of both techniques. The former tendency seem to be more favoured in crowded compositions where figures are located in an orderly setting with a balanced dispersion while there is applied extensive blurs in transition from light colors to more predominant dark colors (Fig.4.53, Fig.4.54, Fig.4.55, Fig.4.56). This preference is especially more emphasized in her “*Last Supper*” depictions. The examples in this regards within this study does not indicate any depiction of her “*Last Supper*” compositions that had a small landscape view in the back like in the Semiradzski’s although she was familiar with his works of art (Fig.4.54). Yamashita’s Baroque-style inspired icon paintings accomplishedly carry the qualities such as expressive looks, high motions, chiaroscuro techniques where dark and light colors are combined in stark positions, appropriate angling of light to lay the emphasis on the main character or characters, heavy use of moving body gestures, contrasting movements, deep colors, emotions and exuberance, coalescence of drama and

dynamism gathered together more like in a frame of a theatrical setting (Fig.4.56- Fig.4.60).



Figure 4. 53: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Last Supper-1*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 54: Henry Semiradzski, *The Last Supper*, oil painting, The Sate Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, date unknown. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 55: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Last Supper-2*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 56: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of Icon of Last Supper*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

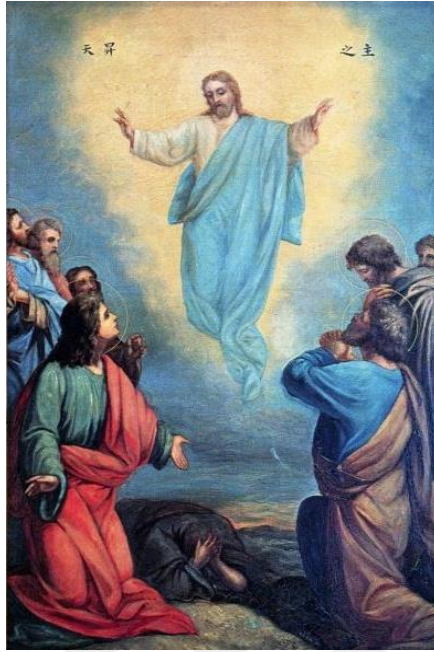


Figure 4. 57: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of the Ascension of the Lord-2*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

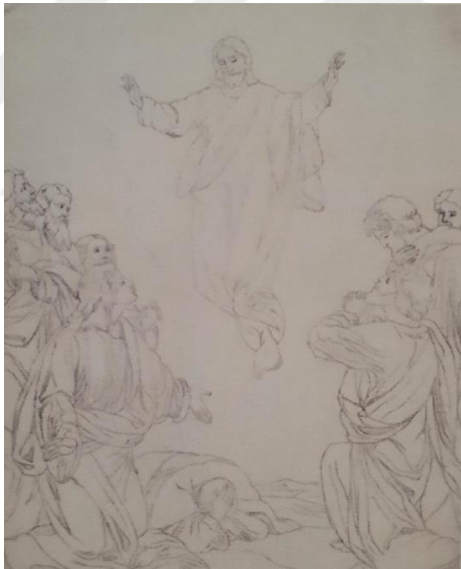


Figure 4. 58: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of Icon of the Ascension of the Lord-2*, Yamashita Rin, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 59: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of the Assumption of Mary*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

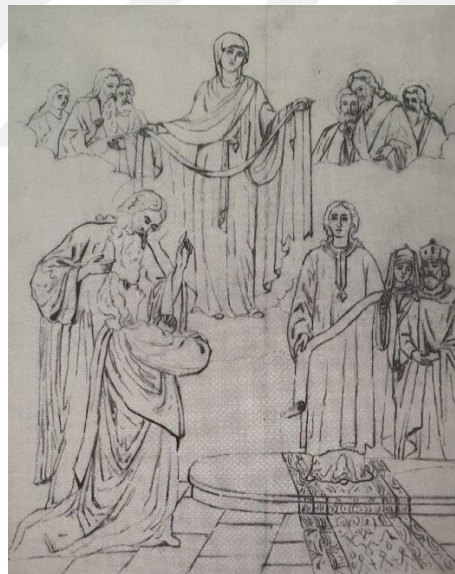


Figure 4. 60: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of Icon of the Assumption of Mary*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

Yamashita Rin was delicately taught portraiture by his tutor Antonio Fontanesi who was a renowned portrait painter. She could effectively portray a sacred figure in blends where she combines Baroque-inspired and Renaissance-inspired depictions and light effects by either using bodily gesture, like a hand-clasp, a Biblical-style beard and mustache even without making the eye contact or by using the same technique, this

time with a hand gesture symbolizing trinity, with a clarity on the face but slightly averting to make an eye contact to enhance the spirituality in a different version (Fig.4.61, Fig.4.62).

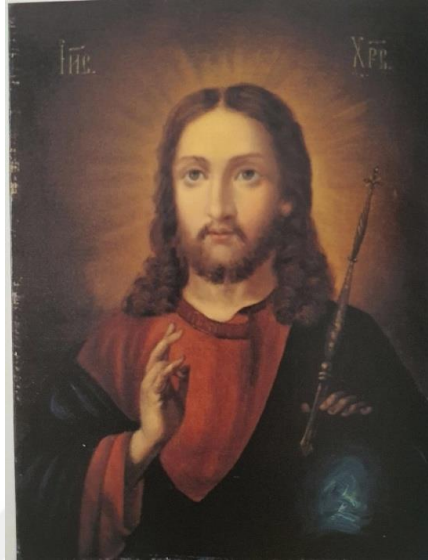


Figure 4. 61: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Christ the Savior*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

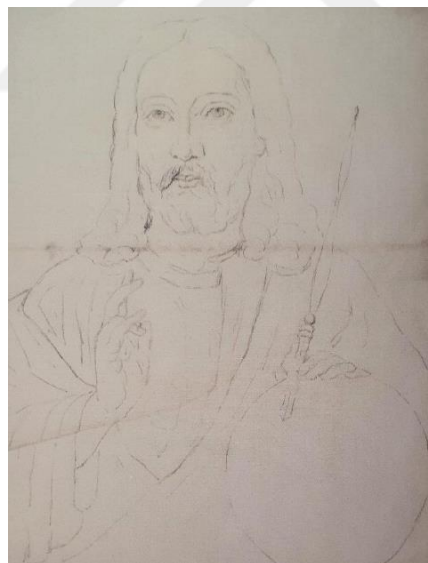


Figure 4. 62: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Christ the Savior*, pre-1939 (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

Yamashita made icon paintings where she demonstrated her skills in depicting the flyaway figures in such soft blend where she used a fine balance of colors in a toning way in order to create a calming effect (Fig.4.63). The circular motions and the body

gesture borrow from Baroque style yet the composition manages to radiate a sense of serenity. The same flyaway depiction can also be observed in her icon making where it does not overturn the stillness of the composition when the picture plane is divided into multiple sections with mobile and immobile figures featured together in groups (Fig.4.64).



Figure 4. 63: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Ascension*, Obihiro Orthodox Church, Hokkaido Prefecture, Japan, 1911. [URL-34]



Figure 4. 64: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Adoration of the Christ Child*, Hokuroku Orthodox Church, Akita, Japan, pre-1939. [URL-35]

Yamashita used strong light effects in her icon paintings to illuminate the main figures. This enabled her to enhance the drama of the sacred themes and increased the three-dimensionality when combined with the bodily motions and still figures (Fig.4.65- Fig.4.76). The related sketches show how delicately she applied the contours and the finest details not only on the figures but also on the interior parts of the indoor places.



Figure 4. 65: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Birth of Holy Theotokos*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 66: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Birth of Holy Theotokos*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 67: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Dormition of the Theotokos*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 68: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Dormition of the Theotokos*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

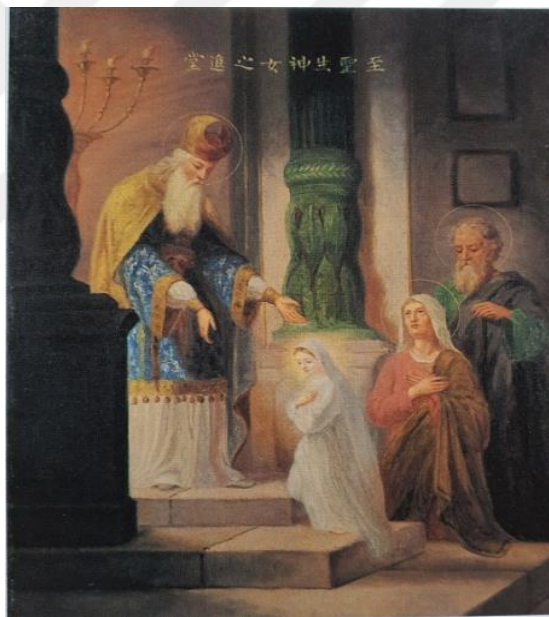


Figure 4. 69: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Presentation of Mary*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

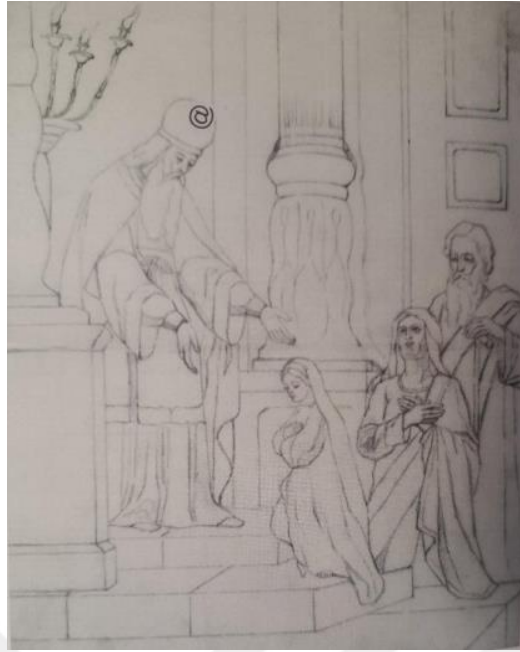


Figure 4. 70: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Presentation of Mary*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

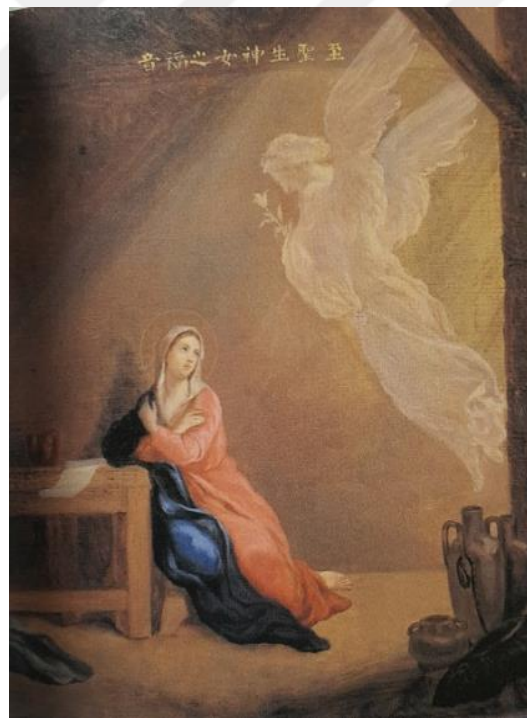


Figure 4. 71: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Annunciation*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 72: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Annunciation*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 73: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Nativity of Christ*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 74: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Nativity of Christ*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

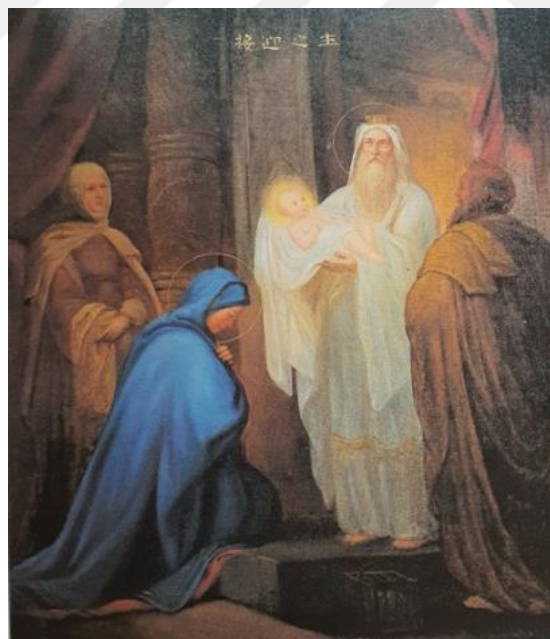


Figure 4. 75: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Presentation of Jesus*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 76: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of Icon of Presentation of Jesus*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era,1998)

Yamashita's ability to create a sense movement in a still composition can even be observed in colorless sketches but the way she applies the color flow in such an orderly way shifts the stylization to her distinct way of blending the Baroque style with Renaissance style (Fig.4.77- Fig.4.80)

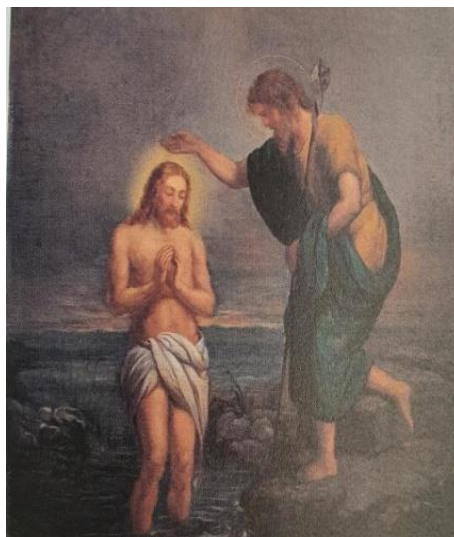


Figure 4. 77: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Baptism of the Lord*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era,1998)

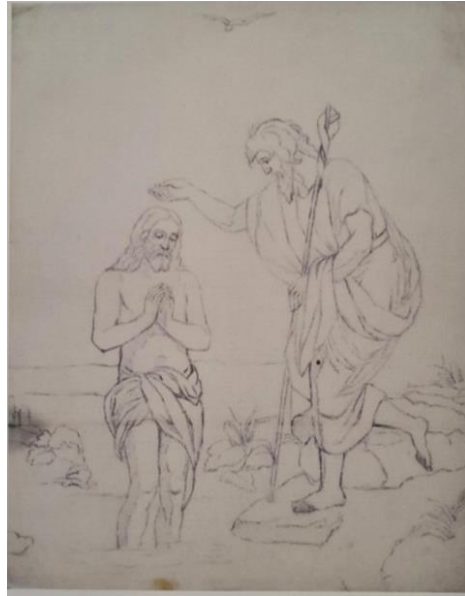


Figure 4. 78: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Baptism of the Lord*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era,1998)

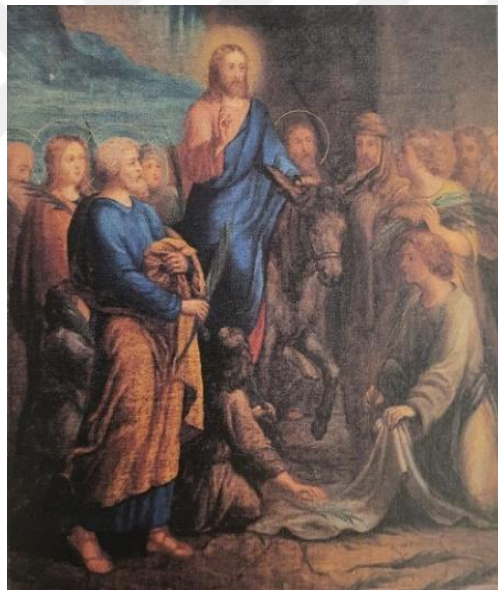


Figure 4. 79: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era,1998)



Figure 4. 80: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch of icon of Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

Her Baroque-style depiction skills provided with her the best occasion to bring together elements from different stylization which enhanced her distinction in this genre. When a relevant sketch in this regard compared to its colored version, it is easy to detect her masterful approach in color selection where she can embeds a magnetic into the composition drawing the eye into the focal point while absorbing the entirety at the same time (Fig.4.81, Fig.4.82).

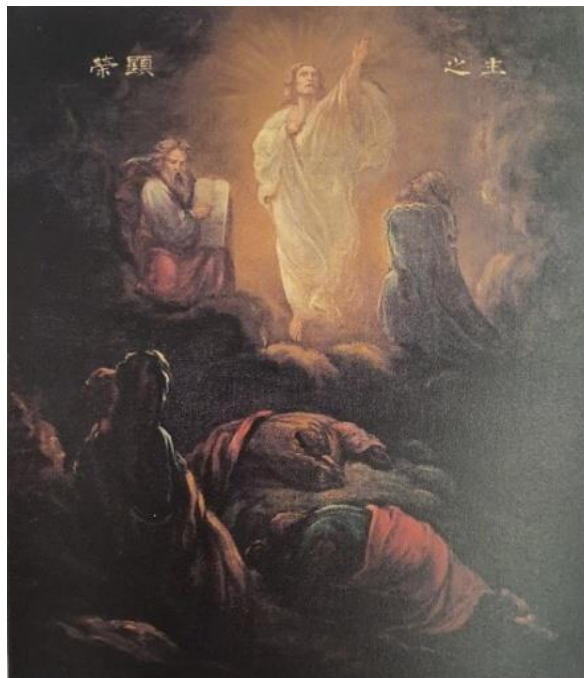


Figure 4. 81: Yamashita Rin, *Icon of the Ascension of the Lord*, pre-1939 (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 82: Yamashita Rin, *The draft sketch Icon of the Ascension of the Lord*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

Yamashita Rin made religious paintings where the impacts of Japanese traditional arts are highly visible. These traditional elements are masterfully incorporated into sacred depictions making them unique examples where a blend of Baroque, Ukiyo-e and Nanga-style come together in a water color in high motion (Fig.4.83) or a blend of Renaissance composition, Ukiyo-e and Nanga-style composed in water color in deep equanimity (Fig.4.84), both portraying the conventional Biblical themes with choices of vibrant colors locked in sharp contours.



Figure 4. 83: Yamashita Rin, *A blend of Baroque, Ukiyo-e and Nanga-style inspired water color, icon depiction of Solomon's Judgement*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 84: Yamashita Rin, *A blend of Renaissance composition, Ukiyo-e and Nanga-style inspired water color, icon depiction of Presentation of Jesus*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

Rin's ukiyo-e inspired religious depictions (Fig.4.85, Fig.4.86) appear as woodblock paintings that features deep contours to enhance the floating motions in depictions of figures, elements of nature, details of clothes capturing motility and dynamism in religious paintings, a style that technically runs counter to the ecclesiastical protocols. Her religious depictions resembling to engraving works (Fig.4.85) evoke the influence from her chief tutor in Russia, Prof. Ioardan who was renowned for his engraving skills.



Figure 4. 85: Yamashita Rin, *Ukiyo-e and engraving inspired icon depiction of Christ pulling St.Peter out of the Lake Galilee*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)



Figure 4. 86: Yamashita Rin, *Ukiyo-e inspired icon depiction of Sermon on the Mount*, pre-1939. (source: Hakodate Museum of Art Exhibition Catalogue: Yamashita Rin and Her Era, 1998)

She stuck to a specific genre such as sacred art painting. It would not be an overstatement to suggest that her steadfast commitment to a specific genre profoundly shaped the course of her later life. In addition to creating original works, she was also entrusted with the restoration of icons across the country, a responsibility she carried out with exceptional diligence. While such a role may have limited her engagement

with other genres, it did not prevent her from assimilating broader influences that had impacted Japanese painting during her time. Remarkably, she succeeded in integrating these stylistic elements into a religious art framework, thereby realizing her multifaceted potential in a manner that was both innovative and unparalleled.

Rin's icons are currently housed in many churches across Japan (Fig.4.87). There is also a museum, Hakurinkyo in Kasama, dedicated to her works (Fig.4.88-Fig.4.89). Every location that houses her works of art serves as a testament to her artistic legacy. Her contributions to the religious art world, particularly through the fusion of Eastern and Western styles, continue to be revered through exhibitions (Dogo,1998,p.12). Her icons, which blend traditional Japanese techniques with Western influences, have not only contributed to the cultural and artistic dialogue between the East and the West, but also solidified her place in the history of iconography. They represent a historical archive by their themes and stand the test of time where they are housed(Appendix A).



Figure 4. 87: Locations of churches that house the icons of Yamashita Rin.[URL-36]



Figure 4. 88: Exterior of Hakurinkyō Yamashita Rin Memorial Museum, Kasama, Japan [URL-37]



Figure 4. 89: Interior of Hakurinkyō Yamashita Rin Memorial Museum, Kasama, Japan [URL-38]



5. INTERTWINED ARTISTIC PROFILES CARRYING OUT MULTIPLE LEGACIES: PETRIDOU, LINTRIDOU, ZOGRAFU-SIMALARIDOU, LASKARATOU

Olga Petridou (1898-1980), the most prolific icon painter among the selected Ottoman-Rûm born artists, received artistic education at Istanbul State Academy of Fine Arts. She also stands out as the one who produced under the most versatile types of arts. She was a student of Hikmet Onat and Leopold Levy (1882-1966), the director of *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi*. In icon making, she mostly favored oil paintings. Her listed icon paintings in this study showcase her preference toward Renaissance-style in figural depictions with immobile stance and color application confined within cark thick contours where the light is not used in a naturalistic manner but borrowed from the gilded-like background surface to emphasize the sacred narrative (Fig.5.1-Fig.5.3). Some of her icon paintings oscillate in between Baroque-style and Renaissance-style with successful usage of sfumato and light effects (Fig 5.4-Fig.5.5). Her icons with a more Baroque-inspiration display anatomical inaccuracy adding to the level of the motion, separating the depiction from naturalism and shifting it more toward the symbolic context (Fig.5.6-Fig.5.7). Her icons are still hanging on the walls of many churches in Istanbul (Şarlak,2001) (Table 5.1). She also contributed to the restoration of icons in various churches in Istanbul (Saris,2010,p.244).

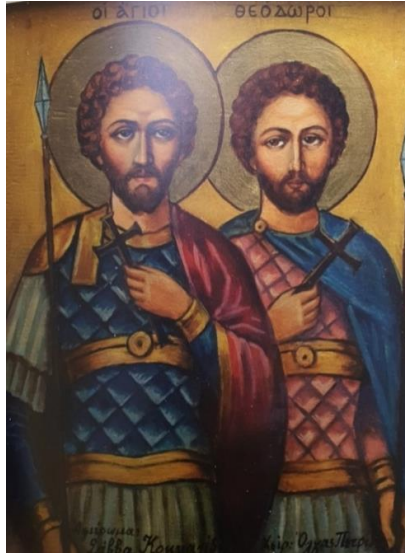


Figure 5. 1: Olga Petridou, *Icon of The Two Saint Theodores*, oil on canvas, 27x22 cm, Langa Agioi theodori Church, Yenikapı, İstanbul pre-1980. (Saris,2010)



Figure 5. 2: Olga Petridou , *Icon of St. Varvara (St.Barbara)*, oil on duralite, 128x95 cm, Langa Agioi Theodori Church, Yenikapı, İstanbul , pre-1980. (Saris,2010)



Figure 5. 3: Olga Petridou, *Panagia Eleoussa*, 133x50 cm,tempera on wood, Church of Ayios Konstantinos and Eleni, Yedikule, İstanbul, 1966. [URL-39]

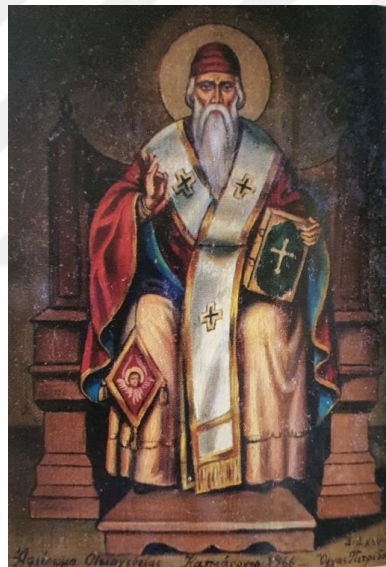


Figure 5. 4: Olga Petridou, *Icon of Saint Spiridon*, oil on duralite, 31x23 cm, Panagia Church,Yeniköy, İstanbul, pre-1980. (Saris,2010)

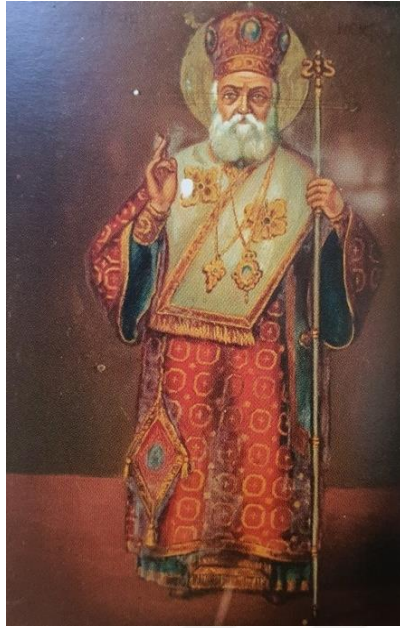


Figure 5. 5: Olga Petridou, *Icon of a Saint*, oil paint on wood, 41x30 cm,Dodeka Apostoli Church, Feriköy, İstanbul, 1900. (Saris,2010)



Figure 5. 6: Olga Petridou, *Icon of Christ the Good Shepherd*, 228x61 cm, 1967.
[URL-40]



Figure 5.7: Olga Petridou , *Icon of Ioannes Prodromos*, 170x170 cm, oil on wood, Church of Ayios Theodoros, Yenikapi, İstanbul, after 1964. [URL-41]

Table 5. 1: Churches in Istanbul, Türkiye housing the icon paintings of Olga Petridou. [URL-42]

Artist: OLGA PETRIDOU

City: İstanbul

Location: Agia Kriaki Church, Kumkapı

- Icon of St. Kiriaki x 2
 - Icon of Virgin and the Child
 - Icon of Pantokrator
-

Location: Agios Theodoros Church, Aksaray

- Icon of the Virgin Mary
 - Icon of Presentation of Mary x2
 - Icon of Ioannes Prodromos x 2
 - Icon of St. Eleftherios
 - Icon of St. Georgios
 - Icon of Jesus the Good Shepherd
 - Icon of Theotokos
 - Icon of St. Theodoros
 - Icon of St. Barbara
-

Table 5. 1: (continued) Churches in Istanbul, Türkiye housing the icon paintings of Olga Petridou. [URL-42]

Artist: OLGA PETRIDOU
City: İstanbul
Location: Agios Nikolaos Church, Topkapı
• Icon of St. Eleftherios • Icon of The Elevation of the Cross
Location: Panagia Church, Belgradkapı
• Icon of St.Peter • Icon of Christ the Great High Priest
Location: Konstantinou and Eleni Church, Yedikule
• Icon of St. Demetrios • Icon of St. Georgios • Icon of Archangel Michael • Icon of the Three Holy Hierarchs • Icon of Konstantinos and Eleni • Icon of Pantokrator • Icon of Theotokos • Icon of Ioannes Prodromos • Icon of Jesus the Good Shepherd • Icon of St.Nicholas • Icon of St. Pandleimon • Icon of St.Barbara • Icon of Koimesis • Icon of Nativity
Location: Agios Pandleimon Church, Kuzguncuk
• Icon of St. Georgios
Location: Agia Paraskevi Church, Hasköy
• Icon of Paraskevi
Location: Agios Georgios Kiparissas, Samatya
• Icon of Despotikon
Location: Dodeka Apostoloia Church, Feriköy
• Icon of St. Nektarios
Location: Agios Georgios Church, Bakırköy
• Icon of Christ
Location: Panagia Elpida Church, Kumkapı
• Icon of St. Minas
Location: Church of Metamorphosis, Şişli
• Icon of Theotokos
Location: Church of Taxiarches, Arnavutköy
• Icon of Taxiarches

Another figure who studied at *Istanbul State Academy of Fine Arts* is Viktoria Lintridu (1905-1968), who trained under the guidance of İbrahim Çallı, Cemal Tollu (1899-1968) and Hikmet Onat. The artist prioritized oil painting techniques in her icon

paintings and emphasized her affinity for the Impressionist style (Saris,2010,p.180). Her listed icon painting presents a blended combination of unmoving posture on the left in a Renaissance manner while more motion is applied on the figure on the right under the influence of Baroque style. The light is not portrayed in a naturalistic sense therefore the symbolism is retrieved by applying solid golden color in the background putting focus on the sacred theme (Fig.5.8).



Figure 5. 7: Viktoria Lintridu, *Icon of Jesus and Saints*, oil on canvas, private collection, pre-1968. (Saris,2010)

Another name who received her education at *Istanbul Devlet Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi* is Egli Zografu-Simalaridou (1911-1999) who was trained in the ateliers of Nazmi Ziya and İbrahim Çallı. She hailed from a lineage of icon painters, her grandfather was an icon painter too. She is another name whose icon paintings are still hanging on the walls of various churches across Istanbul (Şarlak,2001) (Table 5.2). Like her contemporaries, she initially worked within an Impressionist style but gradually moved toward more abstract representations (Saris,2010,p.276). Her listed icon paintings reflect the variety of schematic depiction (Fig.5.9) as well as anatomical inaccuracy to elaborate the magnitude of the featured Biblical figures (Fig.5.10- Fig.5.11).

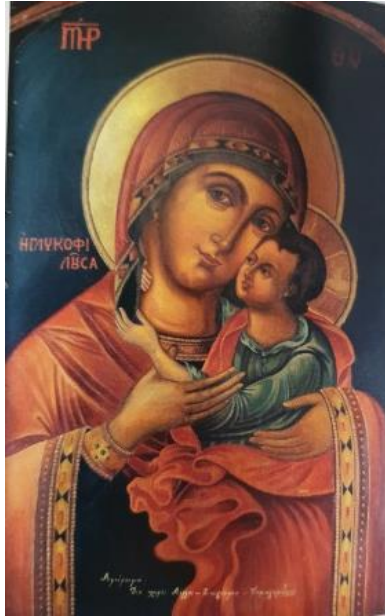


Figure 5. 8: Egli Zografu- Simalaridou, *Icon of Virgin and Mary*, 28x80 cm, Langa Agioi Theodori Church, Yenikapı, İstanbul, pre-1999. (Saris,2010)



Figure 5. 9: Egli Zografu-Simalaridou, *Icon of Ioannes Prodromos*, 150x65 cm, tempera on wood, Panagia Church, Balgradkapı, İstanbul, 1963. [URL-43]



Figure 5. 10: Egli Zografu-Simalaridou, *Icon of Hagios Minas*, 145x80 cm, tempera on wood, Panagia Church, Belgradkapı, İstanbul, 1966?. [URL-44]

Table 5. 2: Churches in Istanbul, Türkiye housing the icon paintings of Egli Zografu-Simalaridou. [URL-45]

Artist: EGLI ZOGRAFU-SIMALARIDOU

City: İstanbul

Location: Panagia Church, Belgradkapı

- Icon of St.Nektarios
 - Icon of Theotokos
 - Icon of St.Trifon
 - Icon of Pantokrator x2
 - Icon of Archangel Gabriel
 - Icon of St.Nicholas
 - Icon of Annunciation
 - Icon of Taxiarches
 - Icon of the Nativity of the Theotokos
 - Icon of Christ the Great High Priest
-

Location: Agios Theodoros Church, Aksaray

- Icon of Panagia Glikophyloussa
-

Another artist name under this category, Eleni Laskaratu (1912-1990), who studied at *Istanbul Devlet Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi* under Namık İsmail, became skilled in the production of Ottoman miniature art and icon works. Through her training with İsmail Hakkı, she also practiced Ottoman ornamental art called “*tezeyinat*”. After relocating to Athens, she opened her own painting school. Her technical preferences generally

included oil painting and pastel. (Saris,2010,p.178). Her listed icon paintings respectively display different tendencies where she deliberately sought inaccurate proportions to draw the focus on the sacred theme but the compositional layout is well balanced as it is inspired from Renaissance (Fig.5.12) while her other depiction (Fig 5.13) represents a masterfully applied naturalistic look and gestures with a slight touch of Mannerism with an elongated face yet the figure is portrayed so realistically so much so that the disproportions almost get blurred. This tendency toward an expressive style finds itself a firmer ground in her other icon painting (Fig.5.14) where she used colors,lines and contours in a very bold attempt for a saint's depiction yet she still manages to keep a dark and light effect of chiarascuro in a nebulous background (Fig.5.15) along with a visibly clear facial expression.

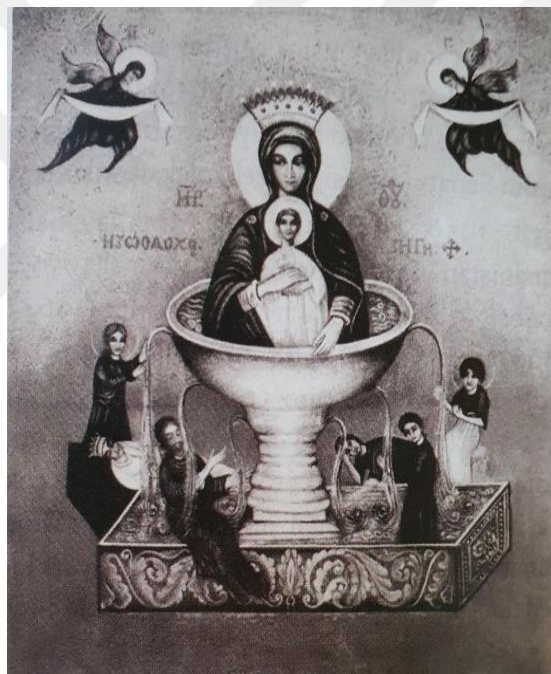


Figure 5. 11: Eleni Laskaratou, *Icon of Mother Mary*, pre-1999. (Saris, 2010)



Figure 5. 12: Eleni Laskaratou, *Icon of Savior Christ*, oil on canvas, pre-1999. (Saris,2010)



Figure 5. 13: Eleni Laskaratou, *Expressionist style-inspired Icon of a Saint*, 32x31 cm, pre-1999. [URL-46]

These artists demonstrated their full professionalism in their paintings of both secular and sacred painting genres. The effective use of light utilizing the techniques of Renaissance and its transformation during the Impressionist era can easily be detected in their religious works of art. The facial gestures and postures do properly accommodate the symbolism as needed and this does support the tendency to follow the ecclesiastical protocols in the traditional sense but these artists have a unique style doing it without disrupting the nature-inspired compositions. The clarity and fine balance in color combination is prioritized in their paintings. Masterly application of touches of Idealism and Realism in their facial depictions place their portraiture examples to a distinct place.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of centuries-long socio-political transformations within the Western culture, the groundbreaking artistic developments that defined the 19th and 20th centuries were closely observed by the Eastern societies. These advancements were either directly adopted or locally adapted in response to specific cultural and institutional needs. In this context, both the Ottoman Empire and the Empire of Japan, situated at the opposite ends of the Eastern world, pursued similar strategies by sending students abroad and inviting Western instructors in order to foster education in painting, sculpture and architecture. The preference for Italian instructors in oil painting was closely linked to Italy's longstanding prominence in the field of visual arts. Within this genre, not only were original works produced in both landscape and portraiture, including icons, but the use of traditional techniques also contributed to the enhanced durability and preservation of the works of art over time.

In the artistic paradigms of East and West, a fundamental divergence emerges: Eastern art tends to prioritize nature, while Western painting exhibits a more anthropocentric approach, focusing on the human body. The generation of Ottoman artists sent abroad in 1914 brought this proficiency in portraiture back to their homeland and subsequently transmitted it to their students. The influence of Impressionism, which they had absorbed, is also discernible in select works by these students. A parallel trajectory can be observed in Japan, where exposure to Westernization in art further shaped the productions of Yamashita Rin. Although Japan had been introduced to the stylistic elements of Realism during the Edo period through illustrated works by the Dutch merchants, the Meiji period marked a more advanced engagement with this mode of representation, one that emphasized nature and natural light, supported by the artistic backgrounds of foreign instructors. This development was strongly influenced by Antonio Fontanesi, primarily a landscape painter but also known for his proficiency in portraiture, who played a key role in shaping the curriculum at *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*.

This aspect of his tutelage was reflected on Rin's icon paintings and draft sketches extensively.

Both countries, Ottoman Empire and Empire of Japan, adopted European fine arts academies as institutional role models and structured their curricula accordingly. The positive effects of Modernization on the fine arts education for women played out substantially similar on both sides. The rapid increase in female student enrollment highlights the high momentum with which Eastern societies adapted to modernist practices. Despite these educational advancements, the sociological structures in both contexts were not yet fully receptive to the direct integration of female students into public life, even through art. As a result, during outdoor sketching sessions, female students in the Ottoman context were accompanied by police escorts, while their Japanese counterparts were also confronting with public disturbances and discomfort. Sketch exercises based on visual references significantly enhanced students' copying skills; in the context of religious art, these skills facilitated mastery of established canonical practices. However, due to the socio-cultural conditions of their respective periods, artists on both sides managed to move beyond rigid rules and gained the opportunity to express individual artistic interpretations even within the framework of sacred imagery. Yamashita Rin, whose story showcased a unique example of dedication to one's profession, began her artistic practice within the realm of traditional arts. She later received Western-influenced art education during Japan's Meiji Era, a period marked by a cultural revolution that accompanied the country's modernization in the context of Westernization. She enrolled in *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō*, Japan's first state fine arts academy, where she studied under the renowned landscape and portrait artist Antonio Fontanesi, an Italian tutor-painter.

This thesis has explored the artistic productions from the two ends of Asia, Istanbul and Tokyo, within a complex interplay between gender, identity, feminist propaganda and political conditions of their time. Since their stories also bore the cultural turbulence of transition periods they lived through, the research has sought to reposition these female artists among the bridge-makers. All of the artists within the scope of this study featured non-religious themes very skillfully too but through the religious themed paintings they did show how they technically defied dominant narratives about femininity within the genre of sacred art. The socio-political landscape that induced rapid changes accordingly shaped their artistic trajectory.

Yamashita's visual expressions and compositions could easily be classified as unique and superb, correspondingly the Rûm artists' works of art display the quality of the tutorship they received as well as their innate depiction skills.

These artists painted icons that are still displayed on the walls of churches both in Japan and Türkiye where they not only perform an instrumental role but also invite the keen-eyed viewers to appreciate their artistic talents. Historical and theoretical contexts of respective imperial rules allow the reader to embrace the heritage the featured artists carried out on their shoulders. The circumstances of their time may also help the readers reconsider the assumptions about the identity or the gender of the artists within the frame of visual culture.

The evolving role of women in art education from the 19th century into the early 20th century reflects a gradual overcoming of institutional, social and cultural barriers. Through an analysis of the operational frameworks of art education institutions, this study highlights the uneven and incremental inclusion of women in formal artistic training and the broader ramifications for their professional recognition. Notably, the contributions of selected women artists for this study remain largely unrecognized, even within their own cities of origin. Although women began to gain admission to art academies from the mid-19th century, their educational experiences were distinctly gendered in both structure and content. They were frequently excluded from life drawing courses and mostly discouraged from pursuing prestigious genres such as history painting. These kind of restrictions reinforced the prevailing notions of feminine artistic inferiority. Despite these limitations, women artists and educators resisted marginalization by engaging in advocacy, forming supportive networks and establishing institutions dedicated to the advancement of women's artistic practice. The featured artists within this research demonstrated extensive efforts and performed an excellent job by producing works of art that could compare to the productions at art institutions where women's inclusion in art education was recorded earlier.

Modernization positively affected the arts education by accelerating the process to incorporate female students into the student body. The social reforms that influenced the expansion of opportunities for women in art education are actually rooted in the feminist discourse of an earlier period where courageous women demanded social rights for women and the artists within this study represent the artistic outcome of such engagement. The state mind sided with these progressive attitudes and created an

inductive environment which facilitated the state image to be positioned as modern. Contributing to women's intellectual and artistic capacities and capabilities was also seen as a civic investment because these women would be expected to raise their children within a similar manner.

It should also be noted that the access to art education was neither uniform nor equitable. It was rather shaped by the intersecting factors of class, race, geography, and gender. While middle-and-upper class women were able to make significant advances within mainstream art institutions, working-class women were largely marginalized or excluded from these spaces. The socio-economic standing of the selected Rûm artists in this research cannot be discussed in depth because there were not enough evidence to support this argument but if they were coming from upper scales of the society, they would have better chance of making names. The structural inequalities were present on both sides of the geographical spectrum as laid out in this study. But there is supporting evidence for Yamashita's conditions that she came from a disadvantaged background and she had to rely on the material assistance provided by the Japanese Orthodox Church.

Negotiation of artistic identity within patriarchal systems is no easy task. That is why it is crucial to include in this study that these artists produced religious paintings, specifically the icons which are used as ecclesiastical elements in church rituals. Whether to consider this genre as a sub category of art is a topic that deserves a more scholarly attention from the fields like theology and sociology but from the perspective of act of painting, it can be taken as a liberating engagement as well. These artists' secular or profane themed paintings can also be interpreted as a means of self-expression, professional advancement and subtle resistance to the gendered social norms given the adversities they confronted in their respective journeys of life. Especially on Yamashita's side, in terms of the sacred themed category, she did not merely participate in religious painting, she reinterpreted spiritual narratives in ways that reflected her unique creativity in a devotional sphere despite significant cultural and institutional constraints. The ability to create in this genre does not only provide female artists with an opportunity for artistic expression but also equips them with an instrumental role through their art where they contribute to a specific religious culture. Rûm women artists were highly likely born into such tradition thus fulfilled both an individual potential in terms of depiction skills and a societal task that catered the

needs of their community. Yamashita, on the other hand, carried her skills to a whole novel level by becoming associated with her new religion at a later stage in life and opened up a new gate through her exclusive stylization in religious paintings. The fact that these paintings contained subtle or substantial deviations from the established iconographic norms does not actually hurt the cause, on the contrary it speaks to the conditions of their time where they were accorded rights to interfere with their own preferences where they subtly contested the prevailing theological and artistic conventions of their time. Even though the prevailing practice in icon-making was copying, one could still easily detect a heightened emotional intimacy and this can be potentially linked to that fact that they were performed by women. While the art world has historically been shaped by male-dominated institutions, the engagement of women artists in the patriarchal context of ecclesiastical art renders their contributions particularly significant within the canonical history. Their involvement in shaping the visual culture of Christianity remains insufficiently recognized. These women navigated intricate cultural negotiations and their engagement with sacred imagery may have served as a means of deepening their connection to their religious identity. Their participation in the sacred visual tradition represents a valuable and underexplored area for future scholarly investigation.

Selected women artists' stylistic tendencies may have contributed to imbuing their subjects with psychological depth and emotional realism, reflecting not only personal devotion but also a unique perspective informed by the gendered experience. These women artists identified alternative modes of expression through which they articulated theological insights and actively participated in the development of religious visual culture. By foregrounding their contributions in this study, the enduring perception of sacred art as an exclusively male domain is effectively challenged.

Within the realm of secular or profane art, redefining the limits of what women could achieve within a male-dominated art world was embodied by the women artists' ability of mastering established techniques. They proved fruitful in their artistic potential and created works of art in diverse concepts. The selected artists in this study also undertook a social duty by bridging cultures to each other. The Ottoman-Rûm artists Olga Petridou, Viktoria Lintridu, Egli Zografu-Simalaridou, Eleni Laskaratou carried the Roman heritage into the art sphere initiated as an Ottoman-Turkish venture. The

Japanese artist, Yamashita Rin, weaved a texture between different empires. She even played an in advertent role to preserve the Russian visual heritage outside of Russia because the Communist rule was not kind to the religious institutions within Russia. Her icons copied directly from Russian masterpieces, whether direct copies or individually stylized versions, in a way work to sustain the original heritage in Japan.

Gendered divisions within the curriculum were a defining characteristic of the earliest art schools in both empires. In particular, the study of the nude from live male models was explicitly prohibited in the women's sections as it was considered morally inappropriate. Nevertheless, Yamashita's sketches properly demonstrate her technical proficiency. Despite the pronounced disparities between male and female curricula, the artistic output of women was not only comparable to that of their male counterparts but also to the works produced by artists with the leading international institutions in the West, considering the fact that prominent institutions such as the Royal Academy of Arts in London and the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris were initially designed to exclude women. The first formal state-funded art schools in the Ottoman Empire, *Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* and its counterpart for women, *Înâs Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi* made notably rapid progress in incorporating women into their student bodies at a fast pace and eventually merged to form *İstanbul Devlet Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi* where the co-education took place. Similarly, despite the initial resistance to admitting female students, *Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō* in Japan stands out as a progressive institution in terms of including women within its student body. In all these contexts, women artists navigated deeply patriarchal systems to access education, achieve professional recognition and attain visibility within the art world.

Women's entry into the earliest art institutions was both contested and transformative, with their full inclusion remaining restricted well into the transitional period from the 19th century to the 20th century. Nevertheless, many women artists transformed these limitations into platforms of creative innovation, developing alternative stylistic approaches that significantly enriched the trajectory of their fields of art. Often constrained by rigid social norms, the women artists generally referred to in this study played a foundational role in asserting the right to professional artistic training. Their artistic output deserves recognition not only for its aesthetic merit but also as a testament to the systemic inequalities that have historically structured the art world. Acknowledging both their struggles and achievements is critical, both for fostering a

more inclusive and accurate art historical narrative and for accelerating progress in alignment with the evolving social and cultural dynamics of our time. The intersection of social reform, modernization and gender politics profoundly influenced the opportunities and constraints experienced by women in art. Situating these artists within the broader historical contexts of major imperial powers such as the Empire of Japan and the Ottoman Empire, both of which underwent dramatic transformations, highlights how gender-segregated education, conservative cultural attitudes and institutional barriers shaped women's artistic trajectories. These conditions, and the negotiations they necessitated, offer a valuable perspective to reflect on the development of modern artistic practices and mindsets that previously paved the way for the status of women in the art world in our time. Ultimately this thesis sought the need to place the contributions of these selected women artists' stories and works of art among the pioneering ones. Yamashita Rin, finding herself in a position to assume almost a diplomatic role even by a single icon, namely "*The Resurrection of Christ*" icon she painted or the Ottoman-Rûm women artists Olga Petridou, Viktoria Lintridu, Egli Zografu-Simalaridou, Eleni Laskaratou representing a harmoniously balanced duality in their identity attested by their diverse works of art deserve to be told. They were the cultural producers of their time, they were the bridge-makers across multiple cultures. Their works of art hold a unique aspect to deliver a message to a wider community. Recognizing the sacred works of these women artists not only restores their rightful place within the art historical canon but also enriches our understanding of how sacred imagery has been employed to articulate both personal and collective experiences of the divine. As the discipline of art history increasingly embraces more inclusive and expansive narratives, the legacy of these women must be acknowledged as both spiritually significant and artistically consequential.

This study reveals a vast gap for future art history researchers to concentrate on unsatisfactorily documented women artists and opens up an opportunity to lead groundbreaking discovery efforts. The future complementary extension to this research can more lean toward the feminist archival records. A wider gender-conscious lens would help to compensate for the limitation sought in the scope of this study. The academic institutions could also invest in digital infrastructure, rise funds and grants not only for connecting with the private collectors who keep the works of featured artists but also creating an online scholarly database dedicated to the use of art history

students in a curriculum-embedded way. Their artistic legacies should not be left to the margins but rather should be incorporated into arts-related social debates and settings where multidisciplinary perspectives converge ranging from sociology to theology especially when dealt with religious depictions in the hands of women. These kind of artistic discoveries do hold the potential to enhance the quality of societal communication where existing canons are expanded, enriched and presented to the societies through exhibitions. Provenance research would be an auxiliary field to support this field because the historical discourse manipulated many works of art into being left unattributed when they were detected as painted by women. Reversing this tide still has a long way to go and in a time like this where internet provides extensive research capacities, this duty almost becomes obligatory. Uncovering women artists and contributing to register them into formal art history records should be embraced as a noble societal cause. Moving beyond the Western archives where their dominant narratives fall behind in today's ever-connected world should serve as a motivation source for art history researchers for investigating regional records and make an introduction of at a global scale.

These women were integral to the progressive movement that pursued professional recognition as artists during pivotal periods of transformation in the Eastern artistic sphere. Through their exceptional skill and determination, they succeeded in establishing a presence within the predominantly male-dominated artistic institutions of their era both in sacred realms of art. Although the art historical recovery of women artists has made significant strides in recent decades, the selected artists' names are still marginalized within mainstream art historical discourse. This thesis fills the gap in both in highlighting the struggle and efforts put forth by female artists in an under-explored area in art history called icon painting and in making the underpublicized women artists gain recognition. Such recognition will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the artistic contributions of these women who navigated and transcended the socio-cultural challenges of their time. Their legacy is marked by resilience, innovation and enduring significance, underscoring the imperative to recognize their contributions as essential to a complete and inclusive history of art in order to complement the rich yet underexplored dimension of it in which faith, gender and artistic vision converge.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Churches in Japan housing the icon paintings of Yamashita Rin





APPENDIX A

Table A.1: List of icons and churches housing Rin Yamashita's icon paintings in Japan

Artist: RIN YAMASHITA
Region: <i>East Japan Diocese</i>
Location: Kamimusa Christian Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Resurrection • Nativity • Birth of Theotokos • Epiphany • Ascension • Exaltation of the Cross • Dormition of the Theotokos
Location: Kushiro Christian Orthodox Church
• Theophany • Christ the Savior • Theotokos of Kozelschina
Location: Sapporo Christian Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Annunciation • Archangel Gabriel • Last Supper • Luke the Evangelist • John the Evangelist • Nativity • Resurrection • Crucifixion • Assumption • Exaltation of the Cross • Icon of St.Sergius • Dormition of Theotokos • Theotokos of Kozelschina

Table A.1. (continued) List of icons and churches housing Rin Yamashita's icon paintings in Japan

Artist: RIN YAMASHITA
Region: <i>East Japan Diocese</i>
Location: Hakodate Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Resurrection • Epiphany • Nativity • Dormition
Location: Kamiiso Christian Orthodox Church
• Last Supper
Location: Otaru Christian Orthodox Church
• Holy Theotokos • Christ the Savior
Location: Morioka Christian Orthodox Church
• Crucifixion • Christ in Gethsemane • Last Supper • Annunciation • Theophany • Resurrection
Location: Hokuga Christian Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Four Evangelists • Archangel Gabriel • Archangel Michael • Annunciation • Resurrection • Thotokos • Holy Cross • Nativity
Location: Mori Christian Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Four Evangelists • Archangel Gabriel • Archangel Michael • Last Supper • Ascension • Holy Cross

Table A.1: (continued) List of icons and churches housing Rin Yamashita's icon paintings in Japan

Artist: YAMASHITA RIN
Region: <i>East Japan Diocese</i>
Location: Location: Iwayado Christian Orthodox Church
• Annunciation
Location: Ichinoseki Christian Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Annunciation • Last Supper • Nativity • Epiphany • Exaltation of the Cross • Holy Trinity • Christ in Gethsemane • Transfiguration • Dormition
Location: Kananari Christian Orthodox Church
• Holy Theotokos • Resurrection
Location: Takashimizu Christian Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Four Evangelists • Archangel Gabriel • Archangel Michael • Annunciation • Holy Apostle Peter
Location: Ishinomaki Christian Orthodox Church
• Christ with bread and wine • Theophany
Location: Shirakawa Orthodox Church
• Annunciation • Last Supper • Trinity • Dormition • Holy Cross
Location: Sendai Christian Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Cross

Table A.1: (continued) List of icons and churches housing Rin Yamashita's icon paintings in Japan

Artist: YAMASHITA RIN
Region: <i>Archdiocese Of Tokyo</i>
Location: Ashikaga Christian Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Annunciation • Four Evangelists • Archangel Gabriel • Archangel Michael • Holy Trinity • Theotokos • Holy Cross
Location: Kanuma Christian Orthodox Church
• Christ in Gethsemane
Location: Takasaki Christian Orthodox Church
• Annunciation • Resurrection • Theophany • St.Sergius • St.Nicholas • Nativity
Location: World Christian Orthodox Church
• Holy Theotokos
Location: Suga Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Annunciation • Archangel Michael • Archangel Gabriel • Last Supper • Trinity • Four Evangelists
Location: Sugawa Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Annunciation • Archangel Michael • St.Barbara • St.Catherine • St.Nicholas • St.Nicholas • Holy Apostle Peter • Last Supper

Table A.1: (continued) List of icons and churches housing Rin Yamashita's icon paintings in Japan

Artist: YAMASHITA RIN
Region: <i>Archdiocese Of Tokyo</i>
Location: Shuzenji Christian Orthodox Church
• Christ the High Priest • Nativity • Holy Cross
Location: Tega Christian Orthodox Church
• Last Supper • Trinity • Theotokos • Holy Cross
Location: Shizuoka Orthodox Church
• Archangel Michael • Resurrection • Christ the Savior • Holy Apostle Peter • Holy Prophet Isaiah • Holy Prophet Moses • St.Barbara • St.Catherine • St.Basil the Great • St.Gregory the Theologian • St.Nicholas • Trinity • Christ in Gethsemane
Location: Russian Orthodox Church in Japan Podworye St. Nicholas Church
• Holy Theotokos • Christ the Savior
Location: Hamamatsu Christian Orthodox Church
• Annunciation • Last Supper
Location: Kashiwakubo Orthodox Church
• Archangel Michael • Archangel Gabriel • Annunciation • Four Evangelists • Christ in Gethsemane
Region: <i>Western Japan Diocese</i>
Location: Osaka Christian Orthodox Church
• Theotokos • Holy Cross • Last Supper

Table A.1: (continued) List of icons and churches housing Rin Yamashita's icon paintings in Japan

Artist: YAMASHITA RIN
Region: <i>Archdiocese Of Tokyo</i>
Location: Kyoto Christian Orthodox Church
• Annunciation • Holy Cross
Location: Nagoya Christian Orthodox Church
• Last Supper
Location: Handa Christian Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Holy Cross
Location: Toyohashi Orthodox Church
• Nativity • Ascension • Holy Cross • Dormition
Location: Tokushima Orthodox Church
• Christ the Savior • Holy Theotokos • Archangel Gabriel • Archangel Michael • Four Evangelists • Christ as High Priest • Holy Theotokos
Location: Kobe Christian Orthodox Church
• Holy Theotokos • Christ in Gethsemane • Transfiguration • Holy Cross
Location: Hitoyoshi Christian Orthodox Church
• Last Supper
Location: Yanaihara Christian Orthodox Church
• Holy Theotokos • Resurrection • Theotokos of Kozelschina

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