Contemporary Japanese Artists in New York City: Artwork and Identity in Creation

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the relationship between multiple identities among contemporary Japanese artists living and working in New York City. The main focus of the research lays on how non-work role and social identities such as ethnicity, gender, place, family, and myth, are constructed and negotiated in relation to the professional artist identity. Theoretically, it draws largely from identity and social identity theories, and aims to fill the empirical gap in multiple identity and artist mobility research. Biographical narrative interview method and follow-up interviews with 14 participants revealed the connections between multiple layers of identity, and their dependence on socio-cultural, personal, and circumstantial factors.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASLNY	Art Student League of New York
JAANY	Japanese Artist Association of New York
NYC	New York City
SCT	Self-categorization theory
SIT	Social identity theory
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
U.S.	United States
WASP	White Anglo-Saxon protestants
WHO	World Health Organization

JAPANESE LANGUAGE TERMS GLOSSARY

有田焼	*Arita-yaki*	Arita ware (porcelain)
アーティスト	*Ātisuto*	Artist
美術	*Bijutsu*	Fine arts
美術団体	*Bijutsu dantai*	Art association
絵巻物	*Emakimono*	Picture scroll
外人	*Gaijin*	Foreigner, non-Japanese
芸大	*Geidai*	Tokyo University of the Arts
芸事	*Geigoto*	Traditional performing arts
芸術	*Geijutsu*	Fine arts
芸術家	*Geijutsuka*	Artist
家元制度	*Iemotoseido*	Apprenticeship system in fine and performing arts
女流	*Jyoryū*	Woman (writer, artist, doctor, etc.)
貸し画廊	*Kashi garō*	Rental gallery
巨匠	*Kyoshō*	Maestro
日本画	*Nihonga*	Japanese-style painting
日展	*Nitten*	Japan Fine Arts Exhibition (1907–)
侘び寂び	*Wabi-sabi*	Traditional Japanese aesthetics centered on the acceptance of imperfection and impermanence
洋画	*Yōga*	Western-style painting
読売新聞	*Yomiuri Shinbun*	A Japanese newspaper (1874–)

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the research

Jackson Pollock once said: “Painting is self-discovery. Every good artist paints what he is.” These words accurately describe the focus of this study, which dives deep into the interrelationship between art, identity, and migration.

The focal point of the current research is identity. Modern scholarship sees identity “as a process” (Jenkins 2008, 5), and a “holistic mechanism, operated by a complex system of cognition, emotions, and actions” (Learey and Tangney 2003, 23), “affected by kinship, relationships with people, and belonging to groups” (Brubacker and Cooper 2000, 15). Identity is not static, but it is instead something that keeps on developing throughout our lives. Encounters with other people, life events, emotional ups and downs all contribute to our experience as humans and modify our identities one way or another. Some of the factors contributing significantly to our identity and self-image development are the geographical locations where we find ourselves, occupations we engage in, and the society we exist in.

To examine these phenomena deeper, I conducted a case study featuring Japanese contemporary artists living and working in New York City (NYC). According to most of the artists participating in the current study, NYC is seen as “the center of the art world” (H. K., 7 August 2020). While this title is currently contested by cultural capitals of the world, such as Berlin, London, Singapore, and Hong Kong, the image of New York City as the “place to be” (A. K., 8 April 2020) among the

artists, as well as density of creative professionals make it a perfect site for the research.

Most research in related fields (migration, living abroad, Japanese artists abroad) focuses almost exclusively on one aspect of identity, most commonly, the ethnic or national identity. In this research, I concentrate on the interrelationships between multiple aspects of identity, including group identities (ethnic, gender, social), role identities (occupational, relationship-based, and others), and personal

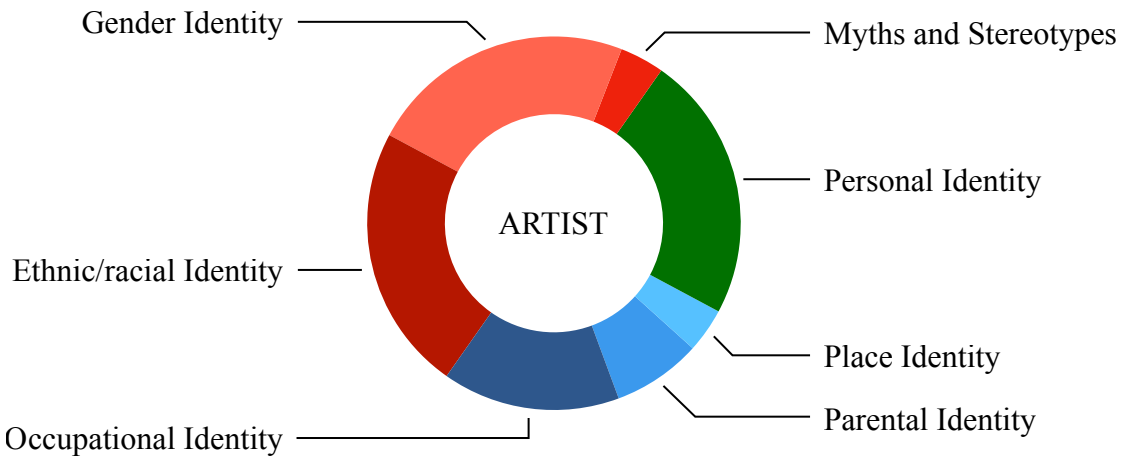

FIGURE 1.1 VISUALIZATION OF IDENTITY CATEGORIES. SOURCE: AUTHOR.

identities. This approach was inspired by identity theory and social identity theory and provided comprehensive tools to investigate the complex, intricate, dynamic structure of human identity. In other words, the focal point of this thesis is to explore different identity fragments and examine how they weave into one's daily life and self-narrative.

Fig. 1.1 illustrates the abridged version of the concept. The center of the diagram represents an activated artist identity. When an identity is activated, it serves as a lens through which an individual interprets reality, receives information from other identities, and adjusts behavior according to the meanings associated with the activated identity. According to identity theory, there are three bases of identity: personal (marked with color green), role (blue), and group (red) identities. The sizes of the bars do not reflect the importance of a particular identity, as each individual has their hierarchy of importance of each identity.

Moreover, the importance and meanings associated with an identity can change, and therefore it might be helpful to imagine this chart as a static snapshot of a dynamic structure. At any given moment, several identities are activated simultaneously. Role, group, and personal identities tend to overlap, and in certain situations, are not easily distinguishable (Stets 2013).

For example, the profession of an artist (occupational identity) has always been surrounded by myths and stereotypes dictated by the social and historical climate that the artists tend to adopt and internalize. Existing societal gender norms (gender identity) affect the way an artist may be perceived by the viewers and art world professionals and provide different art and secondary employment (worker identity) opportunities. Race and ethnicity also play a significant role in the way artists situate

themselves within the art world in creating and exhibiting artwork, networking, and building connections. In other words, there is a multitudinous amount of identity combinations, which are in an ongoing dynamic relationship with each other.

Multiple identities are usually activated simultaneously, and as they co-exist in a dynamic relationship, they tend to intertwine and affect each other. I discuss these identity processes in more detail in Chapter III, section 3.2.1, and section 3.2.4. One of the current research goals is to observe how various aspects of an individual's identity interact and contribute to the artist identity.

The remainder of the current chapter briefly presents the context of the study, the background of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, and methodology. Each of these topics is further expanded in individual chapters. Chapter I concludes with a discussion on the limitations of the research and introduces the organization and the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background: Japanese art world and New York as an artist destination

Japan and the United States have different definitions of art, sense of aesthetics, myths, and social roles reserved for artists. Some of the features of the Japanese art world that still have an effect on artists in Japan today and contribute to their emigration are the strict hierarchy within the art system (Yoshimoto 2005), imitation of the teacher's work as the highest form of mastery (Nanjo 1989), and little opportunity to exhibit work independently (Turner 2005). These restrictions made Paris a popular destination for Japanese artists in the 1920s and New York in the 1960s.

Today, an internationally-minded artist has many more options when selecting a base to live and make art (Shiner and Tomii 2007). The contemporary art world is scattered across the continents, gathering artists in Berlin, London, New York, Paris, Venice, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, and other major capitals. However, it would be fair to argue that New York City remains the most influential artistic hub (Favel 2010). Rich cultural migration history, the density of the artist population, and the relatively high Japanese artist population make New York the best site for conducting my research. New York, the city of immigrants, provides an opportunity to start again, granting a sense of freedom that could not have been experienced back at home (Sooudi 2014; Shiner and Tomii 2007; Yoshimoto 2005).

To date, the authors writing about Japanese artists in New York City have been almost exclusively focusing on the national or ethnic aspect of identity. Other aspects of identity, such as occupational, gender, and social identities, which seem to be a crucial part of the professional and everyday experiences of the artists, seem not to be addressed in the current body of the literature, thus creating an ontological and epistemological gap. I want to address this as the primary focus of my research by taking multiple layers of artists' identities into account. The study will become a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature, as it will investigate the identity not only from an ethnic perspective but from a more multi-faceted point of view.

Eriksen defined *anthropology* as an inquiry about "how different people can be, but it also tries to find out in what sense it can be said that all humans have something in common" (Eriksen 2001, 1). One of the goals I set for myself while writing this thesis is to represent to the best of my ability human subjectivities, narrate

real personal stories, and channel the voices and the minds of the artists who kindly agreed to participate in this research, and open up to me over the past two years. In other words, I first seek to understand each artist individually as a person before attempting to analyze the experiences and patterns of Japanese artists in New York as a group.

1.3 Research questions

The research questions below were designed to establish the relationships between multiple aspects of identity. They outlined the interview questioned and served as the guidance during the data coding and analysis processes.

1. What motivates the Japanese to pursue their artistic career in New York City?

Through this question, I seek to establish the artists' relationship to their home country and understand the reasons and motivations, in other words, push and pull factors, behind their decision to move to New York City.

2. How do the participants' experiences of living and working in New York City affect their artist identities?

The purpose of the second question is to explore how the participants' life experiences after leaving Japan affected their self-image as artists. The question connects the first and the last research questions, conceptually linking them together. The foundation, established through the first two research questions, will direct the research to the final and more abstract inquiry:

3. How do multiple identities of contemporary artists interconnect with each other?

Understanding each artist's motivations, emotional and physical experiences will help us understand how the artists perceive themselves and which identities are essential to them. This research question investigates how different aspects of identity, such as ethnic, occupational, gender, social, and personal, emerge in the artists' life, work, and art.

1.4 Conceptual framework

The study draws inspiration from identity and migration studies. Current research regards migration as an experience that leads to physical, mental, and emotional change, which ultimately gets incorporated into an individual's self-narrative and sense of identity.

Section 3.3 of Chapter III is dedicated to the overview of relevant mobility theories. Economic or political migrants are considered in most studies, thus under-representing other groups, including cultural migrants. Focusing on artists and taking a closer look at artist mobility allows us to view migration, identity construction, and expression of cultural migrants from a different, more positive, and more multi-faceted point of view (Kiwan and Meinhof 2011). However, categorizing artists in migration is not a straightforward process, as they are "simultaneously travelers, sojourners, and migrants" (Sooudi 2014, 52). Neither do Japanese artists fit into the common migration patterns of migrants from Japan (Fujita 2009). Here, the mobility factor is treated as an instrument rather than an independent phenomenon. The

experience of migration contributes to the understanding the contribution of migrant and place identities to the art practice and one's self-perception as an artist: Crossing the border physically also means that [artists] have also crossed the border emotionally, an experience which, no doubt, feeds into their work.

(Shiner and Tomii 2007, 17).

In modern scholarship, identity is seen as an inter-and intra-personal relationship construct, affected by a range of cognitive, emotional, action, and circumstantial factors (Learey and Tangney 2003). Identity is constructed through relationships with other people, social roles one is expected to perform, and circumstances in which the individuals find themselves (Woodward 2004). The wholistic sense of identity, then, is a multi-faceted complex construct, designed from multiple identities or multiple aspects of identities. Multiple identities co-exist in an ongoing dynamic relationship and are organized in an internal hierarchy, which dictates the activation and expression of particular identities. I apply a combination of identity and social identity theories to address the research questions raised in the previous section. Identity and social identity theories are presented in more detail in section 3.2 of Chapter III.

In conclusion, the principal goal of the current study is to understand the relationships between the multiple aspects of identity among artists. Migration is examined as a significant life experience that influences artists' occupational and place identities. In the following section, I overview the methodology implemented in the current research, including sampling, data collection methods, and the impact of COVID-19 on the flow of the fieldwork.

1.5 Research methods

To address the research questions and vividly capture the life journeys of select Japanese artists, I relied on qualitative methodology, including semi-structured interviews, biographical narratives, informal conversations, and participant observation. The respondents were initially contacted through Instagram, a social media platform, or were introduced through mutual connections. Initially, I contacted five artists and went on a field trip to New York City in February-March 2020 to conduct the interviews and recruit more participants through the snowball sampling technique. I present the data collection methods and the participants in more detail in sections 5.4 and 5.7 in Chapter V.

Narrative biography became an integral part of current research's goals and philosophy. Artists' life narratives provided a chronological sequence of events that allowed me and the participant to place events on a timeline, situating events in a larger context and according to the participants' subjective meanings assigned to particular events. Narratives were rich with the thoughts and feelings of the respondents and addressed why things unfolded the way they did and what they meant to each participant (Fivush et al., 2011). Please refer to sections 5.2 and 5.3 in Chapter V for a more thorough description of the biographical narrative. Ultimately, choosing a biographical narrative as a data collection methodology was a crucial element in taking a personal approach to understand the worldview and self-perception of each respondent as an individual first and as an artist second.

Unfortunately, my field trip, initially planned for February-March 2020, had to be shortened because of the COVID-19 pandemic. I was forced to return to Japan on

March 14 and continue interviewing the participants online via Skype and Zoom. Because of the pandemic, I could only partially fulfill my initial data collection plan and could not engage in participant observation as much as I initially anticipated. However, I managed to conduct studio visits, and I participated in the exhibitions of some of the artists. I could not go for the second on-site fieldwork in November 2020 because of travel restrictions. However, some of the artists happened to be in Tokyo, and I met them in person in Japan, visited a workshop, an exhibition, and a home studio.

1.6 Limitations of the study

As an artist, a migrant, and a Japanese speaker myself, I believe that I have an advantage in building rapport and relating to my respondents' challenges and experiences. It should be taken into account that the study is limited to my choice of Japanese artists in New York, and I have not done any comparative studies of American artists in Japan, immigrant artists in New York, or Japanese artist communities elsewhere. However, it could be a fruitful direction for future research.

Initially, there was a concern regarding the geographical distance between Tokyo and New York and estimated costs of traveling to the U.S. for data collection. While the first fieldwork was arranged in a timely matter, it had to be cut short due to the spread of COVID-19 and the declaration of the pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). This global event eliminated the concerns regarding the financial side of transportation, as traveling across countries' borders became virtually impossible. However, it posed new difficulties in adjusting methodology, such as

switching the format of the interviews from on-site to online and giving up on participant observation.

1.7 Organization of the research

In Chapter I, I introduce the purpose, methods, and background of the study. It sets the research questions, gives a brief overview of the theoretical framework, and provides the general structure of the thesis.

Chapter II presents the theoretical framework implemented for the data analysis of the current study. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first subchapter is dedicated to theories in identity studies, while the second subchapter overviews migration theories, particularly the push and pull micro-framework, and links it with identity construction.

Chapter III overviews the existing literature on occupational, racial, and gender identities, artist mobility, Japanese migration, and Japanese artists in New York City.

Chapter IV provides a historical and socio-cultural context of being an artist in Euro-Americas and Japan. This chapter is necessary to understand how socio-historical context nurtured the societal stereotypes and myths regarding the figure of an artist and how it contributes to this day to the self-image of contemporary artists.

In Chapter V, the methodology of data collection and interpretation are discussed. The chapter introduces the informants, provides details about the fieldwork, and addresses potential ethical concerns.

Chapter VI looks into the empirical data, attempting to answer the first and the second research questions: What motivates the Japanese to pursue their artistic career in New York City? How do the participants' experiences of living and working in New York City affect their artist identities?

Chapter VII analyzes various aspects of artists' experiences and identities, such as belonging to social categories, interpersonal relationships, and multiple role identities. Moreover, the chapter addresses artists' insights about some art-related topics, such as the role of an artist in society, personal meanings of creating artwork, self-acceptance as an artist, balancing family and work responsibilities, and incorporating non-work identities into one's creative work. This chapter aims to address the third research question: How do multiple identities of contemporary artists interconnect with each other?

Chapter VIII summarizes the main points of the thesis, key findings and introduces possible directions for future research.

Chapter II:
Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

The current research examines how multiple identities of Japanese migrant artists co-exist and interconnect with each other. In order to explore this topic in-depth, I chose to take an interdisciplinary approach by combining concepts from migration and identity studies. Geographical location and identity may overlap to form what is known as a place identity. Exploring the external and internal mechanisms of migration will likely provide invaluable insight into the dynamic relationship between migration and aspects of identity. Therefore, the chapter is divided into two principal parts, covering identity and migration.

The first part introduces modern identity studies. First, I map the main streams of literature on identity and identify two disciplines with a prominent presence in identity studies: social psychology and social theory (sociology and social anthropology). Then, I present two theories, identity theory and social identity theory, which became the foundation of this research. I describe the scientific roots of each theory, briefly present their key concepts and terminology. Finally, I compare the two theories, establishing their differences, similarities, strengths, and weaknesses. In the second subchapter, I focus on migration studies. First, I briefly overview early migration theories and contrast them with the newer conceptual frameworks. Then I discuss in more depth one of the migration micro-theories, the push-and-pull framework. Then I explain the mechanics behind the push-and-pull factors and mobility patterns.

2.2 Identity studies

The interest in one's identity could be traced back for thousands of years, going all the way to the oldest surviving text, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, written in Mesopotamia almost four thousand years ago (Williamsen 1997). It would be fair to say that humankind has always been on a quest of trying to understand itself by asking ourselves, "who are we"? Scholars identify several milestones as the birth of modern identity studies, and consensus has not been reached yet. Some scholars attribute first interest in identity research to the late 19th-century philosopher and psychologist William James (1890) and his seminal quote:

> A man has as many social selves as individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind.

Some other scholars believe it was Durkheim's psychobiological and socio-cultural ego dichotomy that led to the formation of identity studies, others insist on the impact of Mead's symbolic interactionism, and yet others explain the importance of Freud's discovery of *ego, id,* and *superego* to the development of identity studies (Huot & Rudman 2010; Brubaker & Cooper 2000; Fogelson 1982).

While the exact origins of identity research might be challenging to establish, the work of Erik Erikson (1950, 1959, 1968) has been unanimously recognized by the researchers as the most imperative in the formation of modern identity studies (Finke & Sökefeld 2018; Huot & Rudman 2010; Brubaker & Cooper 2000; Fogelson 1982). Erikson established the psychosocial development theory, linking the internal and the unconscious with the external forces and social context in which an individual finds themselves. As a developmental psychologist, the main emphasis of his work was on

the internal processes of identity formation across the lifespan. However, his ideas considerably impacted both psychological and sociological comprehensions of identity (Huot & Rudman 2010; Jenkins 2004).

As the research in identity studies expanded, some of there Erikson's ideas were criticized as too universalistic, capitalistic, rigid, and dismissive of the impact of cultural and social factors, thus offering little support in conducting a comparative analysis of the self (Finke & Sökefeld 2018; Fogelson 1982). This resonated particularly strongly with sociologists and social anthropologists, who believed that individual and collective (social) selves are profoundly interconnected and cannot exist without each other (Finke & Sökefeld 2018).

The literature on identity studies currently represents two separate but parallel streams, with almost no cross-referencing: One stream is social psychology, and another is social theory. This poses several problems—first, the differences in emphases. Social psychology explains identity and collective behavior through cognitive processes, mental events, and states (Chakkarath 2013; Jenkins 2004). On the other hand, social theory loosely bases its theory on the Eriksonian approach, explaining the formation of identity through belonging and a socio-cultural lens (Jenkins 2004). The second difficulty arises from the disciplinary differences in the definitions and terminology used to approach identity. The third concern is the lack of integration between the disciplines. The absence of cross-referencing is confusing and creates a false impression of the existence of only one approach, and it prevents the development of a more comprehensive theory of self.

One of the possible junctures between psychological and sociological identity studies might be identity studies (sociological roots) and social identity studies

(social-psychological roots). Both theories investigate social identities through the prism of belonging to groups or categories. There have been numerous encouragements to integrate both theories due to their similarities. However, a single theory of social self has not been developed yet (Sets & Burke 2000; Hogg, Terry & White 1995).

In conclusion, while the human interest itself is probably as old as humanity itself, modern identity studies were first shaped in the late 19th or early 20th century. The term "identity" gained currency, as Fogelson (1982) describes it, after the seminal works of Erik Erikson (1950, 1959, 1968) gained recognition in the 1970s. Eriksonian concept of identity substantially impacted identity theories developed in social psychology and sociology (and social anthropology). To this date, identity research in both disciplines remains isolated from one another. However, the common ideas in identity theory and social identity theory might become the first steps in integrating both approaches. In the following sections, I introduce identity theory and social identity theory and compare their principal differences and similarities.

2.2.1 Identity theory

Identity theory, primarily developed by sociologists Jan Sets and Sheldon Stryker, and social psychologist Peter J. Burke, has roots in symbolic interactionism. Initially, the primary goal of identity theory was to understand the way meanings affiliated to different identities are negotiated and managed, in other words, how they relate to each other. Identity theory recognized three bases of identity: role, group, and

person identities. These bases co-exist and often overlap but hold autonomous positions within the identity structure (Sets 2013).

Early identity theory focused primarily on role identities. Essentially, roles are socially and culturally constructed meanings, expectations, and associations regarding a particular social position (Stets 2013). An example of a role identity could be a doctor, a musician, a mother, an activist, or a famous TikToker. Each individual occupies multiple roles simultaneously, with a different level of proximity between them (Burke 2003). Roles are formed and developed in relation to counter-roles within the same group: Daughter and father, accountant and manager, funny friend and responsible friend in their respective groups (Stets & Burke 2014). Often, a person occupies more than one role identity at a time. Then, based on the context, past experiences, and the internal identity hierarchy, an individual chooses (consciously or subconsciously) the role identity most suitable for the situation.

Group and social identities emerge from meanings derived from interactions with particular groups of people or belonging to a social category (Sets 2013). Groups might be small, such as families, friend circles, or clubs, intermediate, like neighborhoods, associations, and organizations, and large, such as ethnicity, gender, or class, and have different effects on identity maintenance and expression depending on their scale and category (Stets & Burke 2014). Group identities represent a structure in which persons exist, and belonging to a group dictates one's social identity, rights, obligations, access to resources, and relationship networks. Within a group framework, an individual occupies a particular role, for example, the daughter in a family group, the accountant in a workgroup, or the funny friend in a friend group.

Person identities are unique characteristics of a person, like character traits or self-image. Person identities are always within a person and usually transcend both group and role identities (Stets & Burke 2014).

Control and maintenance of identities within the self depends on several factors, particularly identity salience and identity verification. Identity salience refers to the likelihood that a particular identity will be activated in a situation. The more salient identity is, the higher it is ranked in the identity hierarchy. *Identity verification* is a process that describes whether the person's perceived self-identity matches the way the others see the person (Stets 2013). A successful verification process, or a situation where other people see an individual the way the individual wants other people to see them, increases self-esteem and salience. On the contrary, an unsuccessful verification process decreases self-esteem and identity salience (Stets & Burke 2014).

Another concept that has been important to identity theory since its earlier development stages are identity hierarchy. Identity hierarchy is an internal ranking of one's identities. The more salient or critical a particular identity is to the individual, the higher its position in the ranking. The identity that is placed hierarchically higher is activated more often across different social situations than an identity placed lower. The importance of this concept lies in the assumption that when an identity is activated, it serves as a filter or a lens (Stets 2013). In other words, the higher the rank of a particular identity, the more often it gets activated, and the more often an individual perceives his reality through that particular lens. The hierarchy ranking is dynamic and depends on several factors. It is primarily based on personal beliefs, social groups and, as Uemura's (2011) comparative study between Japanese and

American nationals revealed, is culturally sensitive. Successful identity verification can also increase the salience and commitment of identity, and therefore move it up in the hierarchy ranking (Stets & Burke 2014).

In short, modern identity theory explores the relationships between the identity processes and the interconnections of social groups, roles, and person identities. Stets and Burke (2014) paraphrase Mead's well-known "society shapes self shapes social behavior": structure (or group identities) shapes identity salience (or identity hierarchy), shapes social behavior (or a choice of the best fitting role identity). This formula implies the co-dependence of these seemingly autonomous identity categories and processes. Different bases of identities are in constant dynamic processes: they overlap, affect, conflict, or reinforce one another. I will discuss the topic of multiple identities, identity hierarchy, and the relationships among different aspects of identity in more detail in the following sections.

2.2.2 Social identity theory and self-categorization theory

Social identity theory (SIT) was developed by Henri Tajfel, a social psychologist, in the 1970s to understand the reasons behind intergroup prejudice, discrimination, and conflict. According to SIT, belonging to social groups becomes a resource of a shared identity among its members. Having a shared group identity implies conforming to common beliefs and behaviors dominant in the group (Hogg 2016). Initially, the theory focused mainly on intergroup conflict and intergroup relationships. However, it expanded to cover various topics, such as self-

categorization, social identity motivations, social harmony, collective behavior, influence through leadership, and others (Hogg, Abrams & Brewer 2017).

Self-categorization theory (SCT) was developed by John C. Turner, a former student of Henri Tajfel, as an extension of costal identity theory. SCT and SIT have many overlapping ideologies and perspectives on identity (Turner and Reynolds 2012, 400; Horsney 2008, 207), and in literature are referred to as a unified "social identity" approach. In contrast with other related theories, especially in the field of social psychology, both SIT and SCT put the importance on the shared, contextual, group-focused attributes of people instead of studying the mental system of an individual in an isolated, social environment-free circumstance (Turner and Reynolds 2012, 400).

Categorization and self-categorization are seen as functions of accessibility and "fit," a high similarity among the members of a particular group. These functions highly depend on the context. For example, individuals may perceive the highest level of fit if the group minimizes individual differences (intra-group compatibility) and maximize inter-group differences. However, such feelings might shift depending on the specific context, meaning that such group affiliations are not fixed or static (Horsney 2008, 208). This idea leads to another important concept in SCT: depersonalization. SCT scholars argue that when a group (category) that individuals associate themselves with becomes salient, people tend to see themselves more as a representative of that category than individuals, depending not on objective reality but rather on a subjective sense of belonging. The group identity then prescribes certain behaviors, attitudes, and emotions that the group members should follow in specific contexts (Horsney 2008, 209).

Initially, the social identity approach focused on the intergroup relationships, such as conflict, prejudice, and cooperation (Hogg 2016). However, since the 1990s, the social identity approach has expanded considerably, examining types of self, social identity motivations, intergroup emotions, leadership, social protests, and collective behavior. Moreover, researchers believe that future directions of social identity theory might include broader topics, such as health, online behavior, communication, stigmatized identities, migration (Hogg, Abrams & Brewer 2017). Some of these recommendations have been implemented by scholars from disciplines other than social psychology. There have been studies in healthcare (Lennon et al. 2005, Scott et al. 2017), communication technologies (Jenkins et al. 2019, Slater 2007), migration, tourism, and cross-cultural adjustment (Zhang and Peltokorpi 2015, Lee and Gretzel 2014), marketing (Sierra & McQuitty 2007), ethnography (Weinberg, Williams & Pryor 2001), and others fields.

Another call for action from identity studies theorists included a closer cross-examination and a potential integration of the identity and social identity theories due to their conceptual similarities. In the following chapter, I review the literature concerning the comparison of the two theories.

2.2.3 Identity theory and social identity theory comparison

Identity and social identity theories share similar views on identity formation and society's significant role in its development. However, up to this date, there were only two systematic attempts to compare the two theories: the first one by Hogg, Terry, and White (1995) and the second one by Stets and Burke (2000). Both papers

agree that the differences in identity theory and social identity theory are more differences of focus and emphasis rather than fundamental theoretical discrepancy.

The differences in identity theory and social identity theory could be generalized to three broad areas: level of analysis, the conceptualization of identity, and different understanding of bases of identities. First, as mentioned in sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, identity theory and social identity theory have different disciplinary roots. Identity theory draws from social theory and symbolic interactionism. It is not a psychological theory and therefore does not investigate cognitive processes. Instead, the main analytical concerns of identity theory recognize oneself as an occupant of a particular social role, acknowledging the importance of others in the verification of a role, and relating social roles to behavior patterns (Stets & Burke 2000; Hogg et al. 1995).

Both theories view the self as a dynamic structure that can categorize and label itself with other social categories depending on the context. However, identity theory focuses on the process of identification, while social identity theory emphasizes categorization. Categorization implies that social identities derive from people's knowledge that they belong to a particular social category and view themselves as one with that category. On the other hand, identification is a categorization of oneself based on a role a person is playing in society and internalization of the meanings associated with the role (Stets & Burke 2000). In other words, according to social identity theory, identity is a result of being the same with other members of the group. According to identity theory, identity results from being different from other group members based on their role performance.

The most apparent theoretical dissimilarity between identity theory and social identity theory lies in what is considered to be the basis for an identity: role-based (identity theory) and group-based (social identity theory). In identity theory, one's identity emerges from the roles one occupies in a society: e.g., a teacher, a mother, a customer. These roles develop through social interactions with other individuals and come with specific behavioral expectations from the occupant of the role. A successful re-enactment of a role validates a person as a legitimate occupant of that role in the eyes of society and positively affects one's self-esteem (Hogg et al. 1995, 257). Each role has a counter-role (e.g., teacher-student, mother-son, customer-shop assistant). The successful performance of roles and counter-roles depend largely on negotiation because the interests often compete (Stets and Burke 2000, 227). In short, identity theory regards society as a system of interrelated individuals that, depending on the existing set of norms and expectations in a given culture, are forced to interact and negotiate with each other to enact a particular role one occupies successfully.

Group-based identities of social identity theory view identities as socially constructed as well. However, instead of considering a person's specific role as formative to their identity, group membership is considered the primary source of one's identity. In social identity theory, having a social identity means belonging to a specific group and sharing fundamental values, characteristics, attitudes, and beliefs of a group as a whole, regardless of individual relationships within the group (Stets & Burke 2000, 226). When one's identity as a group member becomes "stereotypical and normative" (Hogg et al. 1995, 260), a relationship with a relevant out-group can become competitive and even discriminatory. Stets and Burke (2000) believe that these views are not mutually exclusive, and mostly depends on whether one wants to

focus more on the relationships between different roles within a group (intragroup relationships), or whether one wants to focus on intergroup relations and examine what a particular group has in common with other groups.

There are more differences between identity theory and social identity theory which are more nuanced. However, the two perspectives are "remarkably similar" and occupy "parallel, but separate universes" (Hogg et al. 1995, 255): they both put a strong emphasis on the co-existence of multiple identities within the self and view them as a part of a psycho-social structure. Up until this date, the two theories exist "with virtually no cross-referencing" due to the differing disciplinary roots (Hogg et al. 1995, 255). Identity scholars argue for a possibility of integration of the two theories for a more exhaustive understanding of self (Stets and Burke 2000).

2.2.4 Multiple identities

The main research question addressed in the current thesis concerns the relationships among artists' multiple identities. This section will briefly overview the conceptualizations of multiple identities across several disciplines: psychology, sociology, and critical theory. Then, in the section 2.2.5, I will explain how multiple identity framework, drawing primarily from identity and social identity theories, will assist in answering the posed research question.

As mentioned in section 2.2, the concept of multiple identities, or multiple aspects of self, is not new in psychology. First interest in the subject is commonly attributed to a psychologist William James (1890). He believed a person has as many identities as there are people who know him because, in each social interaction, a

different dimension of one's self comes into play. The discourse on multiple identities across the disciplines generally does not contest this statement. However, there are some theoretical and focal differences.

Multiple identities have been primarily studied in three disciplines: psychology, sociology (social anthropology), and, more recently, in critical theory. Within these three categories, there are further divisions. In psychology, multiple identities are studied by developmental and social psychological denominations. Developmental psychology is, essentially, Eriksonian psychodynamic theory. In developmental psychology, the identity construction process is seen as a linear evolution. Identities are seen as something one "has" by default, but might not know it, might have lost it, or suppressed it. In other words, according to psychodynamic theory, identities are developed and discovered over time. In contrast to other approaches, a psychodynamic theory is purely psychological and does not emphasize external factors, such as social and cultural context.

Another psychological theory deriving from the discipline of social psychology is social identity theory. In social identity theory, multiple identities are connected to social groups to which they belong. Identities are ranked in a hierarchy. They are frequently independent of each other and are responsive to the shifting social context. As seen through the lens of social identity theory, the primary relationship patterns among different aspects of identity are integration and differentiation of identities, conflict, and overlap in meanings (Ramarajan 2014). In contrast with psychodynamic theory, social identity theory emphasizes the individual's social context, and conceptually could be placed between psychological and social approaches to identity studies.

Identity theory is a micro-sociological theory, which has its roots in social theory and not psychology. Some key concepts in identity theory have already been presented in section 2.2.1, including the internal identity hierarchy of multiple identities within the self. While this notion has been a prominent one since the earlier development of identity theory, little research has been conducted on how these identities relate and influence each other. An extension of identity theory, identity control theory, attempts to investigate this aspect. According to identity control theory, multiple identities only make sense when activated simultaneously in a situation. Identities with shared meanings tend to get activated together. When two identities with shared meanings cooperate, they might enhance one another or conflict (Burke 2003). In other words, multiple identities are in a state of a dynamic relationship with each other and have the power to affect the perspective of an individual and other aspects of identity.

Lastly, multiple identities are covered by critical theory. In critical theory, the self is seen as fragmented, chaotic, and comprises many identities (or group memberships) that are often subject to oppression and marginalization (Ramarajan 2014). When examined through the prism of power relations in critical theory (particularly in intersectionality), the research on multiple identities attempts to investigate how identity salience is influenced by power and privilege of different interconnected structures or through multiple group membership (Jones, Kim & Skendall 2011). It often focuses on the experiences of women and people of color and calls for social change and advancement in human rights.

In conclusion, multiple identities are not a new phenomenon. This concept has been theorized from several disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, and critical

theory. Despite the differences in the emphasis and focus, scholars from across the specialties agree that the majority of identity-related research has only focused on singular identity framework and has primarily omitted the role of having multiple simultaneously active identities (Gaither 2018; Stryker & Burke 2016; Ramarajan 2014; Stryker & Burke 2000). Identity and social identity theories share similar views on identity formation and society's significant role in its development. However, up to this date, there were only two systematic attempts to compare the two theories: the first one by Hogg, Terry, and White (1995) and the second one by Stets and Burke (2000). Both papers agree that the differences in identity theory and social identity theory are more differences of focus and emphasis rather than fundamental theoretical discrepancy.

2.3 Migration studies

As a phenomenon, migration is as old as humanity. However, theories trying to explain migration and people's motivations to move from one place of settlement to another started recently at the end of the nineteenth century with seminal works of Ravenstein. Ravenstein (1885,1889) developed seven laws of migration that have been widely used to date in both empirical and theoretical research. Lee (1966) notes that very few attempts to expand on previous research, considering the changing realities of contemporary migration: its volume, motivations, and assimilation.

There is, however, an increasing interest in the field from the scholars of various disciplines, examining migration from different angles, such as economic implications, remittances, labor market, brain drain. However, as Wickramasinghe

and Wimalaratana (2016) note, a single theory that could potentially explain or address all the aspects of international migration has not yet been developed. According to Arango (2000), there might not even be a need to develop a single all-encompassing theory because of the complexity of migration.

The current sub-chapter will open with a brief overview of key concepts in early migration theories. Then, it will discuss the emergence of newer migration theories, which shift the focus from linear, male, rational choice-based, economic migration to a more nuanced and complex interpretation of the phenomenon. Later, the chapter introduces the “push-pull-plus" framework and the notion of place identity. Finally, the practical application of the discussed conceptual frameworks will be presented in the last section of the chapter.

2.3.1 Early conceptualizations of migration

First attempts to conceptualize migration are attributed to Ernest-George Ravenstein. Ravenstein’s work stems from neo-classical economics and emphasizes rational choice and paid labor differentials (Arango 2000). Ravenstein’s economic-centric interpretation of the drivers behind migration strongly affected the subsequent attempts at conceptualizing migration in various disciplines, taking for granted financial gain as the primary reason people move from place to place (Schewel 2019; O’Reilly 2012). Neo-classical tradition gave birth to several other migration theories, explaining migration primarily through income inequality, availability of work, demand for immigrant labor, and rational choice (Parkins 2011, Arango 2000). World-systems theory is another macro theory, which explains migration as an inherently

capitalist tool for mobilizing cheap labor, making the poor poorer and the rich richer (O'Reilly 2012, Parkins 2011, Arango 2000).

There were also attempts to categorize significant migration streams. In their article, Wickramasinghe & Wimalaratana (2016) review such literature. Jennissen's (2004) study, for instance, four types of migration identified are 1) labor migration; 2) return migration; 3) chain migration; 4) asylum migration; Bell et al. (2010) see migration as three main types: 1) labor migration; 2) forced migration; 3) international retirement migration, and lastly, the categorization offered by Hugo (2008), Koppenberg (2012) and Zetter (2015) is a binary of forced and voluntary migration. Despite differences in the categorizations provided above, labor (economic) and forced (political) migration seem to be present in one way or another in each of the explanations (Wickramasinghe and Wimalaratana 2016, Arango 2000). This accurately reveals the dominance of economic and political migration in contemporary research, thus under-representing other kinds of migration, such as to name a few, lifestyle, transnational, cultural migrations.

However, such predominantly "rational" and economic theories of migration are receiving a fair share of criticism from the scientific community. One point that some scholars brought up is that the world's poor, in fact, often cannot migrate because the initial resources to do so are not available to them. Therefore, while there is a correlation between migration and financial gain, poverty in itself cannot be the primary driver (Schewel 2019; Van Hear, Bakewell & Long 2017). Another point that scholars have brought up is the redundancy of the complexity associated with a migration when viewed solely through the economic lens. Migration is a multi-layered phenomenon, consisting of macro- (economical, political, environmental),

mezzo- (communication technology, diaspora, community), and micro- (education, religion, personal attitude, and individual choice) factors (Castelli 2017). Personal motivations, gender, aspirations, changing resources, and other micro-factors contribute to migration and are actively incorporated into the newer migration theories. Lastly, as suggested by Schewel, migration studies suffer from "mobility bias" (Schewel 2019). According to Schewel, scholars tend to focus on the drivers behind migration, overlooking the "retaining" factors, or counter-forces, which discourage people from migrating, despite the "rational" desire of a potential economic gain in a new destination.

To sum it up, the early scholarship on migration drew primarily from Neo-classical economic models, focusing on rational choice, economic gain, and availability of work. However, macro approaches are criticized for dismissing the complexity of the intertwining macro-, mezzo- and micro- factors and motivations involved in the process. As a result, the need for new theories explaining migration has emerged.

2.3.2 Newer migration theories

The earlier migration theories focused almost exclusively on economic gain, the labor market, and rational choice. Migration was seen as a permanent move to a new destination, and therefore the move was seen as something fixed, immutable, requiring sacrifice and assimilation. However, newer migration theories view migration as a more nuanced, flexible, and continuous process. More aspects and variables are considered: the combination of macro-, mezzo-, and micro- factors; multiculturalism; gender; globalization; mobility (O'Reilly 2012).

Social network theory, for instance, sees migration not as a one-time fixed event but as a part of a bigger picture of one's life story and highlights the importance of social linkages in the home and host countries (Paparusso & Ambrosetti 2017). Migration networks theory also emphasizes the importance of the migrant's family and community in making decisions and views migration as an ongoing process. Migration system theory sees migration as a complex combination of macro-, mezzo-, and micro- factors in a larger context, focusing on a group, or cluster, migration, instead of individual migration (O'Reilly 2012).

Other theories, such as transnationalism, segmented assimilations, and globalization theories, research settlement practices (O'Reilly 2012). Transnationalism is, essentially, an umbrella concept for many processes transcending national borders. Such processes might include transnational corporations, remittances, multicultural identities, terrorism, digital spaces, and other phenomena, and usually implies the bonds between people or institutions across the nation-states. The accessibility and widespread usage of communication technologies and inexpensive means of transportation are often linked to the advancement and normalization of transitional migration patterns. In short, being a transnational migrant means belonging to more than one place, identifying as more than one ethnicity or nationality, living simultaneously in more than one location (Nedelcu 2012, Čiubrinskas 2006, Vertovec 1999)

Some scholars began introducing theoretical frameworks designed for specific groups of migrants. The one that is relevant to the current research is Florida's creative capital theory. As Verdich (2010) summarized it, in order to assert economic growth, urban centers should put effort into attracting the "holders of creative

capital." According to Florida, creative capital holders prefer diverse places and offer a "24/7" lifestyle, opportunities, abundant social interactions, tolerant values and lifestyles, aesthetics, and services. The theory became quite influential; however, it could be criticized as too "urban-centric" and dismissive some people's preference for a more quiet, quality-of-life-oriented lifestyle (Verdich 2010).

Like many other aspects of life, migration is an increasingly gendered process. Earlier migration theories focused almost exclusively on male labor migration, failing to adequately research female migration (Schewel 2019). There are several aspects in which female migration is different from male migration. For example, women are less likely to return to their country of origin after leaving their home country. Living in a new country often comes with independence, equality, and alienation from traditional gender roles. Thus, migration serves as an emancipation agent (Paparusso & Ambrosetti 2017, O'Reilly 2012). Women are more likely to integrate more easily into the new society. Being married, divorced, or widowed decreases the intentions of returning to the host country among women, which is a different dynamic than men, who are more likely to return to their home country when espoused (Paparusso & Ambrosetti 2017).

Earlier migration theories were primarily focused on the economic side and the roots of migration, mainly ignoring the determinants and other factors and agents (Arango 2000). The theories mostly took male experiences in labor migration, overlooking other types of migration, such as asylum-seeking, temporary migration, women migration, lifestyle migration, mobility, and unidirectional moves (O'Reilly 2012). Newer ones tend to consider more nuanced aspects of migration, expand the focus, and include micro-, mezzo-, and macro- factors.

2.3.3 Push and pull factors

One of the earlier micro theories that I would like to focus on is the "push-pull" framework. As summarized by Parkins (2011), micro-theories explain migration through the decision of individual people to migrate based on their skills and where they can be most productive. In earlier literature, push-pull frameworks also relied on primarily economic explanation: migrants were dissatisfied with low income in their region and therefore "pushed" from it towards a region with better financial prospects (Van Hear et al. 2017).

Later, the push and pull factors were expanded to include other, non-economy-related factors. "Push and pull" became to signify any factors that were urging people to leave their home countries (or areas), such as politics, living standards, and insufficient opportunities, and migrate to a different region (O'Reilly 2012). In other words, both the place of origin and destination possesses some attractive and repulsive characteristics. However, it is essential to note that these are individual: characteristics deemed positive for one person might be harmful or indifferent to another. For example, a country with a traditional and societally conservative majority might be seen as a point of attraction to an individual who shares similar values, but might be a point of repulsion for individuals with more liberal views and might have no positive or negative charge to a person for whom this has no importance in their daily lives.

It is not always possible to assess the ratio of these "push" and "pull" factors quickly: the judgment about the place of origin often comes from direct long-term lived experience, while the destination's image is often covered, to some degree, with

mystery and uncertainty. Another critical factor lies in the emotional, cultural, and social attachments to the area of origin, thus requiring the balance of push-and-pull factors to be outweighed considerably by the place of destination, and despite the attempt of many migration theories to "rationalize" the decision behind migrating, as Lee writes, is never entirely rational. The irrational component might be considerably more substantial for some people (Lee 1966, 50-51).

There has been a fair share of criticism towards the push-pull model in its original version due to its static character and failure to take into consideration the changing circumstances and aspirations of people (Van Hear et al. 2017), not distinguishing between country characteristics, and characteristics within the country (Chen 2017), and neglect of social norms and expectations (Schewel 2019). Despite the criticism, push and pull frameworks still offer a valuable and empirically grounded insight into the process of migration (Van Hear et al. 2017). Several scholars called to expand the initial push and pull framework to include at least two more factors: "retain" and "repel" (Schewel 2019, Arango 2000). "Retain" factors are the attractive points that encourage people to stay, while "repel" factors are factors that diminish the motivation to migrate (Schewel 2019).

The findings of current research align with the expanded push and pull framework. Many artists who left Japan might have initially had particular "pull" and "push" factors. However, as they settled in the new destination, circumstances and motivations to stay in the new destination have changed, thus creating additional categories of "retain" and "repel." This is covered in more detail in Chapter V.

2.3.4 Place identity

Proshansky et al. (1983) first defined the term "place identity" as a sub-structure of self-identity that consists of "memories, ideas, feelings attitudes, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behavior and experiences" related to a physical setting in which an individual finds themselves in (Proshansky et al. 1983, 59). In other words, the social and cultural meanings, beliefs, and memories attached to significant places of an individual contribute to one's identity in a similar way that gender or a social class do. According to the theory, place identity is a dynamic structure that changes with the individual, and through a person's attachment to a geographical place, it provides a sense of meaning and belonging to one's life (Proshansky et al. 1983, 60). In other words, "questions of 'who we are' is often intimately related to questions of 'where we are'" (Dixon & Durrheim 2000, 27).

While Proshansky's place identity is viewed as a good starting point for geographically inclined identity research, it has received criticism from the scientific community (Hauge 2007, Bonauito et al. 1996, Krupat 1983). The main drawbacks of place identity seem to be a weak theoretical framework and lack of support to the claim that place identity is of the same importance to one's identity as, for instance, gender and social class are.

Even though social identity theory typically views place as neutrally charged, Dixon and Durrheim (2000) and Hauge (2007) agree that place identity could fit within a more theoretically and methodologically developed social identity and self-categorization theory. However, as Hauge (2007) further notes, the Proshansky et al. (1983) idea of the impact of a physical setting on one's identity has filled in an

existing research gap in self-identity studies. Some of the concepts of place identity are enthusiastically used in humanistic geography, environmental psychology, and other related fields not as an independent sub-structure of self-identity, but rather as a dimension (physical setting-related implications) of other aspects of identity (Twigger-Ross & Uzzel 1996, Hauge 2007, 9).

Urban place identity is one of the topics that has been receiving attention from some scholars (Lalli 1988, Hull et al. 1994, Lewicka 2008, Ujang 2009). Proshansky et al. (1983) also mentioned the importance of associations and beliefs regarding urban life. As per their example, people from various social and ethnic backgrounds living in New York City might see the city as an essential part of their identity, despite having very different experiences of living there (Proshansky et al. 1983, 77). We will see later in Chapter VI how some of the artists participating in the research also develop the place identity of a "New Yorker" or a "New York artist."

Another aspect relevant for artists as a target group, according to Proshansky et al. (1983), place-identity function classification, would be the meaning function. Proshansky et al. (1983) suggested that physical setting and an individual's social role are in a dynamic relationship. Some places can enhance one's role by transmitting certain information and social cues about the individual in the setting and directly affecting their well-being by reconfirming their existing identity. They provide an example of a new assistant professor: if an assistant professor is not given a workspace that lives up to their expectations as what kind of an office an assistant professor is supposed to have, it might affect their confidence as an academician and vice versa. If an assistant professor arrives in an adequately furnished and set up the office, their confidence and well-being might boost. In a somewhat similar fashion,

Bain (2004) conducted research focusing on the place identity of Canadian female artists in relationship to their studios. She discovered that a studio is vital in reinforcing occupational identity among artists, mainly if it follows a particular model of an "artist studio" existing in society's collective imagination. The relationship between the artists and their studios will be further explored in the analysis in Chapter V of the thesis.

The physical setting is something one is often unaware of. However, it contributes substantially to aspects of self-identity. Hauge (2007) suggests viewing place-identity horizontally rather than vertically across other identity categories. The individual finds themselves in a dynamic relationship with the space they find themselves in, modifying the space to reflect their identity and being affected by the place in return, following the social and cultural cues a place calls for. For the artists participating in the current study, two significant locations are to be examined in Chapter V: New York City, where they live, and the art studios where they work.

2.4 Summary

The current research focuses on the relationships between multiple identities of contemporary Japanese artists living and working in New York City. The thesis raises three research questions: What motivates the Japanese to pursue their artistic career in New York City? How do the experiences of migrant artists in New York contribute to their self-perception within the art world, and how do multiple identities of contemporary artists interconnect with each other? As discussed in more detail in the methodology chapter, the current study has made it a point to interview the

participants with the base assumption that their occupational identity of an "artist" is activated and salient. In other words, when the artist identity is activated, how do other identities contribute to that state?

Theoretically, the research builds on two fields: Identity studies and migration studies. Both areas are integral for answering the posed research questions. However, in terms of contribution to the current research, they are not equal. Migration theory, in particular the "push-pull-plus" micro-framework implemented in this research, is utilized as an instrument to bind together some aspects of Japanese artists' identities and place. Careful examination of individual "push," "pull," "retain," and "repulse" factors is aimed to contribute to the understanding of migrants' priorities, which in turn might provide a hint onto which aspects of identities were activated during the decision to migrate. As it was presented in this chapter, the identities are placed hierarchically within the self. The higher is the placement of identity, the more likely it is that it will get activated in a situation. The activated identity becomes a filter, or a lens, for analyzing the context and choosing appropriate behavior (Stets 2013).

In the context of this research, the activated identity of the participants is that of an artist. Then, if the activated identity shares meaning with another identity, it will most likely get activated as well. For instance, if an artist identity shares meanings with an identity of a parent, or gender identity, the likelihood that they both will be activated in a situation is very high. When two or more identities are activated simultaneously, and they share meanings, they have the power to affect and interact with each other, be enhancing, conflicting, or changing their meanings (Burke 2003). Therefore, the identity theory approach will be particularly beneficial in the circumstantiation of the dynamics between multiple identities among the artists.

At the same time, the aspects of self-stereotyping, shared norms, and the relationship to the out-groups (non-artists, non-Japanese), as emphasized in social identity theory and self-categorization theory, might be particularly valuable in understanding the values, typical patterns of thinking, and self-stereotyping of artists as a group. Identifying with a social group usually implies "being at one," "being like others," and "seeing things from the group's perspective," as well as adopting the traditions, myths, and self-stereotypes associated with the group (Sets & Burke 2000, 226). Another appealing point of implementing the social identity approach is that it is highly transferable to any group "regardless of its size, dispersion, and other characteristics" (Hogg et al. 1995, 262). This is a particularly relevant point since a group of "contemporary Japanese artists in New York City" does not exist either physically or in an online format. It is, in fact, a dispersed group of people with similar identities in terms of their geographic location, ethnicity, nationality, and occupation. However, the amount of overlapping identities allows us to think of them as a group with shared values, beliefs, myths, and behaviors.

In other words, the merger of both identity theory and social identity theory seems to be the way to approach the objectives of the current study, with a slight philosophical and theoretical shift towards identity theory. Here, it is possible to borrow the following notions from both identity theory and social identity theory: 1) a hierarchy of identities and contextual activation of identity from identity theory (Hogg et al. 1995, 257); and 2) a process of self-categorization and responsiveness from dynamic contexts from social identity theory and self-categorization theory (Hogg et al. 1995, 265). Due to the psychological origins of social identity theory, it is essential to remain mindful of the epistemological boundaries of social anthropology and avoid

diving excessively into the cognitive psychological processes behind identity and group formation.

Chapter III:
Contextual and Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

The current chapter overviews the literature on various aspects of identity, focusing on how they relate to an artist's identity. In other words, how belonging to a particular social group (gender, class, ethnicity, place), occupying a particular role (artist, parent, woman, soccer fan), and having a person identity (adventurous, introverted, organized) affects the experience of an individual as an artist. It is important to note that the objective reality and subjective perceptions of the artists themselves affect their identity, behavior, and self-image. The myths (or stereotypes) that exist in society also impact the feelings of legitimacy, perceived norms, and expectations.

It begins with an overview of the literature, which describes the definition of an artist. The section will demonstrate the discrepancy between the classifications provided by, for instance, UNESCO, and the interpretations dominating artists' networks and non-artist populations. One of the reasons for such inconsistency can be traced to the mystified and romanticized image of an artist, deriving from the historical and cultural context of the collective imagination. These "myths" affect how the artists are perceived by society and construct the expectations of a "desirable" image of an artist and their lifestyle.

Later, specific identity aspects, such as occupational identity, ethnic identity, gender identity, and others, through the prism of being an artist, will be discussed in each corresponding section. In other words, how various contexts and identity aspects

intersect with the identity of an artist. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of the literature on artist mobility, discussing how the occupational dynamics of creative professionals affect their migratory patterns.

The thesis aims to investigate and comprehend the dynamic relationship among different aspects of the artists' identities. While identity studies have acknowledged the existence of multiple identities within a self for a long time, most identity-related research focuses on a singular identity framework (Gaither 2018). Therefore, each section of the chapter loosely follows an "x identity + artist identity," as more comprehensive empirical research on the interconnections between different aspects of artist identities are yet to be conducted.

To sum it up, examining an artist's identity through its relationship with another identity category (myth, gender, race) or a context (art world, migration) will become a strong foundation for further analysis of multiple identities.

3.2 Myth: Who is an artist?

Within the literature describing the life and work of a professional artist, words like "uncertainty" and "ambiguity" appeared in many studies. This "uncertainty" covers not only the lack of financial stability due to the state of the art market (Menger 1999, 2001) but also the ambiguity of crafting and maintaining an artist identity itself (Lena & Lindemann 2014, Lingo & Tepper 2013, Taylor and Littleton 2008, Bain 2005, Bain 2003, Fine 2003). Myths and stereotypes have historically surrounded the figure of an artist. I will discuss the role of an artist through history in the West and in Japan in Chapter IV, and in this section, I would

like to focus on how various aspects of identity (including major identity categories such as gender, race, and ethnicity) and myths are affecting the artist identity today.

One of the reasons why artists are more influenced by myths than other professionals is the nature of their work environment. Bain argues that visual artists tend to work isolated from each other in "largely unregulated" environments and have little opportunity to create occupational identities through intermingling and adopting a shared workplace culture (Bain 2005, 26). As a result, artists often succumb to stereotypes to reinforce their occupational identity and legitimacy (Bain 2005, 42). Some of these stereotypes include working alone in isolation, being an intellectual, a genius, and male (Lingo & Tepper 2013; Bain 2005; Bain 2004). Lingo and Tepper discuss how artists justify their financial marginalization and normalize undertaking working-class jobs to sustain themselves in order to "live like an artist" by implementing the cultural narrative of "Bohemia" (Lingo & Tepper 2013, 351). What is even more interesting is that society reinforces these myths:

> There is an almost unanimous belief that artists are, and always have been, ego-centric, temperamental, neurotic, rebellious, unreliable, licentious, extravagant, obsessed by their work, and altogether difficult to live with.
> (Lingo & Tepper 2013, 351; see also Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi 1976)

The roots of many of these stereotypes can be traced back to historical, social, and cultural contexts and will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter IV. Many scholars pointed out that an artist's involvement in artistic circles is another significant characteristic in legitimizing one's identity (Lena & Lindemann 2014; Lingo and Tepper 2013; Bain 2005; Menger 2001). In a field where there are no formal licenses and requirements (in contrast to other highly skilled professionals, such as lawyers or surgeons), building a reputation and "convincing" other artists is a

common challenge many artists face (Lingo & Tepper 2013, 338; Bain 2005, 40; Menger 2001, 249). Like other professions, artists evaluate and categorize each other, accept some as their equals (especially those with whom they went through an academic program together), while completely excluding others (Bain 2005, 32).

Hennekam writes about the importance of community in an artist's career:

> In order to avoid this rejection by the community, some artists tried to create a 'good story' so that their artistic colleagues would validate it <…>. Although they [artists] were often dissatisfied about not being able to work exclusively as artists, they 'sold' this in a more positive way to the outside world in order to maintain a coherent identity.
> (Hennekam 2017, 983)

This example shows a perceived pressure from the artistic community to fulfill specific criteria to be considered a 'real' artist. In a profession where one's career relies mainly on networking within the community of artists and art world professionals (Menger 2001), maintaining a coherent identity and self-image is extremely important. Moreover, Bain's data suggests that in the Toronto art scene, there is a certain sense of competition, in which the older generation uses their seniority and status to prevent the younger generation from entering the art world on the same grounds (Bain 2005, 32).

The need to fulfill these criteria might lead to anxiety and feelings of uncertainty by the artists. Lena and Lindemann (2014) raised an interesting hypothesis, which argues that "highly embedded art world members," such as, for instance, arts graduates or those who grew up around artists, managed to consolidate their identities as artists through daily interactions much more successfully than those who entered the art world later in their lives. Art graduates are "trained to belong" in the art world, while others accepting oneself as a professional artist is an achievement

(Lena and Lindemann 2014). Similar sentiments were found during the interviews I conducted with the Japanese artists in New York, addressed more fully in the analysis chapter.

To sum up, being accepted by other professional artists is crucial to one's career. Moreover, it seems that while an artist is often described as free of societal norms and limitations, rebellious, and nurturing his or her unique character, the artist community has many implicit rules and attitudes to which an artist is supposed to comply. Many of these beliefs are perpetuated by myths and stereotypes surrounding the artist's figure because of the lack of "standardized" practice and shared work culture.

3.3 Reality: Who is a professional artist?

The ambiguity regarding the identity of a professional artist starts with differing and often vague definitions of who is considered to be a "professional artist." In their article "Who is an artist?", Lena and Lindemann (2014) define a professional artist as an "occupation whose primary purpose is the creation or performance of artistic works such as design, films, illustrations, music, performances, stories, and videos." In comparison, UNESCO offers a much broader definition of an artist as:

> Any person who creates or gives creative expression to or recreates works of art, who considers his artistic creation to be an essential part of his life, who contributes in this way to the development of art and culture, and who is or asks to be recognized as an artist, whether or not he is bound by any relations of employment or association (UNESCO. General Conference, 21st, Belgrade, 1980 [689]).

In her paper, Bain provides a definition of an artist formulated by The Canadian Artists' Representation le Front des Artistes Canadiens (Canadian Artists' Representation), where the term 'professional artist' includes anyone who makes a living with their artistic practice, possesses a diploma in fine arts, teaches at an art school, exhibits regularly, or who is recognized as an artist by other professional artists (Bain 2005, 32). Convincing one's peers of one's legitimacy is an essential part of being perceived as an artist and can be an increasingly difficult task because the definition of an artist differs from artist to artist. For instance, according to the data collected by Bain, real artists are people who "show in galleries," "are middle-aged," "are dedicated to fine art," who are not "women hobbyists," or "some people like housewives who call themselves artists" (Bain 2005, 34). For some, a professional artist possesses a degree in art or design (Taylor and Littleton 2008). Looking at the range of the definitions, I find the responses of the art graduates in a survey analyzed by Lena and Lindemann (2014), stating that they are simultaneously had been and had never been professional artists, a perfect example of the confusing ambiguity concerning the discussion on who is and who is not a professional artist.

The fact that a considerable number of artists respond that they are professional artists and, at the same time, have never been professional artists is confusing to the point of being absurd. A similar paradox could be found in another layer of the art world – the art market. Menger noticed a peculiar pattern of the art market wherein both employment and unemployment rates in the arts are rising simultaneously (Menger 1999). Autonomy and freedom, paired with low requirements for entry, the author argues, result in the oversupply of artists and creative workers. As a result of the surplus, the art market entails many occupational risks and

uncertainties, such as the inability to financially sustain oneself through full-time artistic employment, including recognized artists (Joy and Sherry 2003, 158; Menger 2001). As a result, most artists end up holding multiple jobs (Lingo and Tepper 2013; Menger 2001; Menger 1999).

Her study focused on interviewing 80 Toronto-based artists. Bain notes that even though most artists would like to work as full-time artists, 78% of her interviewees had secondary employment or received a pension (Bain 2005, 40). In Lena and Lindemann's (2014) study, the number of U.S. art graduates who held two or more jobs was 57%. Moreover, for many art professionals, most of their working week is devoted to jobs not related to their artistic labor, and most of the earning come from employment other than selling artwork (Lena and Lindemann 2014, 72; Bain 2005, 40).

The strategies of navigating the job insecurity also vary from artist to artist. Some artists choose to put aside their artistic careers for several years while earning money to support themselves in the future. Some take creative freelance jobs, such as design or writing projects; some prefer to keep their part-time work completely separate from the art world. Others keep full-time employment while creating art after work (Hennekam 2017; Lena and Lindemann 2014; Bain 2005). Another important strategy is not self-identifying as an "artist" altogether while being an artistic worker. Lena and Lindemann (2014) argue that "artists" earn less than "professionals," especially in "border occupations," such as design and illustration.

In her research entitled "Dealing with multiple, incompatible work-related identities: the case of artists," Hennekam (2017) seeks to understand how artists deal with having multiple work-related identities. She conducted 40 semi-structured

interviews with Netherlands-based artists to collect the data. While 27.5% of her respondents, primarily working in the art education sector, found their activities as highly compatible with their artist identity, maintaining several work-related identities still posed specific difficulties regarding self-image and society's perception.

Moreover, the perceptions of the image of an artist and artist identity can be culture-specific. For example, in her monograph, Shioya (1998) problematizes the lack of applicable definitions for an artist in the Japanese language. She argues that while in English there are many easy and widely accepted collocations, such as "starving artist," "working artist," "emerging artist," "well-known artist," "living artist," and so on, their Japanese counterparts are limited to *geijutsuka, ātisutō*, that both could be translated as "artist," and *kyoshō,* which would be closer to "master," or "maestro" (Shioya 1998, 3). She further points out that for the Japanese, the professional artist has a narrow meaning: "professional" means "earning money," and "amateur" means "not earning money" (Shioya 1998, 19). Chapter IV of the current thesis provides a comparative historical background of the Euro-American and Japanese art worlds, which will address the cultural and social differences between the two traditions in more detail.

To sum it up, the definitions of an artist remain vague and context-dependent. The lack of consensus affects the way artists perceive themselves and how they are treated by society. On the one hand, such ambiguity provides more space for uncertainty and confusion. On the other hand, it might allow the artists to have more flexibility in the craftsmanship of their artist identities.

3.4 The artist, the art market, and secondary employment

In order to understand the way the art world system affects artist identity formation, Joy and Sherry (2003) offer a description of a typical career path of a financially successful artist. First, it is best if the aspiring artist enrolls in a good school with a fine arts degree to make a smoother transition into the art world (Lena and Lindemann 2014; Joy and Sherry 2003). The second step for many graduates is going to New York, hoping to be “discovered” by a gallery. The gallery shows the work of an artist to their base of collectors. The higher the status of the exhibition venue, the more opportunities there are for official recognition (Joy and Sherry 2003). The artist-gallery relationship is one of the most foundational within the art world. Prestige for an artist, Giuffre (1999) writes, is primarily defined by the gallery's status to which he or she is tied. Beckert and Rössel (2013) also recognize the crucial role of gallery owners, curators, critics, art dealers, and art collectors in establishing an artist's reputation and "worth." They conclude that media attention is given to the artist. Representation of his or her works helps build a credible reputation and grant legitimacy in the art world.

However, at the same time, the topic that is often overlooked in this discourse is that galleries also have their careers and can earn prestige by showcasing high-prestige artists (Giuffre 1999, 817). This means that artists and galleries have an outstanding co-dependent bond formed by the level of prestige achieved by both sides (Giuffre 1999, 816). Joy and Sherry also remind us that while the competition is high among artists to earn a spot at a gallery, the competition between the galleries, museums, dealers, and auction houses is fierce (Joy & Sherry 2003). If we would

view artists as employees and galleries as employers, it gives us yet another paradox: the position of both the artist and the gallery are mutually affecting the status and prestige of each other (Giuffre 199, 818). Many (but not everyone) see artists' participation in the art world, and the art market is seen by many (but not by everyone) as an integral part of being a professional artist. Due to the oversupply of artists, the “gallery” art world has become an increasingly competitive space.

This competition is why, as a result, most artists seek secondary employment, which also constitutes the art market. Secondary employment as an art educator is a standard option for many artists, either at an art university, school, or private lessons (Bain 2005). All of the authors (coincidentally, all of them have a background in art education) writing about artists as art educators problematize the identity crisis (conflict) that emerges from the attempts to combine the identities of an artist and an art teacher (Hennekam 2017; Zwirn 2005; Anderson 1982; Orsini 1973).

One of the reasons balancing artist and art educator identities is challenging is that the goals and demands of these two professions are often described as incompatible (Hennekam 2017; Orsini 1973). The expectations for an artist and an art teacher sometimes contradict one another. An “artist” is often thought of as "making objects, implementing ideas, and being creative" (Anderson 1981, 45). Developing one's artistic personality and cultivating one's unique vision is seen as inseparable from an artist’s creative work (Orsini 1973). For a teacher, on the other hand, self-expression and creativity are not required skills. A teacher is expected to be fluent in "method, objective, and generalization" (Orsini 1973, 299).

In two of her papers, Zwirn (2005, 2006) draws data from fieldwork conducted between September 2000 and May 2001. She interviewed four groups of

six: undergraduates, graduate art education students, art teachers with 5-8 years of work experience, and art teachers with 20-35 years of teaching experience. She concludes that the artists who have art-teacher positions in public schools are often expected to follow a particular curriculum. The school does not encourage their art career, and the awareness that the school does not regard its art teachers as having a creative gift is painful for many (Zwirn 2006, 168).

Drawing from their respondents, Hatfield et al. (2006) note that maintaining several identities takes a toll psychologically, especially for those who regard their artist selves as the central identity. Their research studied the lives of eleven art teachers with positions in high schools from three different locations in the U.S. The study focused on the experiences of their professional identities as art teachers and artists. Ten out of eleven respondents in the study were women, revealing a gender imbalance in the field. Zwirn (2006) also noticed that women chose the profession of an art educator more often than men. The relationship between gender identity and artist identity will be discussed in more detail in section 2.7.

Another reason for an identity conflict that emerges from the artist-art teacher dichotomy is the public eye. An art educator's career is often regarded as inferior to an artist's (Hennekam 2017; Anderson 1981; Zwirn 2006). Anderson stresses that it is a "grave misconception" to assume that art teachers engaged in teaching because they could not succeed as independent artists (Anderson 1981, 46). Not only is this misconception true for the general society, but this hierarchy can also be traced within the artistic community itself. Many artists believe that splitting one's time between being an art educator and an artist implies that artistic development is not a priority,

and therefore, the teacher is teaching because they are not “good enough” to be full-time artists (Zwirn 2006, 167).

The crisis arises from the underlying implications of the profession (Anderson 1981, 46). In other words, the expectations and stereotypes concerning the art educator's profession cause the most distress. As one example of this, we can refer to the work of Hennekam (2017). She notes that stress caused by the invalidation from the environment (for example, the teaching institution or other artists) often results in separation and dis-identification management strategies to cope with the inner contradictions (Hennekam 2017). However, despite the challenges of balancing these two identities, the data suggests that art teachers believe it is vital to be successful art educators to maintain their artistic development (Zwirn 2005).

The majority of contemporary artists find themselves in a situation where they have no choice but to engage in several types of employment to sustain their lifestyles and creative careers due to the oversupply of artists in the art world. The job of an art educator is seen as one of the most desirable ones, as it appears to be complementary to the individual artistic practice of the artists. Nevertheless, the differing requirements and expectations of the role of an artist, and the role of an art educator, often result in an internal conflict and distress. Chapter VII will demonstrate how the respondents participating in the current research manage these contradicting occupational identities.

3.5 The “racialized” artist

Recent scholarship is reaching consensus that biologically speaking there is no productive way of discussing racial differences in genetic, medical, or biological differences. Nevertheless, race continues to affect people’s lives and experiences in employment opportunities, societal perception, communities of belonging, being a subject to institutional racism, and other areas of life. The race is socially constructed, relational, culturally, and politically contextual and is reinforced through social practices and beliefs (Alcoff 2006; Woodward 2004). In order to emphasize the artificial (as opposed to natural and fixed) process of categorizing people into categories based on their “racial” physical, linguistic, and cultural markers, many scholars prefer to substitute terms “race” and “ethnicity” with such terms as “racialized” or “ethnicized” (Woodward 2004).

Such contextual “racialization” by others becomes relevant as the “racialized” groups are given identities that do not necessarily correlate with how the members of such a “racialized” group feel. However, such labeling by others has the power to change others’ identities (Woodward 2004). For instance, the current study participants were all born in Japan and migrated to the United States later in life. Japan is considered ethnically homogenous, with more than 98% of its population being ethnically Japanese. In such context, categorizing these artists as “Japanese” or “Asian” would make no sense, and most probably, contextually as being members of the majority group, they were not thinking about belonging to these “racialized” groups either. However, after arriving in ethnically and culturally diverse NYC, suddenly, they were made aware of their “otherness” by the non-Asian majority,

therefore providing them a new "racialized" identity. In other words, moving from Japan to the U.S. provided the Japanese artists with a new perception of the self by unlocking a new dimension of identity.

In the context of the art world of the U.S., "racialized" identities acquire extra meanings, such as differences in career opportunities and stereotyped public evaluation of the "racialized" group members' artwork. Some academic research about racism in the art world was done in the 1980s and 1990s (Pindell 1988; McDowell 1991; Henry, Mathis and Gator 1998; Pindell 1989; Carpenter 1999). However, not much academic research has been conducted regarding this phenomenon in the past decade. Despite the lack of scholarly interest in the topic, the artistic community actively criticizes systematic race inequality within the art world.

Ethnicity is a related term, often used in pair with race and nationality. "Ethnicity" usually implies a community with at least some of the following: shared culture, history, language, religion, territory (Woodward 2004), and, unlike race, can be transcended more easily (Alcoff 2006). Despite these differences, many of the social aspects of "racialized" and "ethnicized" identities remain the same: They are contextual, have different social implications in different contexts, and are often a subject of stereotypization, which might lead to internalization of some of the "key qualities" associates with the group.

Identity theory views race and ethnicity as social categories (or sometimes as one merged social category), created for stratification to embed the members of such groupings into the larger social structure (Stets 2013). Belonging to a large social group like race, ethnicity, or nationality affect the availability of resources, networks,

and opportunities, and as a result, often affects other bases of identity (Stets & Serpe 2016).

In other words, the accessibility to networks and resources are not equally distributed among the population and often depends on large-scale social categories which are difficult to conceal, such as race, ethnicity, and gender. It implies that Asian artists face different challenges in New York City and its art scene than representatives of other racial and ethnic groupings. In Chapter VI, section 6.3.3, I describe in more detail the experiences and subjectivities of Japanese artists in New York through the lens of being Asian/Japanese. The following section overviews the other major identity category: Gender.

3.6 Gender identity and artists

Gender is another grand category of identity. The intersectionality of gender implies different experiences, expectations, and challenges for people of different genders. Most works examining gender and art focus on the female artist experience, as it is often seen as a disadvantage. The historical and cultural implications of being a female artist in Europe and Japan will be briefly discussed in Chapter IV, while this section highlights the gender aspect in contemporary art.

Some things determined by an artist's gender in contemporary art are similar to other professions: financial compensation for labor, work-family balance, and career opportunities. However, some of the themes are art-specific. Miller (2016) narrows them down to three ways an image of an artist is built around masculine model: 1) the societal understanding of a "creative genius" usually implies a male figure; and 2) aesthetic evaluation favors men over women; 3) the need for self-

promotion and entrepreneurial labor requires artists to act in a way more socially acceptable by men than by women (Miller 2016, 120). These three themes highlighted by Miller align with the discourse in related research, mainly, as discussed in the current thesis, about employment in the arts field and the self-promotion aspect of the job (more about that in section 2.4), the emergence of the image of the male genius (please refer to in Chapter IV section 4.5).

Another plateau in which expectations towards working men and women differ is family life. Culturally, women often experience more pressure than men in the domestic domain. While motherhood can be a gratifying and enriching experience for many, combining the responsibilities of parenthood with something as "seemingly straightforward" as maintaining a workspace proves to be problematic for women artists rearing children (Bain 2004, 183). In her study, Bain (2004) interviewed four women artists who were splitting their time between their artistic career and family responsibilities, which for these women often means using their domestic environment as an art studio for either financial or practical reasons. While some women did not mind such an arrangement, some noted that it felt frustrating not to block out the domestic distractions and focus solely on work (Bain 2004). The artists interviewed for the current paper, both female and male, had their own experiences negotiating their professional and domestic lives, which is addressed in more detail in Chapter VI.

Miller makes a point stating that an "ideal" artist is expected to make a "total commitment" to their work and make it the priority of their life (Miller 2016, 121). However, parental and familial responsibilities prevent them from such "total commitment" for many women." In the interviews with women artists of New York

and Philadelphia, Kauffman (1995) found that female creators often find themselves trapped between the dichotomy of independent "heroic male" artist who makes enormous sacrifices for his work and an amateur lady artist dabbles in art as a hobby. Biographies of influential female artists, too, tend to emphasize the "atypical" circumstances of a woman who rose beyond "amateur dabbling" to her artistic triumph: extremely wealthy and indulgent parents, absence of children and family obligations, "unusually determined and masculine" character, and dissimilarity with other women (Miller 2016, 121).

According to Bain, such myths, especially Kauffman's (1995) findings, resonate with Garfunkel's study conducted a decade earlier. Garfunkel (1984) suggested that due to the perpetuation of the gendered myths about the identity of an artist, many women artists internalize an inferior professional identity and, unlike their male colleagues, who carry the identity of an artist as a part of who they are, tend to only perceive themselves as artists only during the actual process of creating art. This is why women artists tend to prioritize external attributes of legitimizing their artist identity and proving their commitment to their profession, such as having a studio space (Bain 2004, 173).

People tend to favorably evaluate works of art perceived as "masculine," as women are often seen as less competent. As a result, many women artists attempt to escape such evaluation bias by performing their gender in a more ambiguous way, such as adopting gender-neutral names, using initials, and presenting their bodies in a more androgynous way, in order to avoid the evaluation based on her physical attractiveness and sexual objectification (Miller 2016, 124-125). This also resonated with some of the artists who participated in the current study, and this shall be

discussed in more detail in Chapter VI. Other artists, on the contrary, use their female bodies as a social and political statement. Kosmala (2007) provides an example of a Polish artist Zofia Kulik, for whom the performative and physical aspects of her gender identity became tools in resisting inequality and gender-based cultural subordination. Art pieces highlighting female experiences, such as Kulik's, tend to be appreciated and recognized as a feminist landmark in protest art. However, they often remain excluded from the more general male-dominated art market and "real" art discourse (Kosmala 2007, 49).

Despite differences in opportunities and evaluation from the outside, according to the findings of Harris and Perricone, both female and male artists have an androgynous self-image while perceiving artists in general as relatively masculine (Harris & Perricone 1988, 67). These factors might partially explain some of the Japanese contemporary artists' reluctance to focus "on women's matters" (A. K., 8 April 2020) or not being thrilled when their work is labeled "feminine" (S. K., 1 March 2020), as such categorization, on the one hand, might feel irrelevant to the more androgynous self-image that these artists possess, and, on the other hand, focusing on "women's matter" might limit female artists from a broader discourse of the mainstream art world.

In short, the gender experience of an artist, including cultural upbringing, societal expectations, and identity, affects the way creators work, present themselves, perform their gender, manage relationships and responsibilities associated with one's gender, and how the public perceives them.

3.7 Artists as migrants

The vast majority of research on migration focuses on economic migrants. Often, artists do not fit the mold of classic "economic migrants" and neither do they fit as "lifestyle migrants." In many cases, artist migration is not one-directional and permanent. Duester (2013) calls it "artist mobility," a type of migration practice, multi-dimensional and short-term. Artists often move (Markusen 2013) to increase their income, develop an international career, choose semi-permanent locations based on their needs, and pursue specific projects and opportunities (Borén & Young 2013; Duester 2013; Markusen 2013). Moreover, as Rius-Ulldemolins (2014) pointed out, artists are, more often than not, immigrants or foreigners who changed their geographic location for cultural production. Like other types of migration, artist mobility can be analyzed through an updated "push-pull-plus" framework, considering micro-, mezzo-, and macro- layers. For this research, I would like to draw attention to long-term artist mobility.

In the 1990s, Richard Florida suggested a concept of "creative cities" that attract the creative class members. While heavily debated by the contemporary scientific community, his ideas significantly impacted artist mobility and settlement practices research. So what exactly is a creative city? In a gist, a "creative city" is typically conceptualized as a large urban area with a high concentration of cultural institutions, such as galleries, auction houses, universities, and museums. It has a large variety and availability of creative projects and art collaboration opportunities to advance their art careers and a flexible job market for day jobs and part-time jobs to support their life as an artist. Moreover, it has a vibrant artist community and a large

population of the educated public with a high demand for art consumption (Hautala & Nordtröm 2019; Grouch et al. 2014; Rius-Ulldemolins 2014).

While some of Florida's ideas, such as urban-centric conceptualization, lack of data on the post-migration experiences of the artists, generalization of artists aspirations, and perpetuation of the "bohemian artist lifestyle" myth, were dismissed by later authors, some artists, and some stages of their lives do feel attracted to such urban "creative" areas (Hautala & Nordström 2019; Borén & Young 2013; Currid 2007).

In their paper on Finnish artists in Berlin, Hautala & Nordström (2019) found that the primary reasons for the artists to move to the city was because of professional opportunities and art network. However, some individuals moved for other reasons, such as personal relationships or curiosity. These findings echo the current research findings regarding the Japanese artists in New York and their reasons for migration, described in detail in Chapter VI. Another vital factor for mobility strategies was the life cycle stage of the artists (Borén & Young 2013). For example, younger artists tend to be more mobile and attracted to places with cheap rent (while still not the determinant factor). Older artists, especially families, prefer places with established networks of artists, support communities, and stable employment opportunities (Hautala & Nordström 2019; Rius-Ulldemolins 2014; Borén & Young 2013).

Apart from the initial push-and-pull factors, one of the strongest "retain" elements is a community and embeddedness into a network of art professionals (Borén & Young 2013). Quite a few researchers emphasize the importance of "artist clusters," or high agglomeration of art professionals in particular neighborhoods and parts of the city. According to Grodach et al. (2014), affordable rents, place aesthetics,

and central locations attract artists, creating a strong artistic presence. However, a creative cluster's social and community elements are often the determining "retain" factors. The more an artist feels an "insider" or part of a network, the harder it makes them leave a place (Borén & Young 2013).

Being an artist heavily relies on formal and informal social gatherings with other art professionals. Artist networks aid their members with the supply of projects and collaboration opportunities, provide chances to compare themselves to other creatives and be recognized and "professionalized" by the peers, seek support and solidarity, and makes it easier to approach art world gatekeepers, curators, gallerists and art writers in an informal setting. Such occupation-specific social life depends heavily on gallery openings, nightlife, and presentations, encouraging artists to cluster in the places with easy accessibility for such art events (Rius-Ulldemolins 2014; Currid 2007). Moreover, according to Hellmanzik's (2010) findings, works produced in creative clusters tend to be more valuable than paintings produced outside of such clusters. That is particularly true for cities widely recognized as "art hubs," such as Paris and New York. The works produced in such clusters are valued more. The average age of the career peak happens earlier than artists working elsewhere (Hellmanzik 2010). The existing artist cluster attracts even more creatives domestically and internationally, who wish to associate themselves with the "brand" of a creative city (Borowiecki & Graddy 2018; Currid 2007).

Artist mobility is a specific type of migration that does not always fit into the traditional economic-centric migration theories. However, it is still productive to examine artist mobility through the "push-pull-plus" framework and consider micro, mezzo, and macro factors. Some artists, particularly at a younger age, tend to be

drawn to urban centers which provide easy access to art institutions, an educated public, affordable rents, flexible job markets, and active artistic communities. Vibrant social life seems particularly important for one's professional development as an artist and serves as a vital "retain" factor. It is crucial to remark that not all artists prefer urban metropolitan areas, and many members of the creative class prefer countryside settings and small towns, as illustrated by Verdich's (2010) study, which I mentioned in section 2.5.2.

To sum it up, artist mobility is a type of migration that is primarily non-economic and non-political. Artists often travel and choose their semi-permanent locations based on their needs, such as the high concentration of cultural institutions, artist community, collaboration opportunities, and the flexible job market. Often, these needs can be satisfied by large urban areas. For the current research, I will concentrate on New York as an example of an artistic hub with a particular "brand" and a strong artist cluster. In the following section, I will describe the art scene in New York and review the existing literature describing the experiences of Japanese artists in the city.

3.8 Japanese artists New York City

In the 20th century, two cities were widely recognized as the world's main artistic hubs: Paris at the beginning of the century and New York City after World War II (Borowiecki & Graddy 2018). Both Paris and New York remain the top two locations in long-term residence among artists and key artistic cluster locations (Hellmanzik 2010). New York's prominence started to decline after the 1980s as other art hubs, such as Berlin and London, emerged (Hellmanzik 2010). However, as noted

by Currid (2007), artists are sometimes "branded" based on the locality in which they are producing their artworks, and New York's longstanding image of a cultural hub and a global tastemaker keeps attracting creatives who hope to be associated with New York City (Currid 2007). This resonated with the experience of the artists participating in the current research, and I will discuss the "New York effect" in more detail in Chapter V.

Drawing from the previous section, it is safe to state that New York City is an excellent example of a city, particularly attractive to artists: It has an established image of an art hub, it has a large population of art professionals, flexible job market, and many opportunities for social interaction and networking. According to Currid (2007), the most attractive "sales point" of New York is its brand and the social environment. The majority of New York-based art professionals recognize the importance of social life to cultural production, professional networks, and career opportunities (Currid 2007). The abundance of such opportunities and the existing artistic cluster attracts artists from the United States and other countries, including Japan. As of now, several works address specifically the experiences of the Japanese artists in New York City. Shiner and Tomii (2007), Yuiko Fujita (2009, 2011), and Olga Kanzaki Sooudi (2011, 2014) are the authors who are working on the topic.

The works draw primarily from empirical data such as interviews with Japanese-born artists living and working in New York City. In her 2009 monograph, Fujita conducted a five-year multi-sited ethnography between Tokyo, London, and New York, following 22 young Japanese people 19-30 years old at the time of departure (Fujita 2009). The main questions she addresses include how the idea of migration is conceived in the first place and how the migrants experience the sense of

Japanese national identity. While Fujita refers to her respondents as "cultural migrants" or "artists," other authors seem to find terms "students" and "artistically-inclined Japanese men and women" more appropriate because the majority of her respondents do not possess a degree in fine arts (Sawa 2016; Matsushima 2010). Who can and cannot be considered an artist is addressed more closely in the following chapters. Sooudi, meanwhile, chooses to base her research on data from the interviews with four New York City-based Japanese artists in order to understand the appeal of being an artist for a migrant, and to examine, how migrants craft themselves through their art and personal identities (Sooudi 2014).

The publication by Shiner and Tomii (2007) does not take a strictly academic approach. However, it has some insightful points that make this work difficult to ignore. The publication includes interviews with 33 New York-based contemporary Japanese visual artists of different generations, genders, sexualities, and media (Shiner and Tomii 2007). The respondents were asked to answer three to six questions, covering migration reasons, impressions of New York City, intentions to stay in New York or leave back for Japan.

While all of the authors are tackling identity, the problem could be divided into two main vectors: the reasons for migration (Fujita 2009, Shiner and Tomii 2007) and craftsmanship of Japanese identity (Sooudi 2014, Fujita 2011, Shiner and Tomii 2007). According to Sooudi, Japanese migrants could be set apart from many other migrants because of the non-economic and non-political reasons as the primary rationale behind their decision. For them, going to NYC is a way to start their life from a blank slate and use this opportunity to "do what I really want to do with my life" (Sooudi 2014). According to Fujita, Japanese artists, to whom she refers as

"cultural migrants," do not fit into any of the four main types of Japanese migrants: 1) male company employees and their families; 2) "voluntarily" migrating women; 3) language and academic students; 4) immigrant entrepreneurs (Fujita 2009). Sooudi, on the other hand, provides a classification that resonates with Fujita's and further simplifies it to two categories – corporate employees and their families on temporary work assignments and voluntary migrants who go to New York City without the support of an organization. She puts the Japanese migrant artists under the classification of "voluntary" migrants that she defines, quoting the work of Fujita (2008) as "lifestyle migration" or "cultural migration" (Sooudi 2011).

Both Fujita (2009, 2011) and Sooudi (2011, 2014) seem to see the lives of Japanese migrant artists in a rather pessimistic view, as they struggle to make ends meet, face racism and alienation from the majority, ending up disillusioned by the West. Contrary to the initial expectations, Fujita's respondents do not develop transnational identity and feel more "Japanized" than before, not only because of the discrimination but also due to the nature of the art world, where one's "exotic" culture might become a marketing point. Sooudi draws a similar conclusion, describing the respondents as "handicapped by their Japanese upbringing." She, however, acknowledges that for them, this might be a more "authentic" way of living, as opposed to being employed at a company in Japan. On the other hand, Shiner and Tomii (2007) highlighted the sense of freedom that the Japanese artists embrace in New York as the prominent undercurrent running through the interviews.

To sum up, all of the authors discussed in this section focus on the national identity of Japanese migrant artists who live and work in New York City. According to Fujita and Sooudi, negative experiences, such as financial problems or disappointment

in their life in New York City, are stressed more than others. The existing literature on Japanese artists in New York mainly focuses on their artist and ethnic (national) identities. However, the purpose of the current research is to provide a more comprehensive structure of the way multiple identities, including, but not restricted to, ethnicity and nationality, co-exist and interact with one another. To achieve this goal, identity and social identity theories will be introduced in the next chapter and implemented as the conceptual framework for the analysis.

3.9 Summary

This chapter provided a piece of contextual information on selected topics that often surface concerning artist identities: Stereotypes, employment, gender, race and ethnicity, and mobility. These topics could be divided into "mythical" and "real" categories. Both categories shape artist identities, albeit in different ways.

The "mythical" (or "imagined") topics, such as the widespread "bohemian lifestyle" narrative and the image of an artist as a mysterious heroic male figure, draw mainly from the collective imagination, formed through a combination of socio-historical and cultural events. The elements of collective imagination insert meanings into the artist's occupation, dictating desirable characteristics, values, and qualities of an artist. Unlike other highly skilled professionals, artists work in isolation in largely unregulated environments, with no formal licenses and requirements, thus leaving more space for myth and interpretation. Therefore for artists, convincing others and building a "good story" of one's legitimacy is particularly important (Hennekam 2017, Lingo & Tepper 2013). "Fitting in" into an existing image of an artist is one of

the ways to construct professional credibility among peers and strengthen own artist identity.

The "real" topics, on the other hand, provide the structure in which artists exist, create and exhibit artwork, network with other art professionals, and seek opportunities. For instance, belonging to a particular gender and racial (ethnic) social categories or the job market conditions are examples of such social frameworks. In the context of the United States, belonging to a particular racial category dictates a historically and socially established social status and access to resources, with the members of WASP (white Anglo-Saxon protestants) often finding themselves in privileged positions compared to members of other ethnic groups. One's gender dictates access to networks and resources and tends to impact role identities considerably. Particularly in the case of artists, which are often expected to exhibit a "total commitment" to their craft, identifying as a woman can become a significant obstacle due to many social norms, internalized expectations, and differences in upbringing between the genders.

Indeed, in many instances, the topics cannot be divided into the "imagined" or "real" realm and are found at the intersection of the two. The conditions of the art market and employment are practical examples. UNESCO defines a professional artist as someone who creates artwork, considers the creative process an essential part of their lifestyle, and asks to be recognized as an artist. At the same time, the research suggests that artists themselves have a different criterion for a professional artist. Many a time, it includes making a living from selling one's art. However, the oversupply of artists and fierce competition for relationships with reputable galleries make it impossible for the majority of the artists to pursue art fulltime. As a result,

more than half of the artists rely on an external source of income. The type of employment an artist engages in might result in distress because of the conflict with their identity as an artist, or, contrary, it might enhance one's "story," particularly if it fits into an existing narrative, such as "struggling artist," who takes on odd low-skilled jobs to support the "artist lifestyle."

In other words, when analyzing identity, particularly from the perspective of social theory, it is crucial to consider the social structure in which individuals find themselves and the existing meanings, narratives, and symbols, which derive from the historical and cultural context. In the following chapter, I will provide a brief comparative historical overview of being an artist in Euro-American and Japanese traditions to illustrate the origins of the "real" circumstances and "mythical" narratives that affect the artist identities to this day.

Chapter IV: Historical Identity Contexts, Shifting Cultures, and Circumstances

4.1 Introduction

The stereotypical image of an artist has its roots in the era of romanticism: a tortured and, preferably, starving seclude, expressing his genius on a canvas. These stereotypes affect not only the way society perceives contemporary artists but also the self-image of artists themselves, projecting certain behavioral, lifestyle, and cultural stereotypes that, under self-categorization theory, need to be fulfilled in order to prove oneself as a "real artist" to oneself, to one's peers and the society at large. What is often neglected in the artist identity narrative is that the image of an artist and their social standing has been transforming throughout history and was different depending on the culture. A combination of social climate, religious beliefs, and economic system has always played a significant role in the functions and perceptions of an artist.

As one of the current research goals is to understand the relationships between multiple layers of identity, it is crucial to examine the historical context of artist identities. Since the study respondents all come from a Japanese cultural background and are currently living in a society dominated by Euro-American understandings of art, in the following chapter, I will briefly discuss artists' shifting roles and identities throughout history in European and Japanese cultures.

The chapter briefly describes the social context of artistic labor in Euro-American and Japanese cultures in chronological order. It starts with pre-modern times and challenges the contemporary definitions of art, contrasting them with the shamanic

and spiritual purpose of items labeled as “artwork” today. Then, it gives an overview of the structure of art production in the Middle Ages in Europe, contrasting it with feudal Japan. In section 4.5, I link the stereotype of a mysterious, tortured artist with the thought of the Renaissance and explain the social and historical reasons behind it. In the next section, I outline the Japanese art scene in the Meiji (1868–1912) and Taishō (1912–1926) eras and the influence of the existing art institution system on the current Japanese gallery system. The last sections of the chapter focus on the post-war art world, introducing the emergence of global art hubs, such as Paris and New York, and its significance for Japanese artists. The chapter closes with a section dedicated to the experiences of female artists, who have been largely excluded from art history. Up to this day, they often find themselves in a disadvantageous position next to their male colleagues.

The current chapter does not aim to be a comprehensive historical reference. Instead, its primary goal is to provide the reader with a cultural context and a summary of the development of the art world in both regions.

4.2 Pre-modern times

Examples of cave art have been discovered in many parts of the world. Depictions of animals, hand imprints, and other symbols are something we would label today as “art,” however, little is known about the figure of the pre-historic artist. Arguably, the most popular version we have today regarding the identity of the people behind the cave art is that shamans executed the paintings.

It is believed that cave art was not "art for art's sake": it was instead a by-product of the combination of his (usually it was a male) occupations of a healer, priest, protector, psychiatrist (Feldman 1995, 11). Feldman writes that a shaman would be identified in a group early on. Often, it would be a "different" kid, unhealthy or physically impaired. Because of this "strangeness," the group would interact differently with the "chosen kid," possibly reinforcing the belief in his power to communicate with the other world and spirits (Feldman 1995, 8). The shaman would go into a self-induced trance to communicate with the spirit world, often in the forms of animals, and had to be painted by memory (Feldman 1995, 5). The situation was somewhat similar in the Japanese peninsula: most of the artifacts created in the *Jōmon* (14,000–300 BCE), *Yayoi* (300BCE – 300 CE) and *Kōfun* (300–600 CE) periods are associated with the spiritual and religious needs of the tribes living on the Japanese archipelago at the time (Stanley-Baker 2014, 16; Makarova 2011, 194).

There is not a lot of proven information regarding the identity of artists from pre-historic times. The contemporary understanding of the word "artist" would probably not even apply, for the very least reason that we do not know for sure if the spiritual artifacts created during the time were perceived by the artists' contemporaries as "art," or was it instead a necessary tool to ensure the survival and well-being of the tribe (Stanley-Baker 2014, Makarova 2011, Feldman 1995).

With the advancement of institutionalized religion, art retained its sacred spiritual connotations. The mode of the artifact production has also changed, and the artist lost the status of the shaman or healer. In Europe and Japan, he turned into a

craftsman and a tool of divine inspiration, albeit in a somewhat different fashion. In the next section, I will describe this transition in more detail.

4.3 Art in the middle ages

The spread of Buddhism in Japan continued the tradition of religious artwork and affected art genres and techniques (Makarova 2011, 195). One of the prevalent examples of early Japanese Buddhist art was the painted scrolls *emakimono*, most often depicting Buddhist themes. However, Shinto and secular *emakimono* also existed, if in a lesser quantity (Makarova 2011, 220). A less widespread but worth mentioning art form was mural painting in Buddhist monasteries and temples. The artisans hired to decorate palaces and temples mainly were of Chinese and Korean origin and organized in guilds (Stanley-Baker 2014, 45). Sometimes, the artisans working at Buddhist temples would receive honorific Buddhist titles (Takeuchi 2004, 15).

In the 13th century, the spread of the Zen sect teachings among the warrior elite also brought new subjects and traditions into Japanese visual art. In Zen teachings, the figure of a mentor was that of foremost importance. It had a perhaps somewhat unexpected input in the development of portraiture: when a master believed that the student had completed their training, he would give the student an auto-portrait, serving as a certificate of excellence (Makarova 2011, 231).

In medieval Europe, the Christian Church was also a solid unifying factor for an otherwise diverse group of craftsmen and artisans working in different mediums and styles (Mann 1992, 2). As God was perceived as the primary creator, artists were

perceived as “channels for divine inspiration” (Bain 2005, 28). This was true for visual art, philosophy, religion, medicine, and other fields of human activity. Many of the objects produced by medieval artists had religious meaning or application (Mann 1992, 2). Occupational identity was deeply intertwined with servitude to God, connecting professional honor to religious devotion (Pappano and Rice 2013, 477). A church-centered worldview prompted the artists to work collectively, anonymously and disregarding individual creative originality, which made retrieving the names of medieval artists increasingly difficult (Bain 2005, 28; Lila 1991, 10; Gilman 1965, 33).

In other words, for both cultures, the individual identity of a specific artist was disregarded in favor of the collective identity of the workshop or school to which the artisan belonged. In the following section, I will describe the structure of artisanal workshops in Medieval Europe and compare them with the master-apprentice system of pre-modern Japan.

4.4 Workshop hierarchy in Japan and Europe

Being a craftsman in Europe most often meant working collectively in a workshop under a strict hierarchical system. Traditionally, the workshop members are categorized into the free master, journeyman, and apprentice. The free master, also known as a master craftsman, was the owner of the workshop and a guild member. A journeyman completed his apprenticeship and worked at the workshop as a wage worker, while an apprentice was usually an adolescent undergoing the training with the free master (Richardson 2005, 144; Martens 1999, 414).

The path of becoming a free master was a significant financial investment (Martens 1999, 414). Free masters were contractually responsible for the apprentices' well-being and training (Pappano and Rice 2013, 478). Despite undergoing vigorous training, paying tuition, and receiving low pay, only 30% of the apprentices ever achieved a status of a free master themselves. After the completion of their apprenticeships, the majority would "continue their careers as workshop assistant or journeyman in the employ of free masters, without any prospect of improving their living conditions" (Martens 1999, 394), primarily because of the steep initial costs of establishing own workshop (Richardson 2005, 144), perceived competition from other masters (Pappano and Rice 2013, 478) and locally-bound social capital (Richardson 2005, 144).

In Japan, the only way of becoming a professional artisan was through an apprenticeship from a master. The master-apprentice system was called *iemotoseido*, or, in literal translation, "the headmaster system." Like the medieval artisan workshops in Europe, an apprentice would pay a monthly fee to be taught. The difference, however, is that in *iemotoseido*, the structure forms a hierarchal pyramid: the master who teaches an apprentice would often himself pay to and learn from a more skillful master. Moreover, the more skillful master, in turn, would learn from a master of an even higher rank. If we attempt to visualize the pyramid, we would observe a more significant number of low-skilled apprentices at the bottom, and the master, a leader of a particular style, at the summit (Nanjo 1989, 31).

The disciples of the master were expected to preserve his style and philosophy, and often it stayed in its fixed form for centuries. The Japanese art world was mirroring the tradition-bound Japanese society, controlled by seniority and inside

politics (Yoshimoto 2005, 11). Flawless imitation was considered the greatest virtue and form of artistry, and therefore the disciples would rarely develop a style of his own. If an artist were to create a unique painting style, there would be enormous resistance to it, "both from the hierarchy of the art world, as well as from the artists' consciousness" (Nanjo 1989, 31). Workshops were organized like a family, and apprentices would adopt the workshop's master's name, preventing the artisans from developing their artistic style (Takeuchi 2004, 10).

While there is apparent overlapping in the systems of both regions, an essential distinction in both regions at the end of the workshop-era was finalized in their respective timelines. In Japan, the *iemotoseido* system lasted for almost three centuries longer until the Meiji restoration. The strict hierarchy and allegiance to one's master remained one of the critical features of the Japanese art world and could be traced in one form or another until today. This legacy was one of the factors that forced Japanese artists, especially women like Yoko Ono and Yayoi Kusama, to move to New York during the first wave in the 1960s and the early 1970s (more about that in section 4.9), and it remains a factor for the Japanese today.

Meanwhile, in Europe, the workshop-oriented lifestyle of an artisan in Europe reached its end with the Renaissance in the early 17th century, and it was the image of the Renaissance artist that remained in the collective imagery and kept the stereotype until this day. This will be elaborated in the following section.

4.5 Renaissance artists and Westernization of Japanese system

Contemporary stereotypes of what kind of a person an artist is, affect the self-image and sense of legitimacy of the artists. Primarily these stereotypes and expectations come from the Renaissance (Bain 2005, 42).

By the early 17th century, a cultural shift occurred, which repositioned humans as the measure of all things and transformed artists into learned scholars with unlimited potential to create original works of art (Apostolos-Cappadona and Ebersole, 1995). Apart from the humanistic ideology, the increase in wealth among the members of commercial society elevated the demand and, subsequently, the artist's status (Feldman 1995, 75). If the medieval guild was designed to reduce competition among the artisans, the Renaissance era and the amount of wealth encouraged the artist competition in terms of prestige, status, and monetary reward (Feldman 1995, 81). Freed from the strict requirements of the guild system, artists were elevated to the status of the intellectual elite.

The creative abilities of individual artists were increasingly revered, and the myth of the heroic male genius emerged. Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1973, 101) explain that 'when the milieu of Rennaisance culture had become aggressively innovative and originality-seeking, the genius wanted to be true to his vision had to isolate himself and withdraw from the limelight. This image was further reinforced, as phrased by Streptoe (1998), by an "emphasis on feeling, imagination, genius and a search for abstract 'beauty' (Bain 2005, 28). It was believed that through his imagination and artist has access to "deeper truths" underneath the series of everyday events (Bain 2005, 28). By the close of the 18th century, artists had become

‘increasingly dissociated from the mainstream of social life’ (Coleman 1988, 78), and this notion of separateness came to be regarded as an essential quality of any true artist. As artists started to be more educated in liberal arts, theology, and philosophy, their artwork, too, began to feel more “elite.”

Approximately at the same time, during the years following the end of Japanese isolationist foreign policy imposed by the shogunate for two hundred years and the restoration of the Emperor rule during Meiji restoration in 1868, Japan turned its gaze towards the West. “Japanese spirit – Western knowledge,” or *wakon yōsai*, became the motto of the new Meiji administration. Japanese scholars were sent to Europe and the United States to learn “Western knowledge”: technology, jurisdiction, administration, and culture. Around this time, the Japanese words *geijutsu* and *bijutsu* were coined as equivalents to the Western concept, both phrases meaning “fine arts,” deriving from the traditional concept of *geigoto* (Takeuchi 2004, 3; Nanjo 1989, 31).

Such westernized modernization led to the devaluation of traditional Japanese art forms, previously flourishing under the former rule of the Tokugawa shogunate (Švambarytė 2016, 482), and a gradual end of the *iemotoseido* apprenticeship system. Instead of spreading Japanese art, the government started to introduce European art actively. As a part of this initiative, many influential Italian artists were invited to Japan to spread Western art and culture, and one of the first Japanese academic art institutions, Kōbu School of Art, was established in 1874 (Turner 2005, 390).

In the Kōbu School of Arts, Western media such as oil painting, pastels, and watercolor were introduced to Japan. These previously unknown techniques became collectively known as *yōga*, or “Western pictures” (Turner 2005, 390; Nanjo 1989,

29). In the process, *nihonga,* or "Japanese pictures," was primarily affected by some of the concepts dominant in Western art. Ernest Fenollosa, an American art historian and philosopher, invited by the Japanese government to work as Professor of Philosophy at the Imperial University of Tokyo, helped modify the traditional Japanese painting style by adding Western realism and colors (Stanley-Baker 2014, 195). The renewed form of traditional Japanese painting techniques on rice paper and silk using mineral pigments acquired the name of *nihonga* (Turner 2005, 390; Nanjo 1989, 29).

Both *yōga* and *nihonga* schools preserved the traditional hierarchy structure, typical to Japanese society (Nanjo 1989, 31). Upon graduation, the majority of the young artists found themselves entangled in the so-called *bijutsu dantai*, or fine arts organization system. The young artists were expected to find a *bijutsu dantai* of similar artistic style and philosophy and apply for membership. An established artist would often serve as the leader of an organization and the mentor for the younger artists. He would offer social security and position in the art world and regular exhibition opportunities in exchange for their commitment (Yoshimoto 2005, 12). Yoshimoto (2005) writes that the *bijutsu dantai* system was feudal: the order of seniority in the organization would determine how often an artist would exhibit in official salons *Nitten*, what is his or her standing in the art world, and even where their pieces are hung at an exhibition, according to their status within the organization.

The artists who exhibited regularly would have higher positions in the art world and sell their works higher. Outside of the *bijutsu dantai* system, finding independent venues for showcasing artwork and being noticed professionally was a nearly impossible task for an artist to accomplish (Yoshimoto 2005, 12).

Numerous *bijutsu dantai* still exist today and remain influential among professional artist circles. For many, as will be seen in the analysis (Chapter VI), the social rigidity and hierarchy of *bijutsu dantai* become a decisive factor in leaving Japan and pursuing artistic careers elsewhere.

4.6 Anti-institutionalism and new art movements in Japan and France

The official *Nitten* salons, briefly mentioned in the previous section, were first introduced in Japan in 1907 and were modeled after the famous *Salon de Paris*. The *Salon* was founded in 1667 by the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in France and became the most prominent annual event of the art world from the late 18th until the end of the 19th century (Delacour & Leca 2011). Despite the chronological discrepancy and unique historical and cultural contexts, which I will not focus on in this section, the governmental salons in Japan and France share essential similarities that are summarized below.

Like the *Salon, Nitten* was initially established as a venue for regularly sharing talented artists' works. *Nitten,* a governmental establishment, was sponsored by *bijutsu dantai*, the *Salon,* supported by Louis XIV, and later by Napoleon III, was heavily influenced by the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* (Tomii 2012, Delacour & Leca 2011). Both of these exhibitions were the most important art happenings of the year, and as a result, fiercely competitive. For the artists admitted into the Salon, participation served as an exhibition place, a networking event, an art marketplace, and a token of recognition in the art world (Delacour & Leca 2011). Due to the increasing popularity and demand, *Nitten* and the *Salon* were eventually criticized for

prioritizing traditional subjects and academic techniques and gate-keeping the art world by blocking the path to the artists who did not conform to the established conservative framework (Kleiner 2016, Volk 2013).

The dissatisfaction with the *Salon's* system and jurors peaked in the late 19th century, prompting Napoleon III to establish the *Salon de Refusés,* which would feature the works not accepted in *Salon* (Kleiner 2016). The faulty judging policy of *Nitten* and *bijutsu dantai* politics prompted calls for their own *salon des refusés* (Volk 2013). Unlike in France, Japanese "rebel" artists were unsuccessful in securing governmental support and formed their art organizations to counter-balance the official *Nitten* establishment. Despite gaining independence from *Nitten* and *bijutsu dantai* hierarchy, the artists had to give up regular exhibition venues and seek alternative spaces (Tomii 2012).

This shift marked the beginning of the era of rental galleries or *kashi garō* in the Japanese art world. *Kashi garō* allowed artists to rent a space for charging a flat fee (Nakajima 2012), providing an opportunity for anyone to exhibit regardless of *bijutsu dantai* affiliation and without being subject to traditionalist jurors' decisions. French artists took a similar but also a slightly different approach. A *Salon des Indépendants* was established to feature new, experimental works and counter the monopoly of the official *Salon.* With no jury and no prices, the new *Salon* became a precedent for establishing other independent salons and searched for alternative exhibition venues, such as private galleries, cafes, and nightclubs (Kleiner 2016, Delacour & Leca 2011).

In short, both *Nitten* and *Salon* were the most influential art institutions, which eventually became criticized for being conservative and biased. The dissatisfaction

encouraged dissident artists with a fresh take on art to establish their counter-organizations and look for alternative venues to exhibit their artwork. In both scenarios, the rebellion against the official governmental system signaled a turning point in the art world globally, as it was drifting away from the academic subjects and styles towards modernist experiments in the first half of the 20th century.

4.7 Post-war art scene and the avant-guard

There was no more room for art with conservative, nationalistic moods growing in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s. The ultranationalistic totalitarian government banned all exhibitions except those dedicated to war propaganda (Yoshimoto 2005, 12). The war era was a time of patriotic production but defeated, and occupation brought dramatic change and the powerful influence of the United States (Turner 2005, 39). At the same time, Paris lost its status as the global capital of arts (Fava-Piz 2018), and New York became the leading cultural center of the world.

Post-war Japan witnessed many dramatic changes in its social, political, and cultural structures. The defeat in the war and forced democratization challenged traditional Japanese values. However, the art world system was rapidly revitalized, and already in 1946, the official exhibitions were resumed by the government (Turner 2005). The *bijutsu dantai* system, too, got revitalized after the end of the war, blocking the way for the professional artists to survive independently without depending on them.

The emergence of art exhibitions organized by large newspaper companies like the *Yomiuri Shinbun* became pivotal for the Japanese art world. Independent of the jurors in official art exhibitions, newspaper company events allowed independent

artists to exhibit their works (Nanjo 1989; Yoshimoto 2005). Nanjo (1989) describes how the competition between the major newspaper companies led to a further increase in non-juried exhibitions, which allowed more artists to become independent from the *bijutsu dantai* system.

While the competition between the newspaper companies provided an alternative venue for the Japanese art world like it had never seen before, there were several stumbling blocks. When one newspaper company would host an event, other newspaper companies would not cover the exhibition. As a result, there was not enough information and discussion about the artwork among the general public, professional curators, and art critics (Nanjo 1989). Another thing was that for the newspaper companies, the organization of the exhibitions was a part of the business. As modern art made a shift from easy-to-understand crowd-pleasing artworks towards Avant-guard, the newspaper companies had to limit their exhibitions to the popular kinds of art (Tomii 2012).

In the 1950s, many public art museums were built, and older galleries re-opened. However, they mainly focused on showcasing well-known European and American modernist pieces, and commercial galleries too would mostly feature Western artists, especially French impressionists, as they were popular among Japanese art collectors (Nakajima 2012; Yoshimoto 2005). The growing number of artists with cutting-edge aesthetics needing independent venues stimulated a dramatic increase in rental galleries. This became particularly apparent with strengthening the Japanese Avant-guard between the 1960s and 1980s (Nakajima 2012). However, the most prominent alternative venue for dissident artists was outside of Japan in New York (Tomii 2012).

The positive transformations of the economic and political structure in the 1970's allowed the mainstream public to develop more progressive views on modern art, which reflected in the willingness to feature the works of living Japanese and Avant-guard artists on the institutional level (Kajiya 2012). These developments coincided with the boom in the construction of regional museums, which regularly featured the works of modern artists (Tomii 2012).

To sum it up, the post-war art scene of Japan witnessed many dramatic changes on an institutional and ideological level. A considerable part of the post-war Japanese art scene concerned anti-establishment moods and searches for alternative exhibition venues among avant-guard artists. As Japan's economy and the political situation improved, so did the relationship between artists and art institutions. *Bijutsu dantai* and *kashi garō,* however, remained an essential part of the Japanese art world and are operating to this day.

4.8 Contemporary Japanese art

The end of Japan's "postwar" culture is debated and attributed to various dates, including the end of American occupation, the Tokyo Summer Olympics in 1964, or Expo '70 in Osaka. Tatehata (2012) associates the cultural end of the postwar period with the late 1980s, as the term "postmodernism" rose in popularity, and the death of Emperor *Shõwa* signified the end of an old era. The advent of the new age brought new perspectives and discourse on the world of art as well.

In the 1980s, Japan's economy was soaring. Corporations were actively funding "new media" art focusing on video and technology (Hayashi et al., 2012). Japan entered the global arena as the popular culture titan, offering visual fantasy

stories through manga, anime, and video games to the world (Stanley-Baker 2014). As the manga and anime industry accelerated, Japanese artists re-directed their attention to its visuals, combining anime elements with traditional aesthetic tropes (Shiner 2012). High rents drove galleries out of Ginza and Kanda areas in Tokyo, which prompted the emergence of more alternative venues, independent galleries, and spaces. Rental galleries began to lose their importance but remain an inseparable part of young artists' careers (Nakajima 2012).

The 1990s marked the beginning of the economic decline and social uncertainty, spiked by the Tokyo gas attack and the earthquake in 1995. Emerging artists, including Takashi Murakami, "turned their attention to the mass-culture-saturated everyday world, cutting all ties with 'high art'" (Hayashi et al., 2012, 411). At the same time, young photographers, such as Nagashima Yurie and Hiromix, became active in the Japanese art scene (Hayashi et al., 2012). The 1990s delighted the public with the diversity of genres and media. However, focusing on mass-pop culture lacked depth and inner exploration. The influence of Andy Warhol set an example for many artists worldwide, including Japan, shifting the meaning of art from spiritual to commercial (Stanley-Baker 2014). On the institutional level, economic stagnation forced the government to re-structure national, prefectural, and municipal museums, downsizing them on an unprecedented scale and freezing the acquisition budget (Hayashi et al., 2012, Tomii 2012).

By the early 2000s, rising awareness of globalization and multiculturalism became an essential source of inspiration behind establishing some international biennales and triennials in Japan. These events attracted art enthusiasts and art professionals from all over the world, thus creating an opportunity for Japanese artists

and the public to “reconsider the importance of global context” (Hayashi et al., 2012, 412).

To sum it up, the Japanese art scene in the 1980s and early 2000s was developing unevenly and was heavily affected by the economic and political situation of the country. This period saw the decline of the cultural importance of rental galleries, but not a decline in their numbers, the funding of new media art during the economic boom, the downshifting of museums during the economic stagnation, and the establishment of some international art biennales and triennials as the world became increasingly globalized. However, if somebody would ask to single out one trend in Japanese art during that period, that would probably be the hybridization of “high” and “low” art, or fine arts and popular culture.

4.9 Where were the female artists?

In 2019, *The New York Times* published a report stating that women created only 11% of all work acquired by U.S. galleries and museums. Another example: the most expensive work sold at an auction by a male artist is Leonardo da Vinci’s *Salvator Mundi*, sold for approximately 475 million USD, while the most expensive artwork by a woman artist, Georgia O’Keefe, *Jimson Weed / White Flower No. 1*, is valued at 44 million USD. Gender discrepancy in arts is not a new phenomenon and can be traced throughout history in Europe and Japan.

During the European middle ages, women were mainly marginalized from the guild system except for certain “lower status” professions, such as textiles. The majority of women were practicing their crafts in their homes for the needs of the household members and as a natural extension of their “domestic and child-rearing”

responsibilities, while men mainly produced for trade, and thus were valued more (Pappano and Rice 2013, 479; Feldman 1995, 56). Renaissance culture, too, focused on the "male genius."

In Japan, formal education, including arts, was not equally available for men and women until the late 1940s (Yoshimoto 2005, 11). For the women who could receive a fine arts education, showing their work in public was increasingly difficult, especially considering an already complicated and rigid system supported by the gatekeepers of the Japanese art scene, the *bijutsu dantai.* Women artists were often pigeon-holed as *jyoryū* artists*,* or "those who paint in the manner of women," which had a negative connotation of bourgeois self-indulgent women-hobbyists (Yoshimoto 2005, 13). Even the kind of a hobby that was acceptable for a woman to engage in was regimented by the society: traditional Japanese arts were considered to be an agreeable hobby for women, while new (or Western) media, such as oil painting or pastels, were reserved for men (Yoshimoto 2005, 14).

Together with the emergence of the avant-garde movement, the number of women artists started to increase. The Japanese art world was too slow to adapt to the change (Yoshimoto 2005, 15), forcing many women to leave Japan to seek opportunities abroad. This especially became a pattern after the mid-1960s (Yoshimoto 2005, 11) to escape the male-dominated, conformist and hierarchal society (Turner 2005, 397; Yoshimoto 2005, 37). The majority of women left in their 20s or 30s, when they are expected to start a family in Japan, and therefore from the society's point of view, becoming an artist was not an option (Yoshimoto 2005, 37).

To sum it up, the figure of an artist has historically been gendered in both traditions. In the public eye, the typical artist figure was male, and men artists enjoyed

a higher status and privilege (such as access to art education and professional recognition) than their female counterparts. Women have been perceived as muses and subjects of the artwork rather than creators. The consequences of the underrepresentation of women in arts are still felt to his days, such as negative stereotypes of women artists (Chapter III section 3.2), employment choices (Chapter III section 3.3), lack of gallery representation, and heavier family responsibilities (Chapter III section 3.6).

4.10 Summary

The main goal of the current chapter was to provide a brief historical comparison between Euro-American and Japanese art worlds by focusing on some differences and similarities of the two. Three elements are particularly relevant for understanding the historical roots of the social and cultural context contemporary in which Japanese artists living and working in New York find themselves.

First, the social function of the artist has never been uniform. Depending on the historical context and social circumstances, the artists were perceived as shamans, tools of God, artisans, mysterious geniuses, members of the elite, rebels, or business people. However, these incarnations have had an accumulative effect on the meanings the collective imagination puts into the figure of an artist today. As a result, many of the attributes associated with the past artists often contribute to the trope of a contemporary artist: A little bit of spirituality, a little bit of craftsmanship, a little bit of mystery, a little bit of rebellion, a little bit of business.

Second, the structure of the art world and art institutions formed in a particular historical context of the past often leave a legacy, which might not be well adjusted to

the present-day pace and social order. For example, the hierarchal master-disciple system of *iemotoseido* greatly impacted how *bijutsu dantai* were structured during *the Meiji* era. The gatekeeping of the art world by the joint efforts of *bijutsu dantai* and *Nitten,* in its turn, can still be felt today. The abundance of rental galleries results in the over-saturation of culturally insignificant artwork, the lack of dialogue between the public and the art professionals, and the overbearing gravity of one's academic credentials and group membership to be recognized as a professional artist are some of the examples.

Third, while some similarities and shared milestones in the development of art in Japan and Euro-America, there are some fundamental institutional, cultural, and aesthetic differences. The equivalent of the term "fine arts" was coined in Japan only in the late 19th century. The characters used for the expressions mean either the "skill of beauty" (*bijutsu*) or the "skill of technique" (*geijitsu*). Thus it creates an expectation that artwork is supposed to be exceptional technically or aesthetically pleasing. However, the English word "fine" refers to something of high quality, which does not necessarily address neither beauty nor technique. The story of one of the informants presented in Chapter VI, Aomi, is particularly illustrative of this semantic clash, resulting in a crisis of meanings.

I did not intend to provide a comprehensive guidebook of Japanese or European art histories in this chapter. The fundamental purpose of the chapter is to draw attention to the shifting perceptions and identities of the artists throughout history and depending on the geographical region. Additionally, I wanted to help the reader recognize more subtle culturally-tuned nuances in the artists' quotes in Chapters VI and VII.

Chapter V: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Having established the context and the necessary background information, the current chapter now focuses on the methodological aspect of the study. The chapter begins with a description of the approach used to analyze the data and the rationale behind choosing it. Later in the chapter, the ethics of conducting qualitative anthropological research, obligations of the researcher towards the informants, informed consent, anonymity, and related topics are discussed. The chapter concludes with a description of preparations for the fieldwork and extracts from the author's fieldwork diary.

5.2 Biographical narrative

When I was going into the field, I was unsure which interviewing method would be the best to answer the research questions. As I spent some time designing the research, I found myself drawn to a well-established method in oral history, educational sciences, and psychology – narrative biography.

Originally, biographical, sociological research began in the 1920s, in association with the migration study *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America,* a book by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918-1920) at the University of Chicago (Rosenthal 2004, 48). This form of interviewing "integrates individual experiences with cultural frames for understanding identities and lives "including the memory of how a certain event occurred, what it means, and why it is important" (Fivush et al. 2011, 321–322).

Connecting with the informants' sense of self through their memories, or, as Rosenthal refers to it, "genesis," provides a better, more thorough understanding of the social, cultural, and psychological phenomenon being studied (Rosenthal 2004, 49).

Another appealing point of using this particular methodology was that it grants the respondents more agency over their past, as the respondents tell their own life story, highlighting by their own will the significant life events and experiences in their lives. For the informants, the process of recounting their own stories triggers the so-called auto-biographic memory, which focuses on telling and retelling significant life events that people construct for themselves through interactions and patterns in their lives (Nelson & Fivush, 2004) (Fivush et al. 2011, 322). While sometimes narrative biography can be criticized for not being "wholly personal" (Andrews 2004, 119), it occurred to me to be a more meaningful and profound way of conducting an interview and connecting to the informants, as opposed to a structured or semi-structured interview.

Before fieldwork, however, I had certain reservations regarding this method, as its benefits (providing agency and building connection) might not have outweighed the potential disadvantages, such as not receiving the information needed to answer the posed research questions. Luckily, this issue was automatically resolved by itself. As soon as I interviewed my first respondent in New York, she started to narrate her own life story naturally, without my prompting.

The biographical narrative methodology was selected for the following reasons: First, the nature of the biographical narrative allows the researcher to engage with the study participants on a deeper level, which is crucial in conducting an

identity-related study. Second, as identity is constantly in a constant process of formation and transformation, it might be impossible to pinpoint a definite 'identity' before migration and a definite 'identity' after migration. Thus, taking into account participants' whole life stories and navigating their journey of identification through the years would be a better fit for the current study. Third, art is a significant part of the current study. Following and including participants' relationships with art would provide the study with a deeper understanding of the ways life events and identity shifts are reflected in the participants' artworks. Furthermore, one of the more significant appeals of a biographical narrative as a method is providing agency to the respondents and examining certain phenomena through their memories and interpretations.

In summary, the biographical narrative method was appropriate for the type of research conducted, but it also naturally emerged during the interviewing process.

5.3 Biographical narrative interview

The principal tool of a biographical narrative method is an interview. It was first introduced in the 1970s, with a strong emphasis on the subjective perceptions of the informants regarding certain life events through their narrative and the meanings they assign to these events in the past and the present (Rosenthal 2004, 49).

While conducting such an interview, it is also important to remember that life narratives are constructed within social and cultural contexts that define life and how it should be lived (Fivush, 2010; McAdams & Pals, 2006; Nelson & Fivush, 2004). This means that the historical and socio-cultural context of both countries of origin

and country of migration – in this case, Japan and the United States – must be taken into account when analyzing the interviews. Thus, focusing on specific areas of interest, such as the relationship between different artists' identities, is only possible after a person's life story, structure, and *gestalts* are taken into consideration (Rosenthal 2004, 50).

In implementing a narrative biography interview, Rosenthal (2004) suggests following a particular sequence of eight steps. The first two steps involve working with the informants directly:

1. Period of main narration: Particular niche themes should be avoided in the beginning, and questions should remain as open as possible, for example: "Please tell me your family story and your personal life story; I am interested in your whole life" (Rosenthal 2004, 51). Main narration should not be interrupted by questions and only supported through (mainly) non-verbal expressions of interest, attentiveness, and encouragement to continue narration (Rosenthal 2004, 52). Alternatively, the researcher might ask to focus on a specific aspect of one's whole life story: such approach will allow the researcher to state the topic and ensure that the interviewees speak about it while still leaving enough room for relating other biographical strands (Rosenthal 2004, 51).

2. Questioning period: During the questioning period, the researcher addresses specific phases in the interviewee's life, focusing on a theme or event that the informant already mentioned during the interview (Rosenthal 2004). After the data collection is completed, the researcher enters the next phase of transcription and analysis:

3. Full transcription of audiotape and analysis of the biographical data: Firstly, it might be helpful to start analyzing the primary biographical data that is essentially free of interpretation, such as date of birth, number of family members, educational data, place of residence. This data is taken from transcribed interviews and all other available sources, and it usually gains its full significance only after the analysis has begun, as its importance to the informant's life is often overlooked at the beginning (Rosenthal 2004, 54–55). The analysis of the biographical data serves as a preparation for the next step – the reconstruction of the life history (Rosenthal 2004, 55).

4. Text and thematic field analysis: The underlying assumption while moving forward with this analysis stage is that the narrated life story does not consist of random, disconnected events. The informant's selection of stories is based on a context of meaning that the interviewer interprets (Rosenthal 2004). The narrated life story represents a sequence of mutually interrelated themes, which form a dense network of interconnected cross-references (Fischer 1982, 168; Rosenthal 2004, 57), and it is the researcher's goal to decode them.

5. Reconstruction of the life history.

6. Microanalysis of individual text segments: During these stages of analysis, the researcher is moving chronologically through the informant's life stories, examining individual interview passages (Rosenthal 2004, 59).

7. Contrastive comparison of life history and life story: During this stage, the researcher aims to find and determine the differences between the narrated and the experienced life story (Rosenthal 2004, 61).

8. Development of types and contrastive comparison: during the final stage of analysis, the researcher aims for theoretical generalization, drawn from thematic field

analysis, reconstruction, microanalysis, and comparison of life story (Rosenthal 2004, 61). In this whole process, the main goal of such research is to study social and psychological phenomena in the context of their conception and transformation (Rosenthal 2004, 62).

The details of the practical implementation of this recommended workflow regarding current research are described in more detail in the following sections.

5.4 Data collection

As was suggested by Rosenthal (2004) for narrative biography research, the data analysis followed his general guidelines: The period of main narration, questioning period, a complete transcription of the data and analysis of biographical data, followed by the search for general themes and patterns, microanalysis of certain aspects of the life stories, comparison between the life stories of the informants, and, ultimately, the theoretical generalization based on the analysis.

Rosenthal's described way of conducting a narrative biography interview proved to be efficient for establishing informants' trust and feeling of security and obtaining the general understanding of the life stories of the informants. Taking the process step-by-step was the best way to make the participants feel comfortable and gradually increase the level of depth of the conversations.

The interview process was divided into three stages: First, biographical narrative interview in early and mid-2020. The interviews focused on the lives of the respondents through the lens of being an artist. While there were specific topics common among all the interviewees (growing up in Japan, discovering a passion for art, moving to New York), the interviews were not structured and were meant to

provide more agency. The majority of the interviews followed this flow relatively effortlessly. However, some informants responded better to a more guided way of conducting the interviews, mainly if the interview was being conducted in Japanese.

Later, follow-up interviews were held in mid-2020 and late 2020. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial plan of conducting several fieldwork sessions had to be abandoned, and taking the fieldwork into a virtual space was one possible substitution. The purpose of the follow-up interviews was to touch base with the artists, see what has happened to them since the first interview, whether their lives changed after the pandemic, and ask about their goals and plans for the future.

The initial two steps of the data collecting process address mainly the first (What motivates the Japanese to pursue their artistic career in New York City?) and second (How the experiences of migrant artists in New York contribute to their self-perception within the art world?) research questions. For a deeper comprehension of the interaction of the multiple layers of identity (RQ3: How do multiple layers of identity contribute to the artist umbrella identity?), social identity approach, structured interviews were conducted in the spring of 2021. The set of questions differed from person to person, based on each previous interview. However, all the follow-up questions were in one way or another connected to the exploration of different aspects of identity: occupational, familial, national, racial, gender, personal, and others.

5.5 Data analysis

After completion of the first round of data collection, the audiotapes of the interviews were transcribed. The majority of the interviews were conducted in

English, some of them were bilingual (English and Japanese), and two interviews were conducted entirely in Japanese.

After the interviews were transcribed, the general biographical data, such as education, age, gender, places of residence, were analyzed. As the general background of the informants was established, the next step of the analysis, which included the establishment of common themes and patterns, was conducted. The data was structured by the common themes found among the artists, and the connection of these themes to research questions was established. Four major themes emerged: Life at the origin country, migration, and life in the host country, experiences within the art world(s), and aspects of artist identity.

LIFE AT ORIGIN				
Childhood memories	Education background	Relationship with parents		Working life in Japan
MIGRATION AND LIFE IN THE HOST COUNTRY				
Reasons for migration	Experiences of migration	Life in the host country		Future plans regarding place of residence
ART WORLD EXPERIENCES				
Art opportunities	Art communities	Japanese vs American art scene		Thoughts about art
IDENTITIES				
Japanese identity	Artist identity	Gender Identity	Family ties	Occupational identity

TABLE 4.1. IDENTIFICATION OF COMMON THEMES THROUGH THE INTERVIEW ANALYSIS. SOURCE: AUTHOR.

Each of these major themes was further sub-divided into sections (Table 4.1). For example, life at origin country included childhood memories and first encounter with art, education background and art school experiences, relationship with parents, and (for some) working life in Japan. Reasons for migration, experiences related to

migration, and life in the host country were placed under the migration and life in the host country section. All artists' experiences within the art world(s) of Japan and the United States, such as the availability of art opportunities, comparison between Japanese and American art scenes, membership in art communities in Japan and NYC, and general thoughts about art, were placed under the art world(s) section and included many comparisons between Japan and the United States.

Five main aspects of identity emerged from the first interviews: Japanese identity, artist identity, gender identity, family ties, and occupational identity. As the themes and their subdivisions were established during the first round of the interviews, it became possible to compare the artists' responses on specific topics and the patterns in their life stories and narratives. The subsequent interviews were built on top of the topics that were discussed previously. The primary purpose of the second and third interviews was to expand and deepen the understanding of the themes that have already emerged from the first interview with each artist.

5.6 Ethics

In the anthropological and neighboring disciplines, it has become a standard agreement that at all stages of research, the researcher has a responsibility to remain considerate and respectful towards the participants involved in the study, including the informants, the scientific community, the research institution, and to the public. While the focus of what is essential ethically speaking might shift depending on the country, local anthropological tradition, and societal norms, the most recent codes of ethics in anthropological research by the American Anthropological Association (AAA), Research and Innovation of the European Commission (EC) and Japanese Society of

Cultural Anthropology (JASCA) seem to share core values. These values include non-discrimination, respect of human rights and rights to privacy, protection of the people studied, and accountability of the research. The responsibility towards the informants remains the primary one (Fluehr-Lobban 1998, 191).

Here I would like to discuss some of the specific points relevant to conducting current research based on the guidelines of the AAA, EC, and JASCA. The first aspect that requires attention is ensuring the safety of the informants by being mindful of how the information provided could affect their life and work. This is especially relevant for the current study, as all informants are engaged in New York City's art world and might share the same professional networks.

Another aspect is anonymity. It is expected that the researcher should identify in advance whether the "informants prefer to remain anonymous or receive recognition and make every effort to comply with those wishes" (Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association Approved February 2009). The anonymity of the informants became a crucial question to consider before conducting the interviews with the informants. This posed a rather tricky problem, considering the nature of the artist profession and the focus of the current research.

Lastly, new types of information, such as representation on social media, became available to researchers with the advancement of technologies. It is essential to treat the online space with respect and thoughtfulness as the on-site fieldwork and stay mindful of the division between public and private space. The new media "have given rise to new forms of community and personal identity for people that pose real challenges to the key ethical research principles of consenting, voluntary

participation, and vulnerability" (Research Ethics in Ethnography/Anthropology of the European Commission, 2015).

These guidelines were essential in conducting current research, not to affect in a negative way interpersonal and work relationships of the participants. I kept particularly mindful of the privacy of people mentioned by the informants during the interviews and was careful of the information's context. Things said in private after the recorder was turned off also do not appear in the research. All requests made by the participants in terms of content and privacy were respected.

In order to protect the rights and privacy of the informants, acquiring informed consent from the participants became a norm in the scientific community. It is agreed by both AAA and EC that informed consent should be obtained in advance and include all necessary information about the data collection, privacy protection, goals of the study, and relevant details of publishing the results. As there is no specific form, the informed consent may be obtained orally or in written form. It can be argued that acquiring written consent forms might interfere with the flow of anthropological research, primarily if the method of participant observation is being implemented (Fluehr-Lobban 1998, 188).

The current research was mindful of the research ethics guidelines and explicitly informed the participants about the research's objective and potential risks. All informants were more comfortable with the oral informed consent. The informants were made aware that they were free to choose whether to stay anonymous or disclose their identity and that they had the freedom to withdraw from the research at any time. As consent "may be treated as ongoing throughout the research engagement" (Research Ethics in Ethnography/Anthropology by European

Commission), oral consent was obtained anew before conducting each interview, including the follow-up interviews with the participants.

All participants chose to use their real names. When giving full names, the Western convention of the first name followed by the last name is used.

5.7 The informants

The selection of participants began in November-December of 2019. The initial participants who fulfilled the primary criterion of 1) identifying as a professional artist, 2) being born and raised in Japan, and 3) living in New York City for at least one year since the beginning of the study were selected through acquaintance recommendation and social media search. After arriving at the fieldwork

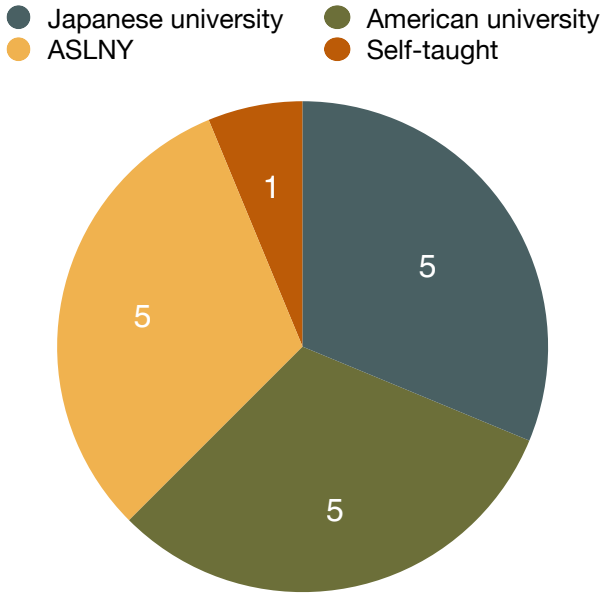

FIG. 4.1 ART EDUCATION TYPES AMONG THE INFORMANTS. SOURCE: AUTHOR.

site, the snowball method was used to select the remaining informants. Some of the

participants gave suggestions for potential informants, while others introduced their acquaintances.

Out of 14 informants, nine have received a degree in an art-related field from a university, out of which four graduated from a Japanese university, and five from a college in the United States. Four artists studied at the Art Student League of New York, and one is a self-taught artist with no formal training.

As shown in Figure 4.1, most of the artists participating in the study received a degree from an art program at a university at some point in their lives. Two people received education from more than one type of art education, reflected in the chart accordingly. The age groups of the informants also varied, with the majority falling into the category of being in their 40s and 50s.

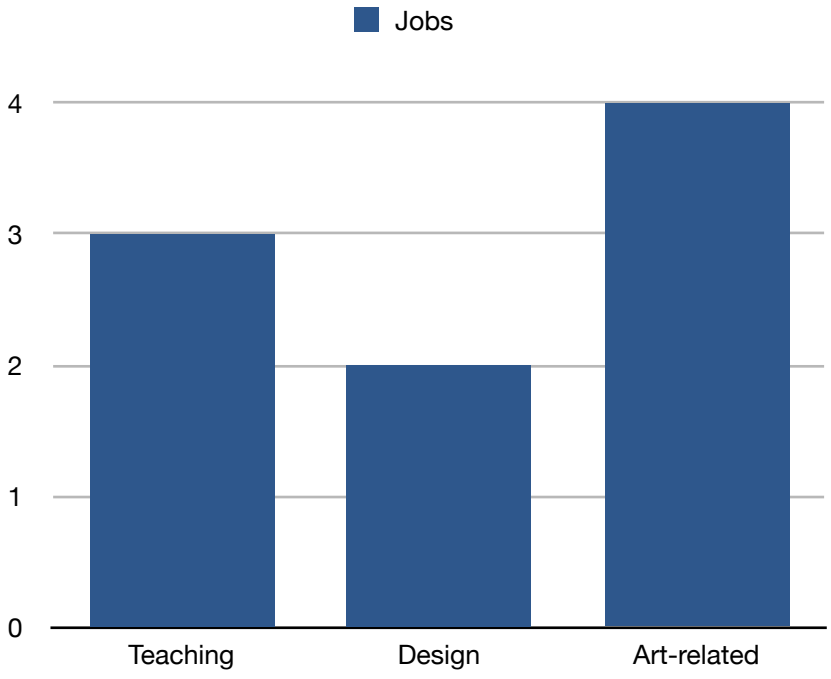

FIG. 4.2 TYPES OF JOBS OCCUPIED BY THE INFORMANTS AT THE TIME OF THE INTERVIEWS

All informants lived in New York City for two to twenty years at the time of the interviews and, except three participants who left New York to go to Japan or

elsewhere, continue to live there as of 2021. All artists are actively involved in the New York and global art scenes and regularly present their artwork. Some of the participants have experience exhibiting in Japanese venues as well. Five out of fourteen currently work as full-time artists without supporting jobs. However, the majority of participants have several types of income to support their art practice. During different stages of their lives, many artists have experience working as waiters and dishwashers at restaurants and cafes, as art movers, or having full-time corporate jobs. However, at the time of the interviewing, the most popular source of income for the artists was art-related jobs, such as art restoration, modeling at an art school, art assistant, or art mentorship. The second most popular type was teaching art, either at the university level or privately. And lastly, design-related jobs, such as design director at a company and freelance space design.

5.8 Going into the field

The original plan for the first fieldwork was to arrive in New York on 28th February 2020 and stay there for one month. For most of my time in New York, I stayed as a scholar and a painter at Mothership NYC, an art residency in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. I lived and worked with other artists while conducting interviews with the primary focus of my research, Japanese contemporary artists in New York City. This, as well as taking a life painting class at the famous Artist Student League, mentioned by many of my respondents, facilitated the immediate immersion into the artistic scene of New York. Moreover, I was lucky enough to arrive in New York during the

Armory Show, a significant art event with many satellite art shows, which also became a point for discussion and building rapport with the artists.

During my stay in Brooklyn, I kept a researcher's diary, where I wrote down my observations about New York's art scene and my thoughts on what I saw and heard. As a creative and a migrant myself, many things discussed during interviews and informal conversations resonated deeply with me. The reflections about the feelings that arose became a significant part of my researcher's diary. Upon my arrival to New York, I had four interviews scheduled: Sonomi and Sophia, whom I was referred to by my first respondent, Maho; Keiko, whom my academic advisor referred me; and Satoko, or Sato, as she introduced herself, whom I contacted via Instagram. During my stay, Sonomi introduced me to my following respondents: Takashi and Isaac; while the head of the art residency where I was staying, a Norwegian-American painter, introduced me to a Japanese textile artist, Aomi.

The original plan was to conduct all the respondents face-to-face and visit some of their shows in New York and Tokyo. However, many of these plans were canceled due to the spread of COVID-19. I had to return to Japan earlier than I had initially planned on 15th March 2020, so the more significant part of the interviews had to be conducted on a different date and digitally via Skype.

5.9 New York as a backdrop: Auto-ethnography

As a migrant and an artist myself, I felt that my own experiences and emotions might resonate with the stories of my informants. In order to keep track of my immediate reactions and reflections, I decided to follow the example of classic ethnographers and keep a field diary during my fieldwork in New York City. It

became an excellent tool to pay more attention to the surroundings and immerse myself more into the city, visualizing the lives of my informants in NYC. As Kondo stressed in her monograph *Crafting Selves*, many of the first diary entries highlight sensory impressions and feelings of the strangeness of the new place of fieldwork (Kondo 1990, 7), and it proved to be true for my first entry upon arrival to New York, dated 3 March 2020:

> It seems like everybody is an artist in New York: "I work as an x, but I also make painting / creative writing/music," etc. And it's not surprising, considering that you are surrounded by art everywhere you go: museums and galleries in Manhattan, graffiti and murals on literally every wall in Brooklyn, performers in the subway. Another thing that is very different from Tokyo, is that nobody cares, what you are doing, how are you dressed, and whether you are talking on your phone on a train or no. This is very different from Tokyo, where all working adults are expected to have a certain type of appearance, clothing, hairstyle, act a certain type of way, "be considerate" of others. People are irritated easily by the smallest misbehavior, and you feel under constant social scrutiny. In New York, nobody cares if you are listening to your music loudly if you have dreadlocks and work at a bank (a situation that would be considered absurd in Japan), and yet if people do talk to you, they are very friendly, and somehow they make you feel included in the community that is New York City. The atmosphere seems to be relaxed because of this unwritten solidarity between the New Yorkers. And even though I read many times that people in NYC are fast, constantly busy, and rude, I, the Tokyoite, am the fastest walker and, probably, the tensest.
> (Author, 2020)

I will include some of the extracts from my field diary in this section and the analysis chapter, as first-person narratives in ethnographic research help emphasize the complexities of everyday life and highlight the importance of any account, including the author's (Kondo 1990, 8). As I started to analyze the collected data, as well as my fieldwork diary and re-reading it almost exactly a year after I wrote it, I could not help but realize that many of the things that the informants felt in New York

City, especially in contrast to Japan and Tokyo, I felt in a very similar way. One of the examples would be the following:

> I realized that I need to blend in and seem like a local wherever I go. With New York, it is much easier than in any other place that I lived. Everybody is a foreigner or an immigrant in one way or another. It provides more space for maneuvering in being one of them. I talked to Keiko today about this realization, and she said that she feels similarly: in New York City, nobody cares about you, and you can be whomever you want to be. Outside of the city it is different, and you can be discriminated against easily. But in New York City, everybody can be a New Yorker; you don't even need to have perfect English. In the subway, the announcements are in Spanish, and some of the ads are completely in Mandarin with no translation. On the streets, I heard locals speak English, I heard French, Polish, Russian, Arabic, Japanese, and virtually anything else. And I feel that's what makes the city welcoming because everyone is on in the same status as you are.
> (Author, 2020)

The majority of the informants shared the feeling that one can quickly disappear in New York City, and nobody would pay any unnecessary attention to who you are, what you do, and what language you speak. The role of this in the experiences of the migrant artists will be discussed in more detail in Chapter V.

Another peculiar thing, an unspoken truth, in a way that I found out as I spent some time here, talking to the Japanese artists was a kind of an invisible network among the Japanese artists in New York City. On the other hand, some of the informants were actively entangled in the Japanese artist community, including being a member of the Japanese Association of the Arts of New York (JAANY), exhibiting in Japanese-owned galleries, actively seeking Japanese friendships and art-related connections. However, most artists mentioned trying to distance themselves from any direct ties with Japanese or Asian artist communities in NYC and work more towards the individual or universal appeal. Nevertheless, as I realized along the way, many of the artists, regardless of which group they belong to, actively used the "weak ties" to

seek opportunities in New York: finding jobs (gallery staff, art movers, artist assistant, restaurant jobs) through a loose network Japanese friends or acquaintances. Moreover, I discovered that there is a high possibility that the artists I interviewed might know each other:

> I went to interview Takashi today at his studio apartment. We had a 2-hour conversation about his life and his art. When we chatted about this and that after the interview ended, we realized that he knows personally everyone who I interviewed or plan to interview. It is funny how all of these local Japanese artists mention how they try to stay away from the Japanese community in NYC, and yet everyone knows everyone.
> (Author, 2020)

Unfortunately, due to the unfolding COVID-19 situation, my fieldwork was cut short, and I was not able to completely immerse myself in the atmosphere of the city and attend all of the events and places I was planning to, such as two Japanese-owned galleries, JAANY, and some of the exhibitions of the interviewed artists. At the time, I was still hopeful that I would return the following year to proceed with the fieldwork. However, this plan proved to be unrealistic. Regardless of this turn of events, I was not going back empty handed, having interviewed some of the artists and having had a glimpse of the city they chose for life and work.

> It was a very insightful trip. <…> There are many things to think about. This time, I decided to let artists speak mostly about whatever they want, see what topics and themes are important to them, and see any similarities. Even though I decided not to implement the narrative biography method when I was coming here, in the end, it seemed the most natural and meaningful way of understanding deeper what these artists are experiencing. I thought it would be best to collect a series of narrative biographies first and narrow down the interviews later. I have a feeling that, in the end, it can be something more meaningful than my original research questions were about.
> (Author, 2020)

5.10 Research limitations

The study is limited to my choice of Japanese artists in New York, and I have not done any comparative studies of American artists in Japan, other immigrant artists in New York, or Japanese artist communities elsewhere. Also, while the level of rapport was established with the artists before conducting the interviews, the level of trust and openness might vary depending on each artist's individual character traits and levels of comfort. Because of the COVID-19, most of the interviews were conducted online, and after the first fieldwork, I could not return to New York to conduct participant observation and spend more time with the artists.

Chapter VI: Leaving Japan and Living in the States

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes the empirical data collected during the interviews with the respondents and links the common themes and observations with the existing body of literature. Chapter VI answers the first two research questions: 1) What motivates Japanese artists to migrate? And 2) How do the experiences of the migrant artists in New York contribute to their self-perception within the art world? The primary rationale behind combining the findings related to these two research questions together is twofold: First, both of these questions deal with actual lived experiences of the respondents and are based on life events, and second, they prepare a background for a more abstract third research question (How do multiple layers of identity contribute to the artist umbrella identity?), which will be addressed separately in Chapter VII.

First, I will discuss the respondents' motivations to migrate to New York and then present the main reasons for choosing New York as their ultimate destination. Second, I will describe the participants' everyday experiences in New York and link them to the development of their artistic identity.

6.2 What motivates Japanese artists to migrate?

The analysis of RQ1, “What motivates Japanese artists to migrate?” is divided into two parts. The first part reveals the reasons and circumstances for initial migration outside of Japan and the reasoning behind choosing New York City as their

ultimate destination. The second part focuses on the reasoning behind choosing to stay (or not) in New York instead of moving somewhere else or going back to Japan.

In literature, Japanese artist migration is sometimes referred to as "lifestyle migration" because the primary reasons are "non-material and non-instrumental" (Sooudi 2011, 79), as opposed to, for example, economic migration. However, as we shall see further in the chapter, the reality is more complex than that, and, like most migration experiences, is a fusion of micro, mezzo, and macro factors (O'Reilly 2012). Therefore, it might be more fitting, as we already discussed in Chapter II, to view artist migration through a "push-pull-plus" framework, which includes, as suggested by some researchers, "repulse," and "retain" factors (Schewel 2019, Arango 2000). In the following sections, we shall examine the act of migration, motivation to leave Japan (push factors), to go to the U.S. (pull factors), and then, upon arrival, reasons to stay or to go back ("retain" for the U.S. and "repulse" for Japan, and vice versa).

In literature, one of the leading "pull" factors for Japanese artist migration is the image of the Western metropolises generated by the media (Sooudi 2011, 79; Fujita 2009, 7). This might be true to a certain extent, on the stage of the conception of the idea of going specifically to New York, and the existing image perpetuated through mass media and word-to-mouth, of New York City as the center of the art world. However, as already discussed in Chapter II, one "pull" factor is not enough, and the "attractiveness" of the destination has to outweigh the place of origin considerably. An essential part of the decision-making process is played by the emotional attachments and security associated with the country of origin. As a result,

it is frequently not a specific list of pros and cons but rather an emotional and irrational judgment (Lee 1966).

6.2.1 Leaving Japan

The primary reason for migration for most of the informants participating in the study was related to art in one way or another: Either to receive/continue art education or to become a part of the contemporary art scene instead of the local Japanese one. Two other popular categories could be family reasons and by chance. Not everybody's first choice was New York City: Takashi, Sophia, and Aomi were first drawn to cities in Europe. After obtaining a doctoral degree in Japanese painting in Tokyo, Takashi began wondering about the perception of Japanese painting abroad and decided to find the answer by embarking on the journey abroad, also declining a job opportunity at his *alma mater*:

> I thought if I continued to be inside of Japan and be an assistant, I wouldn't know the exact reason it's [Japanese painting] not popular outside. I wanted to see it from the outside. As a Japanese culture, as a Japanese art market and the kind of systems from the outside point of view. So that's the reason, actually.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

At first, Takashi went to Germany and then eventually found himself in Paris.

> But then I was walking around the art fairs, and galleries [in Paris], and I felt, it's still old-style. Kind of… <…> But I was still thinking about paintings but still thinking about the contemporary style. So I thought maybe that this was old. It was maybe 1994? Or something like that. And of course, no Japanese painter was there. So maybe, English [-speaking country]? It must be the final answer.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

After coming to this conclusion, Takashi first made his way to Canada, then to Hawai'i, and then got to San Diego, in order to eventually find himself in New York City:

> San Diego, my gallery is still in San Diego. <…> But for me, the new guy, is not selling well. And if they don't sell well, I don't have any income. So I was kind of thinking, if I'm living in San Diego, I'm still just a local guy. And they also said that, you are actually considered as a local artist. I don't know, even the same guy, they say to their customers that this artist is from New York, it sells much better. I don't know (laughing). So if I go to New York, probably, it will be much much better. Because it's exclusive, right? I can't probably contact any new galleries too. So I will be a New York artist. So that's how I came to this area. <…> Of course, New York is central to any kind of culture, so…
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

Sophia, too, was drawn to Paris at first:

> And then he [painting teacher] passed away, and then, actually, I went to college [to study art] first to France. But I couldn't feel like this is exciting for me, because it is kind of traditional, and I left in three months, and I went back to Japan, and then I went to New York.
> (S. C., 17 March 2020)

Both Takashi and Sophia found the art scene in Paris too traditional, and for them, that was a decisive "push" factor, signaling that they had to move on to somewhere else. For Sophia, Paris was a destination where she chose to go to first. After NYC, Paris was the second-most-popular choice among Japanese artists to pursue art. The choice of Paris by the artists is not surprising. The informants' fascination with France as a destination for pursuing an art career could be traced to the beginning of the 19th century during intense cultural exchanges between Japan and Europe. For a long time, Paris was celebrated as the international hub for painters, writers, dancers, and other creative professionals and became home to several Japanese painters, the most influential of them being Leonard Foujita. As the outcome

of the rich artistic history, as Hellmanzik (2010) wrote, Paris remains one of the top two locations for artists, along with New York. These cities hold a particular gravitas for the creatives who aspire to be associated with the brands of "Parisian" or "New Yorker" artists. Isaac, for instance, wanted to go to France, but the language barrier became a "repel" factor that made him reconsider that decision.

> I actually wanted to go to France, but… Since I couldn't speak English, and French is very hard…
> (I. F., 15 April 2020)

Aomi, who was studying fashion design at the time, was also drawn to Paris at first. Several Japanese fashion designers, including Yohji Yamamoto, Rei Kawakubo, and Issei Miyake, built their careers in Paris during the 1960s and 1970s. From a historical perspective, Paris seemed like *the* destination. However, the experience did not live up to her expectations. She had a plan of studying in Tokyo at first and then making her way to Paris:

> But it's very hard to go directly to Paris to study fashion design, maybe, a large amount of people would say no, kind of, it's crazy. So I needed something… I go to Tokyo, and for one year or so I studied at some apparel design institute. And then, then I moved to Paris. That is my strategy, through the school. So I studied one year there, and I went to see Paris during summertime, but Paris at the time… <…> And then seeing [Paris] from Montmartre hill, it looked like graveyard, because at that time Paris was a lot of buildings, stones, not the modern ones… So I saw Paris as a grave, so (laughing). My desire to go to Paris is a little bit unreasonable.
> (A. K., 8 April 2020)

For these three artists, Takashi, Sophia, and Aomi, New York was not the place they had planned to go initially. They only realized that New York was where they wanted to be through comparison with other cities where they tried their luck along their migration journey.

In a somewhat similar but slightly different way, Aki and Hiroya eventually made their way to NYC. It is similar because NYC was not their "goal" destination that they actively pursued initially, but they ended up there like Takashi, Sophia, and Aomi. It is different because they spent some time abroad during their secondary education (Aki in Wales and Hiroya in the U.S.), and both of them graduated from a college in the United States. Eventually, both of them went to NYC hoping to find work in the art field:

> I guess people end up being here [in New York] just because New York is still the center of art <…> You can create in many places, but, about business and showing and stuff like that, New York is definitely the center of the art world.
> (H. K., 7 August 2020)

One of the most critical and often underestimated dimensions of artistic occupations is social life. Artists go to exhibitions, gallery openings, and other art events to meet people in the art industry and develop acquaintances and social networks that later become contacts for projects, jobs, and the art world gatekeepers (Currid 2007). When Hiroya referred to New York as the "center of the art world" in terms of business, he most probably meant precisely that: It represents a high concentration of art events and art professionals crucial for advancing one's career.

> I mean, I was there [in New York] for a lot of summers and occasions. it is very close from my university, so I really wanted to go there, especially for dance. I didn't think about any other choice. I wanted to spend a year there and work as much as possible.
> (A. S., 4 May 2020)

There were also "accidental" New Yorkers. Both Sonomi and Tadasuke happened to go to New York almost "randomly." For them, similarly to the Stockholm artists in Borén And Young's 2013 study, the "attractiveness" of the city did not

influence their decision to move there. Tadasuke went to New York following his wife, who was already living in New York:

> My wife, she used to live in New York, and she said she wanted to stay here longer, so I came here.
> (T.J., 8 May 2020)

Meanwhile Sonomi shares how she came for a visit as a tourist, and eventually stayed for two decades:

> I just came to New York to visit, and I liked it, I came back for a couple of times and decided to move because I was very young, so I didn't really think about it. Okay, maybe one month, maybe three months, maybe a year. I had no plans.
> (S. K., 1 March 2020)

None of them were interested in becoming professional artists before moving to New York, and thus their motives for moving to New York were not because of the image of New York as the art center. They just happened to be there and only afterward developed a desire to create and show their art. Tadasuke and Sonomi's experiences, while unique compared to other participants of the current research, align with the findings of Hautala and Nordström (2019): In their research, among 16 Finnish artists in Berlin, two moved to Berlin for love, like Tadasuke, and two moved because they visited the city and found it exciting, like Sonomi.

To a certain extent, Sophia could be assigned to the "accidental New Yorker" group. After studying art in France for three months, she decided to return to Japan, realizing that the art scene in Paris was very traditional, while she wanted to do more contemporary and expressive work, but before going to try her luck in another country, she decided to enroll in a language school first:

> I couldn't speak English well, so went to Nova English conversation school. I went there, and there I met that girl. And she was like, tomorrow I'm going to New York. And then she was like, come. And was like, okay. And I went there.I didn't need a visa, I have a three-month visa waiver. My friends told me that, and I was like, oh, ok. It was so easy, I just said ok, and I went there. I didn't even know where New York was in the Untied States. And I just went… "
> (S. C., 17 March 2020).

So, it is possible to say that the way Sophia arrived in NYC was accidental, but unlike Sonomi and Tadasuke, she knew that she wanted to pursue art.

As we can see, for approximately half of the respondents, New York was not their first choice. Like Takashi and Sophia, and Aomi, they had to go to other countries first and ultimately decide to New York. Hiroya and Aki were living in the United States for a while before moving to NYC and decided to do so in order to pursue their artistic careers. For Sonomi, Tadasuke and Sophia as well, going to New York was not the goal. They happened to be there due to particular circumstances and decided to stay.

Another observation that could be made from the informants' experiences is the lack of apparent "push" factors. In the classical push and pull framework, the migrants are "pushed" from the economically poorer region and "pulled" towards an economically "healthier" region (Van Hear, Bakewell & Long 2017). As can be seen from the informants' quotes, financial reasons were not primary factors, and there were no decisive "push" factors that forced them out of Japan. At the same time, "pull" factors seem relatively weak and mostly boil down to micro-factors, such as personal preferences and relationships. In this sense, Lee's (1966) statement that the "pull" factors of the new destination must considerably outweigh does not correspond

with the artists' experiences. As we shall see later in the chapter, "retain" and "repel" categories prove to be more important for the artists' decision to stay or to go.

6.2.2 Going to New York

Some artists made up their minds to go to NYC later, and some went there directly. Among those who went to New York straight from Japan, the reasons for doing so were art-related in one way or another. For example, Sato, Keiko, Aomi, Maho, and Yuko went there to receive or continue their art education. Sato, whose original degree was in architecture, went to New York to go to an art school and fulfill her dream of becoming an artist:

> Just dreaming about being an artist is very easy, but improving everything is very hard. I dreamed to be, when I stayed in Japan, but, unfortunately, I didn't have many art relationships in my country. The thing is, even if you are in your country, things depend on how much relationship you have in an art world.
> (S. Y., 2 March 2020)

Maho's first time in NYC was as a tourist, but that is when she felt like she wanted to study art:

So I was there for... after I left the college, and then I went to the New York with friends.We saved money, we all were, like, I wanted to see the Guggenheim. Guggenheim was my favorite shape of the art museum. So I went there inside, and it was... And the art show was, I think, it was canvas with bold color. <…> And I thought, wow, maybe this is it! And I had a, like, suddenly, I saw, I thought, this place is my place, I want to study art!
(M. L., 21 February 2020)

After returning to Japan and meeting her future husband, who at the time received a scholarship to study law in the United States, they decided to move together. Maho saw it as an opportunity to fulfill her dream of studying art:

> I saw at the museum. I didn't know, I forgot the artist, but his title said, teacher at Art Student League someone. So I thought, okay, Art Student League, that's someone I liked the painting. So I should go.
> (M. L., 21 February 2020)

Similar to Sato and Maho, Yuko and Aomi went to New York to receive their art degree. Unlike Sato, who went in her twenties, Yuko was 34 when she moved to New York, and Aomi was 52. Before moving to New York, Aomi was a textile artist in Japan. However, she wanted to get the feel of the global contemporary art scene:

> So I decided to go study more art and do more contemporary art, so I moved to New York. <…> I went to New York, because I wanted to become universal kind of artist.
> (A.K., 31 October 2020)

For Aomi, New York was a place where she could detach from her current status of a local Japanese artist to a "universal" artist. As Currid (2007) pointed out, New York's high concentration of artists and art institutions, which, in turn, provides the city the title of a "global tastemaker." Being associated with New York, an important cultural center, is one way of making that leap from local to a universal artist. However, as was mentioned by Verdich (2010), not all creative professionals prefer urban settings and find it easier and more productive to express their creativity in a more local scene.

Yuko worked at a big corporation in Japan for more than ten years. After realizing she did not like corporate life in Japan, she decided to pursue her old dream of doing art professionally, and New York seemed like an excellent place to start:

> And I was like, if I work few more years, and save this much, and I can take off and don't have to be here study art, and, you know, the best place to study art <…>, I picked New York.
> (Y. S., 6 January 2021)

Keiko, who was studying Japanese-style painting at a university in Tokyo, first arrived in New York after winning a scholarship to paint there for six months. She then returned to Japan, and a couple of years later, returned to the United States under a program sponsored by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

> And after that I got, in 2011, I got the show opportunity in New York, which is really… <…> And at that time I also got a grant to get a temporary studio in New York. And I got a Red Hook studio, a very small one. And I ended up, like, you know… Aster the show, I was back and forth in Philly and New York, since I got some relationship here. Then ended up, like, giving up Philly, and [being] more here [in New York]. <…> I still love Philly, and I have friends there, but now I am kind of stuck in New York City.
> (K. M., 5 March 2020)

For these five women, moving to New York was due to an educational opportunity. They wanted to study art and decided that New York was the best place to do it, or, as in the case of Keiko, received a scholarship to do so. In contrast with the artists discussed in the previous section, the act of migration was more intentional and intertwined with their goal of becoming an artist, choosing NYC as the "place to be" (A. K., 8 April 2020).

Isaac, Tadahiro, and Shigeno were intentional about their move to New York and in a somewhat different fashion. Isaac decided to go to New York at 24 because

"art is important in New York" (I. F., 15 April 2020), and art is easily accessible in New York.

> And [in Kyoto] I went to see the artworks [from Metropolitan Museum]. And I thought, oh, so many different kinds of artworks exist. I thought, oh, there must be so many different kinds of artworks in Metropolitan Museum. <…> That's why I chose New York. And there are so many different museums in New York, and so much art, of course, so I felt that this environment will be good for me. That's why I chose New York.
> (I. F., 15 April 2020)

Tadahiro first came to New York on a student visa. For him, much like for Isaac and Maho, a visit to an art museum inspired him to pursue art. Moreover, years later, he returned to the United States with his family for a job opportunity and continued pursuing art.

> When I was in New York, maybe, 2013, and… I came by myself, just on a student visa. And I went to a very famous museum in the upstate, and it has art of contemporary art, very, you know… And of course, a lot of famous, Gerhard Richter, like that… So… I've never been there, and it was my first time, you know. I was very impressed by that, I think, you know, art culture. <…> So, it was just, it was obsession of making some art, you know. So I started to, you know, make more art, suddenly. So… <…> And then, I decided coming here [to New York] with my family [as a design director].
> (T. G., 23 May 2020)

In Shigeno's case, he initially came to New York for an art tour, and years later returned there to become an artist, based on conversations he had with the artists he met in the city:

> The first time I went to New York City, it was a tour with all other people, and just looking the museums and galleries, and then a part of the tour was visiting artist studios, and I met them, and I asked some questions to them, and they asked, you know, New York is a very special place, they said, and if you want to be an artist, maybe you can do this in this city. And I was young, and I believed them.
> (S. I., 10 November 2020)

In short, Isaac, Shigeno, and Tadahiro all decided to come to New York to pursue art, but, unlike Keiko, Sato, Maho, Aomi, and Yuko, they did not go there for education but for pursuing their art careers. The clear gender-based division among these two groups attracts attention. All male informants went to New York to pursue art, and all female informants went to New York to pursue art education first.

This might be related to the internalized professional identity inferiority among women perpetuated by gendered myths of an artist's identity (Garfunkel 1984). As discussed in Chapter II, in the collective imagination, a typical artist is a male genius. For the same reason, as stated by Garfunkel (1984), women artists tend to seek external attributes in order to legitimize their professional artist identity (Bain 2004) and choose an art educator role instead of a professional artist (Zwirn 2006). For Sato, Maho, Aomi, and Yuko, going to New York to receive an education first might have been precisely the type of external validation that other researchers mentioned.

In her monograph, Fujita (2009) posed a similar research question to the one we are addressing in the current sub-chapter: "How do young Japanese conceive the idea of migration to New York City or London for cultural production?" The majority of her informants moved to NYC or London nearly immediately after completing high school or college or quitting their jobs, and they were dependent on their parents' financial support or savings (Fujita 2009, 2). In contrast to her findings, only five out

of fourteen artists participating in the current study left Japan immediately after completing university. Two of them secured a scholarship for receiving further education (as in the case of Keiko, who won a scholarship to go to New York, Aki, who completed high school in Wales and later got a scholarship for a BFA program in the United States, and Hiroya, who graduated a high school in Massachusetts and later received an illustration degree). None of them was dependent on their parent's financial support. Also, it is essential to note that not all of the respondents moved with the purpose of "cultural production": Tadasuke, for instance, chose New York to be with his wife, while both Sonomi and Sophia were visiting New York as a tourist with friends and decided to stay.

Fujita's (2009) central hypothesis was that the image of the U.S. and Western Europe constructed by media and the Internet is the main reason for migration (Fujita 2009, 7). The findings in the current study only partially align with this hypothesis. A particular constructed image of the U.S. and Western Europe as a reason for migration did occur, as we see from the image of New York and Paris as the global art hubs.

However, as discussed in Chapter II, it would be a mistake to only focus on this factor. In other words, the data does not support Fujita's (2009) view that Japanese artists migrating to major Western cities are "overseas students who eventually wanted to stay longer" (Sakai 2011, 478), and only partially supports Sooudi's (2011) "dramatic jumps to creative fields." Firstly, the absolute majority of the informants (twelve out of fourteen) moved to NYC with some intention to pursue art (blue color in the chart), whether as a continuation of their existing art education/ career (Aki, Hiroya, Isaac, Takashi, Sophia, and Keiko), or as a, using Sooudi's expression, "dramatic jump" of changing an existing career in Japan to pursuing an art

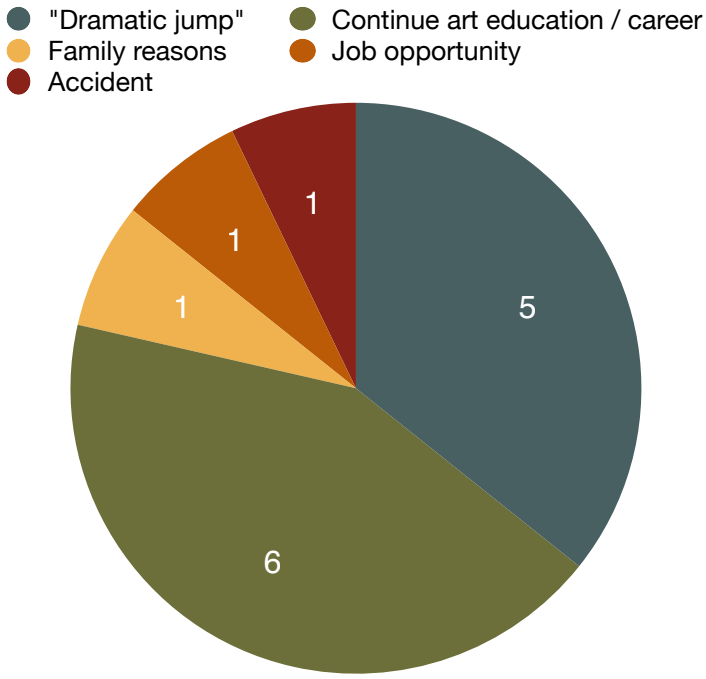

FIG. 5.1 REASONS FOR MIGRATION TO NYC. SOURCE: AUTHOR.

career in NYC (Sato, Yuko, Shigeno, and Aomi, Maho). One person moved for family reasons (Tadasuke), one moved for a job opportunity (Tadahiro), and one moved as an adventure (Sonomi). Out of these three respondents, two (Tadasuke and Sonomi) discovered their passion for art while already in New York.

As we saw in the interviews, the decision to migrate for the majority was related to their desire to be able to produce and show, and be able to easily access art, something they could not accomplish as easily in Japan, which will be discussed more thoroughly in the following section. Moreover, per Lee's (1966) proposition, in many cases, the final "push" towards New York was somewhat irrational and emotion-based: Takashi was trying to answer a question that was bothering him, and went almost on a round-the-world trip, living in Germany, France, Hawai'i, Canada, and, ultimately, United States, to understand, why Japanese art is not popular outside of Japan. Maho, Isaac, and Tadahiro were deeply moved by the artworks they saw in museums, and those experiences planted the idea to move to NYC. Sonomi and Sophia both went as tourists and decided to stay.

For some of the others, moving to NYC was a deliberate and thoroughly calculated decision, a “dramatic jump” in a way, as was described by Sooudi: “Many leave predictable jobs in Japan to undertake risky, dramatic jumps to creative fields such as art, dance, and design” (Sooudi 2011, 79), as we can see in figure 5.1. Such were the stories of Yuko, Shigeno, and Tadahiro. For them, New York was the ultimate “creative city” with a wide range of art institutions (Hautala and Nordström 2019), a vast art market with a large selection of projects, flexible job opportunities, and an educated population with high demand for art (Rius-Ulldemolins 2014).

6.2.3 “Retain” to NYC, “repel” from Japan

For many of the artists, the reasons why they were attracted to New York in the first place do not necessarily transform into the reasons why they choose to stay. This is why I believe that “retain” and “repel” post-migration factors might be more critical for the settlement and further migration aspirations among artists than the initial “push” and “pull” factors. After having to experience and de-mystifying NYC, the artists start comparing their lives in Japan and the United States, providing them with a clearer understanding of their reasonings and preferences. Many realizations come from social and cultural differences that are not easy to understand and compare until some time is spent in the new destination.

Takashi and Sophia, for example, felt that being an artist in New York is less complicated than in Japan because being an artist is not considered a “real” occupation and is seen more as a side thing that one can do:

> Living as an artist… In New York, being an artist is normal. In Tokyo, probably [people think], the artist, what are they actually doing? <…> America, or New York, has really considered artists as job <…> That's why I like it, actually. Here, as I said, in local galleries… Who lives, an accountant in the daytime, but he's [considered] a real artist <…> If you declare yourself an artist, you are an artist.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

> So, anyways, twenty years ago [Japanese art world] was a very traditional thing, it was mostly man thing, but they didn't give money until they get really old. So until then, we have to work and then paint on the side, part-time. I still work here [in New York], but I still paint more. But in Japan it's… work is the main thing, and then paint a little bit. And then there is… All the people are more like, I don't know, I didn't like it. That's why I left (laughing).
> (S. C., 17 March 2020)

Apart from the social recognition, another issue that many artists struggle with is the assumption that to be a professional artist, a person has to receive formal art education and study under a famous teacher. This sentiment was shared both by artists with formal training and by self-taught artists. Nowadays, this kind of flow to becoming an artist remains true for many creative individuals, as recounted by Takashi:

> But being in New York is really fun, actually. To me, it's more freedom. To be a *nihonga* artist in Japan is quite limited society. Where you are from, who is your teacher. They kind of study your background first, not the paintings.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

In his experience, Japan's system contrasts considerably with a more relaxed art culture of New York City. Here we can see a strong "retain" to New York and "repulse" for Japan based on how artists are perceived and treated. Compared to the Japanese art world's historically strict and hierarchal nature, the New York art scene provides more freedom in creation and independence from one's background. For the

informants, making such a comparison would not have been possible unless the artists had a lived experience in both places. Therefore, the usual “push” and “pull” are not enough to adequately describe the situation.

Aomi describes her experience with a Japanese art university:

> So, Japanese art world is very… Disciple, master and then disciples… Tokyo art university is the same, great teacher teaches the students. Student have to work according to his, kind of, advice. You know the… Fujita, Leonard? Fujita is a… Yeah. He once went to Tokyo art university, but he liked to use black color. And teacher said, no black. But he used black, and he was kicked out from the community and the university. It’s Japanese art world. And crafts is much more strict. More strict. So one teacher, and then students have to follow everything, colors, and then… Cannot go out from him. He has a, maybe, color, so as long as you belong to him, you can get some award, or you can be a, get a great position inside the community or the association, but once you say no to him, you will be kicked out. So very… So, Japanese art teachers are very jealous to the younger talented people, so they kill their hope for future. This is… That’s true.
> (A. K., 8 April 2020)

As we can trace from Aomi’s words, the traditional structure of the historic teacher-disciple relationship examined in Chapter II is still relevant to today's Japanese art world. Furthermore, while the arts education system might still be hierarchal and traditional, for the self-taught artists, it is even more challenging to get into the Japanese art scene:

> I think it is very difficult to get in to the art field if I didn’t graduate art college. I am… I am quite old, but still feel so. Always they ask me which art school did you graduate, something like that.
> (S. I., 10 November 2020)

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According to Shigeno, in New York, the importance of receiving formal art education from a good school and a famous teacher is not seen as such an important thing, as it is entering the art world in Japan:

> When I am in Japan, I still feel something strange, because still everybody asks me, did you go to art school in Japan, in Tokyo? And suddenly some art students came to my show, and they were like, "oh, you didn't go to an art school? How do you… How can you make it?" So silly, actually <…> Twenty no thirty years ago, when I was applying to art contests, art grants in Tokyo, there were so many things to fill in in application form. You know? Which school did you go, or who is your teacher? It's so stupid! But in New York, they don't ask my gender, my age, my background. Just artworks, and, you know, artist statement. That's the only thing we need. <…> I am over fifty. Japanese art people are still talking about their school. Which school did you graduate? Who [is the teacher]? Who [is the teacher]? It's still same.
> (S. I., 10 November 2020)

Takashi, who received a doctorate in Japanese painting from an art university in Tokyo, shares a similar experience:

> To me, [being in New York] is more freedom. To be a *nihonga* artist, actually. And then, *nihonga* artist in Japan is quite limited society. Where you are from, who is your teacher. They kind of study your background first, not the paintings.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

Takashi, Sophia, Aomi, and Shigeno all felt uncomfortable with the existing structure of the Japanese art world and the hierarchy within educational institutions. While this might not have been a "push" factor initially, when considering moving abroad to pursue their art careers, the differences between art culture in New York and Japan became more apparent as they spent some time away from Japan. In a way, as Sooudi (2014) put it, going to NYC became a way to start with a blank slate, and "do what I want to do with my life," or, to paraphrase it, "be an artist the way I want to be an artist." Keiko, too, shared her feeling about the Japanese art world:

> But I had a very very bad experience, really, it kind of traumatized me. So I just feel like, you know, that's it, I don't like [Japanese art scene].
> (K. M., 5 March 2020)

One of the possible reasons for Japanese society not recognizing those who have day jobs as professional artists might be the fact that it was the generally accepted norm for a young fresh graduate of an art school to join a *bijutsu dantai*, as discussed by Nanjo (1989) and Yoshimoto (2005). Apart from the unspoken rule of joining a *bijutsu dantai,* an aspiring artist was expected to graduate from a reputable art school. Student-teacher relationship is also incredibly important in entering Japanese art world. As Takashi pointed it out: "I studied under a famous guy, but it's not important for me. It is my painting, what [else] are you looking for?"

Sonomi conceived the idea to become an artist only after she moved to New York, which means that she never had any exposure to the mechanics of the art world in Japan before leaving for New York. She recounts her experience participating in a group show organized by *bijustu dantai*:

> But then the show [I participated in] was kind of weird, in a very Japanese way. <…> Do you know *bijutsu dantai?* <…> It was like membership <…> They were all members, and there is always one, not director, just like an artist who took over the years, like, the main guy. And there are members that are there for a long time. They come to…. If they are there for a long time, they become important members. And I think they pay a lot of money to be a member <…> And then after that [show], they wanted me to become member, and there was like… <…> They wanted me to do a group show with everybody, not even a solo show, they don't even have a gallery. So it was strange for me, becoming a member and having a group show that doesn't really make sense to show together. I think it was abstract, everybody was abstract <…> But their works didn't really connect…. And they show one or three [pieces] each, and it's like, so much art… And so the main guy would have the best spot, and the people. Older, or whatever, longer being a member, they'd be like second or third better places, even if their work is just ok (laughing).
> (S. K., 1 March 2020)

Historically, young artists were expected to find a *bijutsu dantai* of similar style and philosophy: similarly to what Sonomi described: "Everybody was abstract,"

and apply for membership. Back in the days, being a member of a *bijutsu dantai*, before the appearance of newspaper company exhibitions, was the only way to become recognized as an artist by the government and Japanese society. An established artist, or "the main guy," as Sonomi referred to him, would be the organization's leader, serve as the mentor for younger artists and receive some benefits, such as best spots at the exhibition sites (Yoshimoto 2005, 12).

When Aomi was telling about her involvement with *bijutsu dantai* before she left for New York, she mentioned having experienced the "mentorship" aspect of being a younger member:

> It's very hard to breath, you know? So I make something to show them, and they say, oh, this is too much. You want to exhibit with our association, you should change this or that, and my work becomes very boring, you know? So I struggled about four years with that, and my work became more and more boring. But I thought, maybe I have to listen, because they are very experienced, maybe they are a great teacher, and I have to listen what they are saying. But the more I listen, the more and more my work became nothing.
> (A. K., 8 April 2020)

Being a *bijutsu dantai* member is not the only way to succeed in the Japanese art world. However, it is still increasingly difficult. Interestingly, in NYC, there are also Japanese artists' associations similar to *bijutsu dantai*. One such organization and the artists' relationship with it will be discussed in section 5.3.

Several artists also mentioned a lack of art education. Takashi expressed his frustration with the fact that Japanese culture and traditional arts are under-represented in the Japanese education system and compares it to art literacy in other countries:

> Actually, they [non-Japanese], they know their cultures better than Japanese guys. And I realized, why Japanese don't know their own culture? Compared to other countries. And then I ended up, Japanese guys are not learning Japanese history or culture as kids at school. Obviously, if you know Japanese education system, we don't teach *nihonga* painting. Only at universities. But this is our culture actually, right? Old history, culture. But they don't teach anything about Japanese painting. Only Western painting history, Western art histories.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

For Aomi, art education became a point of comparison as well. She recalls how her understanding of art was limited to Japanese art and aesthetics before going to New York.

> People… I didn't know before, you know, before I went to New York, I didn't know what is art. But what is art, maybe it means… I didn't know, and I knew what is Japanese art, but I didn't know what is contemporary art. So Japanese, they still know, they know Japanese art, but they don't know contemporary art. So I had the same thing. Most of Japanese think, why this is art? Why? What is this? They are thinking about contemporary art like that. They don't understand. Understanding art is… I am not… I cannot say, I can't, I don't want to say, but we need some studying.
> (A. K., 8 April 2020)

Tadahiro believes that because of the lack of art education, Japanese people cannot discuss art easily, and he sees that as a problem that also translates into reluctance in supporting artists and buying their artwork, as opposed to the United States, where purchasing original art for the interior is more common.

> I mean… Here, in U.S., especially in New York and L.A., people get art as interior very easy, I think. Because they have maybe education in arts, and they can, you know, the usual people can express, you know, talking about art, you know, what they like. But in Japan, most people cannot talk about what they like in art, I mean… <…> It's a big deal, I think. It's the education of arts, I think. Japanese people, you know, have no art education. I don't know why.
> (T. G., 23 May 2020)

For Takashi, Aomi, and Tadahiro, the difference in art education levels is apparent, ultimately becoming a "selling" point for staying abroad. Tadahiro's

sentiment of having specific difficulties selling art in Japan is shared by Sonomi and Sophia as well:

> I mean, I am an artist, but to be able to afford to live in Japan, and I don't have to work… Maybe possible (laughing). It is easier for me to live here [in NYC].
> (S. K., 1 March 2020)

> Yeah, that is another reason I can't go back. Because somebody surviving in Japan, because they are staying outside of Japan. Because Japan, yeah. Japanese artists cannot… They cannot survive in Japan, unfortunately. I had a show in Philippines. Phllippinian people buy some art. And they are asking, why Japanese don't buy it. <…> Actually, only Japan doesn't buy art, maybe. Yeah, once they change, maybe I can go back. But I don't think it's going to happen during my life.
> (S. C., 17 March 2020)

To sum up, the majority of artists find it easier to pursue artistic careers in NYC compared to Japan, primarily due to socio-historical factors discussed in Chapter IV, such as rigidity and hierarchy in art education system, culturally taking its roots from *iemotoseido* system; network of inapproachable art gatekeepers, preventing outsiders from entering the Japanese art scene ("I think it's very difficult to get in to the art field if I didn't graduate art college, I am… <…> They always ask me which art school did you graduate, something like that." (S. I. 10 November 2020)); lack of autonomy in case of being a member of a *bijutsu dantai* ("So I make something to show them, and they say, oh, this is too much. You want to exhibit with our association, you should change this or that, and my work becomes very boring, you know?" (A. K., 8 April 2020)); prejudice from the society ("In Tokyo, probably [people think], the artist, what are they actually doing?" (T. H. 2020)); lack of general education in arts ("It's the education of arts, I think. Japanese people, you know, have no art education. I don't know why." (T. G., 23 May 2020)), and, consequentially, the

inability to financially sustain themselves through their art practice ("Yeah, once they [Japanese] change [start buying art], maybe I can go back. But I don't think it's going to happen during my life." (S.C., 17 March 2020)).

These reasons are the exact opposites of the attractiveness associated with a typical "creative city": low barrier of entry, open-mindedness, freedom, abundance of projects, work flexibility, art-savvy population, networking opportunities, and supportive communities (Hautala & Nordström 2019; Rius-Ulldemolins 2014). Understanding these nuances required the artists to stay in the destination for a longer time to observe, process, and compare the social and cultural aspects of being an artist in New York and Japan.

6.2.4 "Pull" to Japan, "repel" from New York

As there are factors encouraging some of the informants to prolong their stay in New York, certain things might push them back to Japan. When conducting the first round of interviews, none of the informants expressed a strong desire to return to Japan. However, the situation changed swiftly with the progression of the COVID-19 global pandemic. As a result, approximately half of the respondents considered returning to Japan, and some left.

Sooudi believes that all Japanese migrants have an eventual return "written into their trajectories" from the very beginning of their journey, and NYC serves as a type of an "intermediary" role (Sooudi 2011, 78). This might prove true in the future. However, at the time of the interviews, most participants of the current research associated their future with New York. The longer an artist lived in New York, the less aspiration they had to return. This echoes Borén and Young's (2013) findings, stating

that the more embedded an artist becomes in the artistic network, the more difficult it is to migrate elsewhere. However, with the advancement of technology and social media platforms, physical integration into a particular community becomes less and less relevant. Some of the artists felt like they did not care in which country to live and produce work, like Sato:

> I don't care which country to stay, I am sorry to say. Depending on how much is running.
> (S. Y., 2 March 2020)

For others, having had the exposure to contemporary global art scene like the one they experienced in New York, expanded their ambition from just being a local Japanese artist to a transnational one:

> Even if I returned to Japan, I think I want to continue doing art professionally. But probably instead of doing art in Japan only, I would want to go back and forth between Japan and other countries.
> (T. J., 8 May 2020)

Similarly, after being a part of an international NYC art scene, Aomi felt like she developed the confidence to be an international artist anywhere, be it in Japan or anywhere else. That gave her confidence to come back to Japan in April 2020.

> That's one reason that I went to [the] Pratt Institute. I went to New York, because I wanted to become universal kind of artist. And I wanted to make, so I very specifically was making Japanese art in Japan, kind of. And I wanted to change myself to become international artist. <…> No matter where I am, even if I am in Japan, I make something, I am in New York I make something, I am in Italy and I make something… It's me, so…
> (A. K., 8 April 2020)

For Sato, Tadasuke, and Aomi, the geographical location was irrelevant as long as they could continue creating art and being active global art members. It is important to note that, at least for Tadasuke and Aomi, their experiences in the

"universal" New York art scene provided them the confidence in their artist identities necessary to be able to create anywhere. Aomi went to New York specifically with this goal in mind, while Tadasuke, originally a graphic designer, became a visual artist only after coming to New York.

Hiroya, who went to high school and college in the United States, on the other hand, felt more enthusiastic about moving back to Japan in the future:

> That's definitely an option. We love Japan, I miss Japan so much, and my parents are still there, my wife's parents are still there. <…> So there are many reasons for us to go back to Japan, although I got my green card maybe, like, two years ago, so it's kind of like a start for us, at the same time, you know, here too? So I think we're going to stick around for two years.
> (H. K., 7 August 2020)

His family's love for Japan and his wife's parents still living there are important points for him considering the possibility of moving back to Japan. However, Hiroya feels it is not a definite plan, and he feels like going with the flow and seeing the circumstances might be the best option, as it might not be easy to make a comfortable living from art-related income in Japan:

> Short-term goal is probably, sad to say, but we want to leave New York sometime after, you know, getting some kind of… Basically, if I can sell my work, then make a living out of it… <…> and if that happens, we might be able to leave New York, and live somewhere where the rent is cheaper, and there's more space, a little bit more nature yeah… But the plan B is to stick… I feel like New York is also in an interesting time right now.
> (H. K., 7 August 2020)

Some of the most common reasons for considering return migration are family, financial, legal, and professional concerns (Paparusso & Ambrosetti 2017), which are present in Hiroya's quote. Some other respondents were also thinking about their prospects. However, their vision of return migration was much vaguer than that

of Hiroya's. Aki, for example, can depict herself coming back to Japan eventually, but is worried about her prospects of finding a good job in Japan:

> I think I'll get there at some point. Maybe, what's stopping me, is job. I get better teaching job here [in New York], and I don't think I can get the same type of job in Japan. So I'd need to retire to get there [to Japan].
> (A. S., 2020)

The sentiment of potentially returning to Japan after retirement was voiced by Takashi as well:

> I probably would stay here [in New York], yeah. The next stop would probably be Japan when I get 80 years or something (laughing). <…> Maybe their medical system is much better, from the insurance point. I don't know in the future, but… <…> I'd like to stay. I try to get a green card, so… I like it here, actually, better than Tokyo.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

Both Aki and Takashi do not have any particular plans to return to Japan. However, they seem to be not opposed to coming back at some point in the future. In Keiko's case, it is a little bit different. While she does not see herself returning to Japan permanently, she has arranged for coming back and forth from New York to Yokohama due to family reasons:

> And currently I, because of my elder parents, I want to go back to Japan more frequently.
> (K. M., 5 March 2020)

To sum up, when conducting the first round of the interviews, only Hiroya felt strongly about returning to Japan at some point soon because of personal preference and responsibility towards the parents. Keiko felt like she wanted to spend more time in Japan because of her aging parents. For the majority of the artists, returning to Japan was not something that they saw themselves doing anytime soon: Takashi and Aki were talking about potentially returning there after retirement, and Sato,

Tadasuke, and Aomi felt like they have transcended the national borders and can create and share their work regardless of which country they find themselves in.

Since the first round of interviews, COVID-19 became a global pandemic and changed many respondents' plans. Some of the artists who did not express a desire to return to Japan at the time of the first interview left New York City because of the uncertainty caused by the pandemic. In the following section, we shall discuss the effects that the pandemic had on the lives of the artists in terms of the place of their residence.

6.3 Migrant experiences in New York

Turning to migrant experiences, for many, the process of migration becomes an important landmark in their lives. Moving to a new, unfamiliar place and encountering different cultures and languages undoubtedly makes a mark. Physical spaces in which people find themselves often affect their processes of identity formation across several identity categories (Hauge 2007). The relationship between the setting and the individual is called place identity (Proshansky et al. 1983) and is often placed within social identity and self-categorization theories (Dixon and Durrheim 2000; Hauge 2007). Proshansky et al. (1983) believe that a place is not neutrally charged and is filled with memories, meanings, and beliefs, which contribute to one’s perception of identity in a similar way that class or gender do.

This section will cover artists’ experiences of living and working in New York City as migrants for the current research. Several prominent themes emerged during the interviewing process with the informants: the life of artists in NYC and its

comparison with life in Japan, navigating the NYC art scene, the Japanese artist community in NYC, and the role of art studio spaces. The kind of situations the artists encounter, the way they deal with them, and the choices they make, as people, immigrants, Japanese, men, and women, contribute to their sense of identity.

6.3.1 New York City for artists

As we saw from the previous section, many interviewees decided to go to New York because of a specific image of the city as "a place to be" for the artists, constructed either through popular media, friends, or new acquaintances in New York City. However, the realities of living and working in New York are more complex and diverse than an image that one can construct through word-of-mouth, anecdotes, or TV shows. That holds especially true for "niche" and professional fields, which are often out of reach of the mainstream media. The New York art scene might be considered one of such niche professional scenes that only surface through direct encounters.

Takashi is telling how, unlike in Japan, "artist" in New York was always seen as a legitimate occupation one can hold, regardless of the sources of the income:

> America, or New York, has really considered artists as a job. <…> Who lives [as] an accountant in the daytime, but he's a real artist, actually. <…> So even if you are a waiter, two thousand bucks a month, and then a thousand bucks for art, you are an artist. If you declare yourself an artist, you are an artist, it doesn't matter.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

Hiroya, too, remembers his first encounter with the New York art scene in a positive light:

> New York art scene was really happening [while I was studying]. So many small galleries were looking for, like, artists who just graduated, and I saw my friends in my class who was getting shows in galleries. So that kinda got everyone excited. You know, you get to show in a gallery and sell your work. I kinda observed myself, and saw my friends, and someone I know was doing good in art world. And.. I kinda got the idea that maybe I can do it too. And from few, like, help from my teacher, and friends, and… I got into that world, you know? <…> It felt really exciting, that you are being a part of New York art scene, even though it was probably a small scene, yeah. So I feel like, I caught a bug there, like, oh, I can be an artist, you know?
> (H. K., 7 August 2020)

For both Hiroya and Takashi as artists, New York City became "the place to be," with the acceptance of the society and a vibrant scene, stories of peer successes, and opportunities to exhibit work. Moreover, through his work as an assistant for a famous sculptor, Hiroya felt like he could touch the New York scene of the 1960s and 1970s, and it inspired him to continue his journey:

> So, I was working close with him, through him, I felt like I was touching New York art scene, you know? And also I was able to observe how the artist life is. Because, you know, he doesn't have a job, his work is art, you know? Just being an artist, so I had a pleasure to see that, you know. <…> Observing him, it was like, if you have the passion, if you have the love towards whatever you like, he was my, how do you say? Proof, of all you can be. You can make it.
> (H. K., 7 August 2020)

However, not everyone shares the first impression of New York as being the most favorable place for artists. Similarly to Hiroya, Shigeno too had an opportunity to observe the life of an artist who has already been in New York for a while, and this experience left him somewhat horrified:

> Actually, Mr. and Mrs. S. came to pick me up at the JFK the first time. But, you know, they were not famous yet at all. So poor! <…> And, you know, I went to their studio, and I thought, is this the life of Japanese artists, you know, their life in New York City? And I was really surprised and depressed! Actually, they had little kids at the time, and the wife of Mr. S., they were always fighting each other, because they didn't have money for the milk for the baby. And I thought, oh my God, I made a big mistake! And they were already famous in Japan as New York artists, but you know.
> (S. I., 10 November 2020)

Shigeno came to New York with an image of it being "a very special place," and "if you want to be an artist, maybe you can do it in this city" (S. I., 10 November 2020). However, this image was shattered when he quit his career in Japan to make it as an artist in New York and saw with his own eyes how Japanese artists live there. Isaac had a somewhat similar experience, saying that most Japanese artists he met in New York City were "not spending a good time" (I. F., 15 April 2020):

> But actually, what I experienced in New York is, mostly Japanese artists in New York are not spending good time here. They are having really difficult time.
> (I. F., 15 April 2020)

The competitive art scene, especially in fine arts, became a shocker for some of the artists. Aki remembers quite fondly how she first entered the New York art scene as a performance artist. However, re-entering the scene as a fine artist was a different experience:

> It wasn't hard, they are very open. And I think it was because I was in [the] dance community. Maybe [the] visual arts community is much more competitive, I didn't, until I went to graduate school. So, after that I went to a graduate school for visual arts, and I realized that's a lot more competitive field in a way. It was very much different from a welcoming feeling I had in a dance community. So I am glad I started my New York life in performing arts.
> (A. S., 4 May 2020)

Yuko, who is involved in the illustration scene of New York, also mentions that the illustration community seems to be much more friendly and welcoming than that of fine arts:

> Although I do have fine artist friends. I think illustration is very friendly field for the most part, you know, like, we make decent living, but most of us are not, like, *über* rich. Fine arts, it's like, you know, you are either *über* rich, that is like 1%, and the other 99%, and I have seen that in fine art, you know?
> (Y. S., 6 January 2020)

Compared to the fine art scene, in which the market value of each artist largely depends on their status, the average market rates for illustration become a unifying, rather than dividing, factor in creating a more friendly atmosphere in the field:

> So, I entered the vibrant illustration scene, I didn't enter the vibrant fine art scene or vibrant graphic design scene. There are some interactions with other fields, especially with the design field it is so connected, because illustration is a part of design, but fine art is pretty separate. <…> You know, we know how much our art is rated, because that's about how much we make. <…>So maybe among the people who are doing it professionally, the high and low differences is not that high. So I think is makes it very friendly. Like, ok, I am very busy, I can't do the job, why don't you hire this person, who is new, and doing something interesting… You know?
> (Y. S., 6 January 2020)

Both Yuko and Aki felt that the fine art scene is a more competitive field than other, "very separated" (T. G., 23 May 2020) art scenes of New York. Keiko, too, experienced something similar, coming to New York from a less competitive art scene in Philadelphia:

> And after I came to New York, for a couple of years, I was totally again depressed. Because the environment is different [from Philadelphia], and the relationships between artists is totally different. If you are not belonging in a big gallery, you are not an artist. You are treated like nothing. So I felt very different, but art market is very strong here, so you really have to kind of be in the mainstream.
> (K. M., 5 March 2020)

To sum it up, coming to New York for art production became a very emotional experience for many of the interviewees. Like Takashi and Hiroya, some artists felt inspired by what they saw, while some felt intimidated at first, like Shigeno, Isaac, and Keiko. However, as we shall see in the following sections, as they spend more time in New York City, the artists find ways to cope, thrive, and stay on track towards their goals.

6.3.2 The land of growth and opportunities

As Yuko said during the interview, being an artist means constantly growing and evolving with one's art (Y. S., 6 January 2020). For many artists, New York City provides such an environment for professional and creative growth. Hiroya believes that creating art does not necessarily need to be tied to a particular geographic location. However, for the business side, the place matter:

> You can create in many places, but, about business and showing and stuff like that, New York is definitely the center of the art world. So that was part of the reason why I stayed in New York after graduating.
> (H. K., 7 August 2020)

Aki feels that the sheer amount of art-related professionals provides room for dialog and exchange of ideas, something that was historically lacking in the Japanese art scene, even (or especially) after the independent exhibitions organized by the newspapers:

> For my art, it was good to stay in New York at the time. Because I just felt like there's enough dialogue there about the kind of thing I was looking at medium wise.
> (A. S., 4 May 2020)

Aomi felt particularly strong about the years she spent in New York regarding her personal and professional growth. The first cultural shock that helped her grow as an artist happened when studying at the Pratt Institute. Aomi recollects:

> I mean, particularly, uhm, [the] Pratt Institute, I studied contemporary art for the first time, maybe. <…> Just criticizing, criticism is maybe one of the main things in, kind of, art master's course, and in Japan, criticizing, I have experience in my university, criticizing is very difficult, and some say something, and… and students listen, maybe uncomfortable comments, you know? I hate you! I hate it! Very hard for Asian people to criticizing. But in Pratt Institute, or New York art world, good critique is pushing someone to go forward. So, yeah. That is very good things. But I still cannot do a good critique, I am just starting couple of years ago, so I am like at kids'l level. But American maybe people, they are used to doing very good critiques, since they were very small kids. So their feedback is very good to listen, and it's, some teachers are so bitter, kind of… Sometimes shouting us until we almost die. <…> I get lost, because I like beautiful things. But that teacher, we don't need beauty, beauty is nothing, it's boring, so you have to think about this. But as Japanese, art is… We say *bijutsu* or *geijutsu*. It's technique and beauty. So for Japanese, technique and beauty is very important for art. But in America, technique is not so important. So you should do something beyond such kind of, not rely on technique and beauty. That was, for me, is… So, suddenly just disappear. This kind of feeling. This is very hard part, but I could change my work, because of such kind of critique.
> (A. K., 8 April 2020)

Aomi reveals how hard it was during the critiques, and especially accepting a different concept of what art is, compared to the culture she grew up in. However, she believes that her work could change from "local" Japanese art to more "international":

> It's still, I am still sticking to textile and materials and techniques, but my world, my work has broadened significantly, so it's… really good experience in New York, and also how I work as a professional, I applied to competitions, or gallery, kind of, open calls, I didn't anything like that in Japan. So… It's totally... And now I cannot say I am an artist in Japan to people before, but after I experienced in New York school and all, I can call myself artist, and I can say it's a very big difference for me before and after.
> (A. K., 8 April 2020)

Like Aomi felt that her teacher at the Pratt Institute pushed her in a specific direction towards becoming a better "international" artist, many of the interviewees experienced something similar through programs, residencies, and prize awards. Shigeno is telling how winning an award helped him to get recognition and more exposure:

> But then, in 1996, I got a pretty big prize, it's a Texas National…. Texas National Competition for young artists. I got a second prize at that competition, and organizers called me, actually, we usually don't ask these kind of questions, but your name doesn't sound American. Are you Asian? They said. And I answered, I'm Japanese. And then they said, it's the first time an Asian artist got this prize. So it was a really, you know, a big moment for me. <…> and 2001, I think, I got an artist fellowship at NYFA <…> And it was pretty big. They had shows for those artists in Manhattan, and a lot of, you know, art people came to the show, and they asked me, are you looking for a gallery, you know. <…> American art people started, you know, coming to my studio, some of them, you know, got interested in my artworks. It was exciting, actually, for me.
> (S. I., 10 November 2020)

Years later, he got a chance to participate in a project designed to help artists and creatives:

> New Direction. It's called new Direction project. And New Jersey Art Council, and New York, what was they… Some art, I forgot… <…> Yeah, they gave me ten different lectures every week, and supporting artists. And I met a lot of artists and art people through that project, actually.
> (S. I., 10 November 2020)

Meeting people through such projects is also an essential part of being successful as an artist. Sophia mentions how being a part of the immigrant artist program helped her establish many friendships and connections in the art world:

> So I joined the Immigrant Artist Program, every year it's almost forty artists join that. And I did like five, six years in total, so, six times forty, and… Not everybody became friends, but I made lots of friends. So it's a resource too.
> (S. C., 17 March 2020)

Getting to know people in the field provides a professional network and gives more chances to present and talk about one's art. For many, it is not an easy task, but it might provide a sense of community:

> I got a residency at New York's NARS Foundation, I applied, and I got it. And school, well, there was no other plan for school. So I stopped going to that school [ASLNY], and I focused on the residency. <…> at NARS Foundation, you, well, explain about your works, explain your art, we did that a lot. There were these studio visitors, curators, gallerists, they would come, and I would explain my works to them. And it was a first for me. That's why, at that time, I thought, oh, so it's not only about painting. It made me think about that. <…> And after NARS, obviously, I met a different people, and there were many opportunities to show my works…. I felt like I entered a community.
> (T. J., 8 May 2020)

Tadasuke tells how he got a chance to explain his art through a residency and realizes that being an artist is about creating pieces and presenting, promoting, selling, talking, and being a part of a community. For Takashi, too, finding a local art community became an important step:

> And I also found local groups here too. And one guy at summer, there's one guy who is showing movies in the park. So once I went there with my wife, that group was a local art group <…> I started to get involved in this [local art] movement <…> this is actually one of the reasons I could get much more smoothly, get involved in the New York local art scenes.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

Takashi managed to find the local art group that he feels a part of now. Isaac and Tadahiro employed a different strategy of becoming a part of an artist community in New York:

> I met people who were trying to be artists in New York in the school. And I used to go to galleries a lot. When I found good galleries and good artists, I left my name and my number. That's what I did at first.
> (I. F., 15 April 2020)

Isaac was proactive with searching his community by going to the galleries, and if he liked a gallery or an artist, he would leave his contact information. Tadahiro, who works at an art-related organization, tells about the artist community that was brought together in Brooklyn by their workplace:

> Sometimes Tappan Collective has a lot of people who are working as artists in Brooklyn as well, maybe fifteen, or more than ten. And we sometimes made, you know, as a Tappan collective thing. It's good I think <…> And I have a few people, they are Japanese artists living there as well. And they are very good artists, I think.
> (T. G., 23 May 2020)

For these artists, New York became a place where they felt like they had access to the tools that would help them realize their goals: vibrant art market, high density of art professionals, governmental support, active art institutions, and a variety of art communities to chose from. In their experience, Japan could not offer them this, and as a result, many associated their success and their status of an "artist" with the city of New York: "Even in Japan, I am going to say, I am a New Yorker, I'm a New York artist" (S. C. 17 March 2020).

6.3.3 Japanese community in New York

Isaac met a member of the Japanese Artist Association of New York (JAANY) at the beginning of his life in New York, at a church service. He recalled how at that pointing his life, he was actively seeking out connections in the art world, and this coincidental encounter eventually led him to become the director of JAANY (I. F., 15 April 2020). For Isaac, becoming a part of an ethnic network in the form of JAANY proved to be an opportunity. However, becoming or being a part of such networks is

not necessarily a positive experience for most artists. Takashi joined the association as well. However, he has mixed feelings about it.

> Actually, I already joined them [JAANY]! But I... This year the third year? A couple of years ago I joined them... <...> It's like a *bijutsu dantai.* But it's... It's like not a professional way, I think. Of course, they are... They do exhibitions, but it's... Not so many artists, professionally doing artists, have joined them.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

Like Takashi, some artists had their reservations prefer not to get involved with nationality-specific Japanese clicks.

> I try not to get involved... It may sound bad, but, uhm... Well, if you already find yourself in New York, maybe it's better if you [join] a wider community. I mean, Japanese [artist] community is super small. And also, a bit conservative, I feel.
> (T. J., 8 May 2020)

Tadasuke feels that being in a place as diverse as New York provides an opportunity to appeal to a broader art community, whereas sticking only to a Japanese community might be limiting. Sophia expresses a similar sentiment, saying that shows organized by the Japanese community and Japanese galleries attract primarily Japanese audience, and for her, that did not feel right:

> I went there, the [Japanese] artist community. But then.... They are only Japanese. And visitors are also Japanese, and their family and their friends. I didn't... I didn't think it's right, and I didn't join the association.
> (S. C., 17 March 2020)

Hiroya, too, expressed his view that while in certain situations same-nationality shows can indeed be impactful, there is no meaning in doing it in New York City, which is generally seen as a big enough platform to reach people from different layers of society:

> I feel like I am a part of it in a way, but I... <...> I try to have a distance with them, like, I don't want to show in some Japanese, you know, like some people, same nationality people have a show with only those artists. And it's, it's... In some cases, I think it's interesting, but some of the cases I've seen, it's just like, come on, just do it at home, there's no meaning that you have to do it in New York, it just weakens the visual if you gather up too much. So in that sense I feel like I don't want to be in that Japanese community.
> (H. K., 7 August 2020)

To sum up, the sentiment shared by these artists, "Japanese artist showing their artwork in Japanese gallery, it's not so cool, I thought at the time" (S. I., 10 November 2020). Another factor that contributes to the artists' reluctance in joining the association is the membership fee:

> Some of them, some of them take a fee. But as an artist, I don't have money, so why I have to pay the fee? So I stopped doing that. <...> I think, many Japanese galleries take a fee, I guess, so...
> (S. C., 17 March 2020)

One of the main benefits of belonging to an art association is the opportunity to exhibit work regularly. However, apart from the membership fees, participating in an exhibition requires an additional payment. This financial responsibility might become a burden to the already existing members:

> I joined their [JAANY] exhibition once, but I didn't join the last year, I didn't have the money to join last year. They have a kind of year, how do you call it? Payment. And they take payment for the exhibition also.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

In short, most interviewed artists preferred to keep a certain professional distance from the Japanese artist community in New York. Two main reasons for such reluctance are the perceived limitations of showing work in a nationally homogenous setting, especially in a place as diverse and multicultural as NYC, and the financial obligations associated with belonging to Japanese art communities such as JAANY.

Regardless of the artists' views regarding the Japanese artist community, many utilize ethnicity-based loose networks for employment opportunities, especially during the initial stages of arriving in New York City. Shigeno recalls getting his first job in NYC as a dishwasher at a Japanese restaurant:

> I didn't have any [art] background in Tokyo, so I decided to go to New York. And I sold my car and everything, and then made some money, and just went to New York City, yeah. And then, I couldn't get a good job in New York City, and I started from dishwasher in a Japanese restaurant in midtown. And I worked there for three years.
> (S. I., 10 November 2020)

Similarly to Shigeno, Takashi also had experience working for non-art related businesses owned by the Japanese:

> I came here [to New York City] without any jobs, I did waiter, and delivery guy for the flower shop, something like that, for Japanese.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

After some time, both Shigeno and Takashi found art-related employment through loose ties within the Japanese network. Shigeno found an opportunity at a Japanese art gallery:

> And I looked for a job in art field, and I worked [as] an art handler, like, moving art stuff. And then one day I went to the Japanese art gallery. They just opened in SoHo. And, actually, the founder of that gallery was there when I was there. And he said, are you Japanese? And I said, yes. And he said, what are you doing here? I'm an artist, but I could not make enough money from my art. And he asked me to work for that gallery. <...> And I have been working for that gallery for ten years, and I got the green card, and I just quit.
> (S. I., 10 November 2020)

In Shigeno's case, it was essentially a stranger who offered him a job opportunity at a Japanese gallery. Takashi, on the other hand, utilized the network of closer relationships to switch to art-related employment:

> At that point, I ended up with two quarters. That's all the money I had, two quarters. One of the quarters I used for the payphone, yes. Payphone (laughing). Yes, there are no payphone right now. I used it to call my [half-Japanese] friend, he has a gallery space. I ended up calling him. I would like to lend some money from you. And he said no. But! But he said, I can buy your paintings. And then you can use some space in my gallery, to create your paintings <...> And then the second person who helped me was Mako. <…> So I emailed him, do you have any kind of second or third part-time job. He said, he doesn't have it, but probably Mr. Sato has it, because Mr. Sato had already done the Venice Biennale several years ago, and probably getting busier. So then I ended up his assistant.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

Hiroya, too, had an opportunity to work as an assistant for an established artist, and similarly to Takashi, was offered this opportunity through a close friend who also happened to be Japanese:

> For five years, I worked for a famous sculptor, I was a studio assistant. <...> A close friend of mine was his assistant, but he had to go back to Japan, so he kind of introduced me to him, and. I worked with him closely for five years.
> (H. K., 7 August 2020)

"Japanese network" does not necessarily imply exclusively Japanese nationals and/or someone who is ethnically Japanese. Sato's experience illustrates that:

> And after that I had a contract with a gallery. The G. M. It was running between New York and Tokyo. Because the director's name is F., and from here, she was growing in Japan. Because her father is an employer of an embassy. So their family is staying around Yokohama, I heard.
> (S. Y., 2 March 2020)

In Sato's case, the connecting point with F. was Japan. However, F. herself was neither ethnically Japanese nor a Japanese national. Nevertheless, this connection still qualifies as a "Japanese network."

Ethnic identity determines networks available for the members of such groups. The decision "to be or not to be" an active member is a decision that has to be made individually. Even if an individual does not necessarily want to be a part of an

organized ethnicity-based group, it still does not prevent them from employing the ethnicity-based loose network and weak ties to assist with different matters of their lives.

6.3.4 COVID-19

COVID-19 has completely changed the way our everyday life looks: Quarantine, job security, social distancing, mobility restrictions, healthcare systems, online events, to name a few. When I was initially planning the field trips for the research, only a few coronavirus cases were detected in China and Japan. I flew to New York through Seoul, the airports were already getting emptier, but the global pandemic was not yet declared. I arrived in New York on February 27th, 2020, and I was going to stay there until March and then go for a second field trip in the spring of 2021. The WHO declared the global pandemic on March 11, 2020, and the governments started to close the state borders rapidly. Hundreds of thousands of people were stuck in countries they had no ties with. I narrowly escaped the same fate, as I intuitively self-evacuated back to Tokyo from New York, three weeks earlier than planned, after several canceled flights, one day before the borders from the U.S. side were closed for non-residents.

The pandemic altered many plans that people had. After the pandemic, some New York artists who were participating artists decided to leave New York. For Aki, pandemic made her second-guess the meaning of staying in New York if other artists will start leaving because of the steep rent during the uncertainty of the pandemic:

> And a lot of people are questioning that. In New York especially. All because of the economic situation. So while people are losing day jobs, the rent and studio costs are still high, so how do you support yourself? <…> It's a community issue, so depends on how New York art community struggles, my feelings will probably shift as well. I want to start doing art again, and if I will be able to communicate around. It's a serious issue, because even though, perhaps, this will stay one of the bigger representational space, but if all artists leave, I don't know if there's a meaning for me to stay.
> (A. S., 4 May 2020)

After COVID happened, Hiroya, too, started realizing that perhaps it is not necessary to stay in New York to continue doing art:

> Yeah, but at the same time, before COVID <…> I feel like, maybe it really doesn't have to be New York, you know?
> (H. K., 7 August 2020)

Both Aki and Hiroya seem to be in a similar headspace, re-evaluating the merits and demerits of staying in New York City. What has initially attracted them (vibrant art scene, the number of artists living in the city) has now changed because of the pandemic, and therefore the original "pull" factor that New York had for them has disappeared.

Lee (1966) explains this change of heart with the changes in the economic situation of the destination place, noting that during boom times, the migration stream is usually higher, while during the times of depression, many of the migrants return to the place of their origin, as they see it as a "safer" area. Sophia, too, was considering leaving New York, urged by her mom, but missed her chance to go before the borders closed, and remained in New York City:

> In March, there was a lockdown, and I had a part-time job that was also closed, so then, for three weeks I was actually depressed, because I am not sure what to do, and it's so scary, and then my mom said, come back [to Japan], and I was thinking… And then I missed the moment, and then fourteen days quarantine started… And also I am afraid to bring it from here to Japan, because my parents are very old, so I don't want to bring anything, so… So then I decided to stay here.
> (S. C., 17 March 2020)

For Sophia, concern for her parents became one of the reasons that made her hesitate whether to return to Japan or not. Isaac and Keiko left New York during the pandemic, but not directly because of it: both had returned to Japan to take care of their aging parents.

Aomi finally left Brooklyn to go to Japan for a weaving residency in Kyoto that she had been planning to do from the very beginning, before going to New York:

> So I totally changed my mind to go back to Japan to study weaving there and in Kyoto, I have lots lots more studying about weaving and dying. It's a great place, maybe, one of the best places in the world to study and work weaving and dyeing. So, and I have a house. Because I got this house six years ago, it's the same time I decided to move to New York. So first I decided to go to Kyoto and study more, not weaving, but dyeing, and explore more dyeing, but I saw Miami, and I wanted to go to New York City. So just this happened, I got it, but I just keep it. But this is my first kind of planning to come to Kyoto and do something. So I got back to my first original purpose. So, six years detour, but it is very nice to go to New York City, I knew how contemporary art is, and get the… get the skill searching art, kind of, competitions, or galleries, or things like that. Because I got these skills better than before. And I saw a lot of art-related things… So I gained a lot of good experience in New York City, but now I am totally different than what I was six years ago. After New York City, I can work internationally.
> (A. K., 8 April 2020)

The pandemic, however, slowed these plans slowed down even more because of travel restrictions:

> And now I am in a textile art center residency in Kyoto. But I am still in New York… Actually I cannot work anymore at arts and crafts center, but it's until June, so I just keep…
> (A. K., 8 April 2020)

She eventually found herself back in Kyoto, and in December 2020, joined her daughter in Taiwan. Three people left NYC for various reasons, and their primary reason for returning to Japan was not directly affected by the pandemic. Some artists weighed the advantages and disadvantages of staying in post-COVID NYC, the main disadvantages being financial uncertainty, high cost of rent, and inactivity of the art scene due to the lockdown. However, most of the artists were not considering leaving New York because of the difficulties associated with the pandemic and were trying to navigate their lives within the new framework of "the new normal."

Another challenge faced by many artists was the reconfiguration of their finances due to the difficult economic situation brought by the lockdown. For some artists, including Sophia, it meant the loss of stable income:

> And also another worry about them was that, I was in a program, like, working at a senior center, I teach art at a senior center. And then they said, maybe city, maybe there is from the city, so they think city needs the money to the hospital. So they don't pay us. It was very very very stressful. And they also, the senior center was closed, so they let us go, and then… We were not sure if they pay us or not. We really didn't know.
> (S. C., 1 November 2020)

The uncertainty of the job market forced the respondents to think of other ways of maintaining a stable inflow of income. Takashi was considering launching an online class: "…And then it will probably then starting some class, nihonga class, and then… Now, I am thinking if I should start an online class, or no. " (T. H. 4 November 2020). Aki was was starting a new business with her partner: "So we were very busy, basically, starting a new business." (A. S. 18 December 2020), and Sato decided to

receive her teaching certification to increase her employability in the future: “Now I study for teacher certificate. License in New York State. And name of teacher license is K-12, K-12. It’s kids or teenagers, teacher-wise.“ (S. Y. 16 November 2021).

Another noticeable challenge brought by the regulations caused by COVID-19 is the changes in domestic routine and required some re-adjustments in terms of time, space, and resource management. Maho shared her experience:

> I think it’s not that different, so much different what I’ve been doing, because I’ve been doing by myself, and because of the COVID, it’s *motto,* you can’t meet almost anyone, and in the house, staying home, but... [My husband] is working in the home, so... He’s, he’s always there... And... I don’t think it’s because of him, because of him always there... I don’t think that’s the problem. But I was... Sure that... My usual routine, I have to make lunch, or... He doesn’t demand it, but I want to make lunch-time, so I do lunch, and this, and... So... It’s... I don’t know, that’s not... I don’t think that’s the reason, but... (laughing). I had a hard time <…> So... Struggle, but, in the same time, I’m enjoying his company with [my husband].
> (M. L., 16 November 2020)

Maho explains how the change in her usual routine affects her ability to concentrate on her artwork. In less than a year, she managed to transform the situation, which she previously defined as a “struggle,” into a more productive and comfortable fashion:

> Now, in COVID routine, so, I... I practice when Bob’s in a lunch break, so... And... Yeah... And I do work next to Bob, next room to Bob, so... But... I listen to music, I don’t hear his voice. Now I got used to it, I think. I got... yeah. And that’s something, like, eating dinner from 7 pm. It’s... It’s good. Good to me too, because usually, it’s going to be 8, or if it’s on a comment, it’s going to be later than usual. But now, it’s 7pm for dinner time, so... I mean, I am managing.
> (M. L., 31 August 2021)

The households with children particularly strongly felt the changes. Hiroya shared that the atmosphere in his home became more stressful due to the added responsibility of supervising his son during his online school classes via Zoom:

> The school has been hard for my seven year old, because he's having fun, but... For my wife, half of the week we have the Zoom, and the Zoom... Uhm... It's like... Teaching the kids at home, because he's young enough that he can't really understand what the homework is, so we're literally, like, homeschooling him, two or three days a week, and then we have a two year old too, so I guess the only difference comparing this year and last year is that, there's so much stress in the house.
> (H. K., 10 November 2020)

As can be seen from the quotes, the lifestyle has changed for everyone since the beginning of the pandemic in employment and family life. The professional life of the artists had to be recalibrated to the "new normal" as well. Usually, exhibition openings are one of the principal networking opportunities for creative professionals. As the lockdown regulations forced the galleries to suspend their social events, many artists experienced cancellations, postponements, or transfers of their exhibitions to online spaces:

> At the time I think it was still I had a show on April 10. And then it was actually extended. I mean postponed. Then... We had an online exhibition. At the gallery and then, and then although the exhibition was supposed to end like, at the end of the August, and then again, it was postponed and extended . So then actually, I had a chance to show physically in August through October 17 at the gallery so…
> (T. H., 4 November 2020)

Online exhibitions and art opportunities seem to have dominated the professional lives of the artists during the pandemic:

> And sometimes no openings, still a lot of online, you know, like, exhibitions. So, yeah... So to, I don't know how... How other artists are doing, but I think there are a lot of... Online sales, like, opportunities, and people buying online too. So it's a little different, but it's, kind of, just doing it in a different way, I guess.
> (S. K., 6 May 2021)

The relocation to digital spaces did not only de-territorialize the art world, with many artists wondering if it "really has to be New York," but also prompted a

conversation about experiencing artwork and whether physical art pieces could be appreciated fully in online format:

> But I feel like art is never meant to be, I mean, like... You only get to experience, like, 20% of what art is online, with the screen. It's just impossible to experience the full, full pleasure of painting the thing. And in that sense, it's not going to be...
> (H. K., 10 November 2020)

The aftermath of COVID-19 became a challenge for artists in several aspects. Some of them were universal and experienced by many other urban dwellers, such as job market insecurity, increased time spent at home with family and life partners, and the additional workload of supervising school-age children during their online lessons.

Other aspects were occupation-specific, such as the shut down of the galleries, cancellation of social networking events, and the shift of the art world to digital spaces. The latter raised several critical questions. One of them was, is it worth staying in New York? Most artists were initially attracted to New York City because of the vibrant art scene, an abundance of art institutions, and professional opportunities (please refer to section 6.2.2 of the current chapter). With the lockdown and social restrictions, the initial "pull" and "retain" factors disappeared, leaving the artists wondering whether it is possible to maintain a successful art career from a less expensive location. Another question raised was whether there is a possibility of entirely switching to online spaces, particularly among the artists creating physical, not digital, artwork. While many saw additional opportunities to present, sell, and promote artwork, it also provoked anxiousness, as many artists deemed that one cannot fully appreciate a physical art object through a screen.

To sum up, COVID-19 brought many new challenges. However, as time went by, artists adapted to these challenges and re-navigated their daily lives and modes of

production. At the time of writing this thesis, COVID-19 still retains the status of a pandemic, and therefore it would be too ambitious to draw any specific conclusions regarding its effects on the lives of the artists. Nonetheless, it would be a fruitful topic of further investigation and might be covered in more detail in future research.

6.4 Summary

Chapter VI aimed to address the artists' reasoning behind choosing New York City as their new destination and examine the relationship between place and artist identities. The analysis of the interviews suggested that the main drivers that "pushed" the artists outside of Japan were related to art in one way or another. The migration patterns could be roughly separated into three streams. First, artists who went abroad to pursue art, but not necessarily in New York. Then, artists who went to New York to pursue art, and finally, migrants who went to New York for other reasons and eventually became artists.

The first two streams are the most numerous and are united by the ambition of the migrants to pursue art. According to the identity theory, an activated identity serves as a lens for the interaction with the outside world, selecting appropriate behavior, and decision-making. The activation of the artist identity during the conception of the idea to migrate, which is, undeniably, a big life-changing decision, indirectly suggests the high ranking of the artist identity in the inner identity hierarchy of the participants.

As they spent more time in the city and immersed themselves in its life, many began to compare their experiences as artists in Japan and New York. Many participants quoted some reasons for the unceasing hierarchal nature of the

contemporary Japanese art world, deeply rooted in the master-disciple *iemotoseido* system. Others mentioned the leverage *bijutsu dantai* and famous art schools still have in the professional art world. After moving to New York, artists of different backgrounds noted that they felt free from their academic background and accepted and recognized as artists more than in Japan. These experiences became an important anchor for the artists and vital "retain" factors because the social and cultural climate of the art world in New York was more favorable for artist identity verification than their previous experiences in Japan.

Apart from socio-historical differences highlighted in the previous paragraph, the abundance of art institutions, professional networks, and events, emblematic of the New York art scene, allowed the artists to engage in activities that would further consolidate their artist identities and weave it closer with New York: Participation in art prizes, gallery openings, stories of success, communities, dialogue. When two identities are often activated simultaneously, they tend to overlap and develop shared meanings. For many, the artist identity became closely associated with the city of New York, which led to the construction of a new, fused identity among several participants: New York artists. At the same time, they did not develop identities as "Japanese artists" or "Asian artists," and many were actively avoiding ethnicity-based associations in their work as artists, despite utilizing ethnicity-based lose ties and networks for additional employment.

To sum up, most of the artists interviewed in this research-based decided to migrate on their desire to pursue art. New York City became an important milestone for their development as artists due to its social and cultural dissimilarities with the Japanese art world. Being in a city that has acquired a global reputation as the center

of the art world, the artists were able to consolidate their artist identities, moving them up the identity hierarchy, and even develop a new, entwined identity of "New York artists."

Chapter VII: Layers of Identity

7.1 Introduction

Chapter VII aims to address the third research question: How do multiple identities co-exist, interact, and affect artist identity? Some empirical studies have incorporated non-work identities into work identities in the corporate environment (Héliot et al. 2020; Sheik et al. 2020; Ramarajan & Reid 2013; Rothbard & Ramarajan 2009).

However, there is not much research regarding non-corporate highly skilled professionals, such as artists. One reason for the lack of literature on this particular topic might be dependent on the fact that compared to the solitary nature of the working process of an artist, company employees often find themselves in group settings, which allows more space for identity expression through interaction with colleagues and clients, and therefore a more obvious realm for such research. For artists, their occupational identity becomes visible primarily through their work. “Staying true to themselves” and sticking to one’s “truth” in artwork was something that many of the artists participating in the study emphasized as being important to them. In this scenario, “staying true” means knowing who they are and incorporating different life experiences, social roles, and identities into the creative work.

In the following sections, I will analyze common themes that emerged and were internalized as different layers of identities among the artists.

7.2 Social categories

Major social categories, such as gender, ethnicity and race, social class, age, and others, are the most important bases of identity. Social identities are often conceptualized as "groupings" rather than "groups" because belonging to a social category does not require much agency or interaction with other group members (Stets 2013).

Instead, belonging to a social category provides others with visible social and cultural cues. These cues are impossible to hide or falsify and serve as visible markers across all situations that other people can grasp. This makes belonging to such categories relevant in almost any situation, and, as a result, identities based on social categories are often more salient than role identities (Stets & Burke 2014). It follows then that belonging to a social category impacts artists' experiences, social status, and accessibility to resources, particularly in the multicultural and multiracial context of the United States.

In this section, I will focus on two social categories: Gender and race/ethnicity, and analyze the situations experienced by the respondents while navigating the New York art scene.

7.2.1 Gender

Gender constitutes a major identity category, as it profoundly encompasses human experiences. Some scholars consider gender to be a more significant category than, for instance, race (Alcoff 2006). I already mentioned the impact of gender on artist identity based on societal expectations and understandings of a "creative

genius," behavioral differences due to gender-specific inculturation, and the pay gap in section 2.5. In this section, I would like to highlight the topics regarding gender brought up by the informants participating in the study. Not surprisingly, it was primarily women who mentioned being personally affected by their gender in one way or another during the interviews.

For Yuko, gender inequality in the Japanese corporate workplace forced her to reconsider her career path:

> Japan is still not that great for women. Not like U.S. is great, but still, like, it's way better than Japan. And there was really no paths for me to accomplish anything in the company. By that time, like, men, who went to the same college, my classmates, who started work with me, were probably making double or three times more money than I was, right? And so, like, you know, that's when I really started to, like… It's a tacky term, soul-searching… And one thing I really wanted to do, and I never had guts to pursue, was art.
> (Y. S., 6 January 2020)

For Yuko, remaining in an environment that prioritizes employees' gender instead of merit seemed like a dead-end, forcing her to think about what she wanted to accomplish in life. For her, that was art. Yuko was not considering pursuing her artistic ambition in Japan and instead decided that "it has to be New York" (Y. S., 6 January 2020). Perhaps, one of the reasons for Yuko's reluctance to attempt to "make it" as an artist in Japan was the same that drove her away from the corporate world: patriarchal hierarchy.

Historically, formal art training in Japan was unavailable for women until the 1940s (Yoshimoto 2005). For those who received art education, entering a *bijutsu dantai* and publicly showing their work was tricky. Moreover, those who did manage to join an exhibition and showcase their work were often reduced to the term "women-style" painting, which had a negative connotation in society. This has been

true for women in the past and is still, to a degree, relevant today. When talking about her reasons to move abroad in order to pursue her artistic career, Sophia casually mentioned the gender factor:

> So, anyways, 20 years ago, [art world in Japan] was still a very traditional thing, it was mostly man thing.
> (S. C., 17 March 2020)

Sophia was not the only one to flee to the U.S. because of limited opportunities for women in the Japanese art world. Noticeable female artist migration abroad started in the mid-1960s, with examples of such famous artists as Yoko Ono and Yayoi Kusama.

Gender, or rather, gender perception, sometimes has the power to dictate another important domain: the artist's creative process. People tend to evaluate works created by men and women differently, and works of art perceived as "feminine" tend to be evaluated as less competent (Miller 2016). One of the respondents mentioned that her work is perceived as really feminine:

> Some people think that my work is really feminine, but I don't really try to be feminine.
> (S. K., 1 March 2020)

Luckily, such evaluation does not bother her, as she does not "try to be feminine" but also does not "try to be not feminine." Therefore, she believes that her true self is probably revealed through the artwork (S. K., 1 March 2021). However, for some artists, gender perception is seen as an obstacle, especially in more corporal artistic practices, such as performance.

Aki reminisces how for a long time, she was actively trying to eliminate two of her visible identity markers, gender, and ethnicity, from her practice:

> I feel like for a long time I tried to ignore it. Because not only Japan thing, but also female thing comes up a lot. Just because I was a performer, and the first thing that people can see is that I'm a Japanese woman, right? So all those categories is something that was too easy as an entry point. Just to bring attention to the other, like, more locally-focused scene in each piece, I needed to delete those two categories. So I think subconsciously I did a lot of work to delete the characteristics. Like, you know, overall, of course, I'm a woman, and of course, I'm a Japanese.
> (A. S., 4 May 2020)

According to Aki, these visible categories might distract the audience and take attention from the central concept of the piece. In this example, the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity plays an exciting role because of the interloping stereotypes regarding each identity. Female artists' bodies are often sexualized (Miller 2016), and a frequent stereotype of Asian women that appears in popular culture is also exotic, hyper-sexualized, and seductive (Zhang 2010). In the cultural context of the U.S., where such stereotyping is widespread, the attempt to eliminate these categories makes sense unless the performance deals directly with the topics of the female body or female sexuality. Arguably, male artists would feel less pressure to eliminate the visible markers of their gender identity to "get their point across."

Gender identity and gender perception affect both male and female artists in different ways. However, women generally face more obstacles on their path, including the patriarchal structure of the art world, different expectations, and different evaluations of the product of their creative activities. Another pressure that women face more often than men is the social pressure to take care of her family. Family responsibilities affect both men and women, albeit in different ways. This will be discussed separately in section 7.3.2. The most important takeaway regarding gender identity is that it infiltrates into other identity categories, such as race,

ethnicity, occupation, family, in more or less direct ways, as we shall witness in the following sections of this chapter.

7.2.2 Race and ethnicity

Race and ethnicity are some of the significant "visible" identity categories. Such "visibility" allows people to make assumptions about others based on visual appearances, names, and spoken languages (Woodward 2004) and put them into categories. Essentially, categorization and stereotypization are not necessarily "evil," as they help people create a sense of order and navigate an impossibly complicated social reality (Eriksen 2010). As Eriksen (2010) further notes, stereotypes are held by both dominating and dominated groups, and the way one group perceives itself does not necessarily match the perceptions of other groups (Woodward 2004).

After arriving in the U.S., Takashi has experienced "racialization" in the art world as well. As a Japanese-style painter, he uses traditional Japanese techniques for creating artwork, but he does not see his works as particularly Japanese or Asian. For him, the works are "de-racialized" personal childhood memories that happen to have the context of Japan, where he was raised. Nevertheless, he has been stereotyped (and, perhaps, has internalized these stereotypes to a certain extent) as an "Asian" and "Oriental" artist:

> Of course, I paint like an Asian guy, probably, I'm not sure. But my style is probably Oriental. And they see my paintings in that way, and because this is my original image, from my childhood. That is original, it should be like that. And then, they see, they judge paintings, the artworks, it shouldn't be racist or gender-oriented, right? It should be equality, but it can't be equal. How to consider the black art, and Asian art, and Latino art, right?
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

Takashi's experience illustrates Alcoff's (2006) point that racial identity is not a product of "race" itself but rather a contextual phenomenon, which depends on geographical location, culture, and history. If Takashi's works featuring his childhood memories were shown in Japan, the chance that they would be perceived as "Asian" or "Oriental" is minimal. Aki had a somewhat similar experience developing her performance routine:

> Of course, I grew up there [in Japan] until I was fifteen, so pretty much my gut is, you know, the real landscape is Japan. At least my experience of Japan is not, like, exorcised countryside of Japan. So it's just like, it's not interesting enough story in my mind [to bring attention to it].
> (A. S., 4 May 2020)

For Aki, in this scenario, the mental "background" of her performances in Japan, and in order to avoid being put in the category of "exorcized" Japanese performer, she tries to avoid being explicit about the background of the mental image, which is Japan, in a similar way she attempted to delete the category of gender, as we saw in the previous section.

In many cases, stereotypization and categorization, such as experienced by Takashi and Aki, become a tool of justifying privileges and limited access to social resources (Eriksen 2010). The U.S. is a multicultural state with rich racial and ethnic diversity and a specific racial hierarchy. While it is impossible to determine each group's exact level of oppression, the WASP Americans are generally followed by Asian Americans at the top as the most advantageous groups. At the same time, African Americans, Native Americans, and Latino Americans are considered a more disadvantaged position (Song 2004). The exact order of the racial groups is subject to change, depending on the factors that are taken into consideration: such as residential segregation, mortality, economy, history, poverty, education. The only racial group

that remains consistently on the top of well-being is white Americans. While Asian Americans are often referred to as "model minority" by state media, it is widely criticized by scholars, as many Asian-Americans are faring less well than other non-Asian minorities, facing a glass ceiling for promotion to higher positions, racial prejudice, limited access to networks, and the most left out (Zhang 2010, Wong 2006, Karma 2004).

During the interview, Takashi shared his understanding of such racial hierarchy in the U.S. art world, which, again, is different from the hierarchy based on income, education levels, opportunities, or other factors:

> I still feel that there's kind of racism in art worlds. <…> If you count a number of actual artists, white, white male is really really rare right now, but they are dominant right now. So… Asian artists are really really rare. <…> The society is kind of similar. There is a kind of order. White males, white females, black males, black females, and then Asian, and then probably Latinos, yeah.
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

As it is visible from Takashi's suggested hierarchy order, not only race but gender identity is essential. Unlike other, "smaller" identity categories, gender, race, and ethnicity are the identities with the most apparent visible markers and the ones that infiltrate all other identity categories and social roles. While many of the artists felt more "Japanese" in their daily lives after moving to NYC, there seemed to be a general sentiment of non-involving the Japanese identity in artwork:

> Some Japanese artists are good at using their culture I their art to explain the "Japanesesess" or the culture you're brought up with. Because it's different from what other people have here, so, let's say, that's a, like, local, you know, the… Their, you know, country kind of a thing. But I feel like… There was a time when I tried to do that, and I thought to myself that I don't know about Japan, too? So I have to fake myself that I know about *wabi-sabi* for instance, or about tea ceremony, about kimono, or samurai, you know.
> (H. K., 7 August 2020)

Hiroya feels that he does not know enough about Japanese culture to authentically use it in his artwork, as some of the other Japanese artists might be doing. Similarly to Hiroya, Tadasuke does not feel that he can say about himself that he is a "Japanese artist," as he cannot relate to Japanese culture as much:

> At first I felt closer [to Japanese identity]. But after that NARS Foundation [residency] that I told you about, I really, how do you say, on the contrary, I felt like erasing [Japanese identity]. I mean, I haven't really, I have never been really affected by Japanese culture. Consciously. For example, that Japanese culture that people in New York love, I have absolutely no connection with. Yeah. The music I listen to is Western music, American music. Favorite movies are also American. So what influenced me were not these typical Japanese things, like manga or something. That's why I decided not to bring it up. Saying, "I am a Japanese artist," that is not about me.
> (T. J., 8 May 2020)

For both Hiroya and Tadasuke, using Japanese motives in their art feels inauthentic, despite being ethnically Japanese, born and raised (in Hiroya's case, only until his teenage years) in Japan. They both could not relate to the Japanese "popular" culture and voted against employing their "Japaneseness" in their artwork.

Isaac had a different experience, somewhat similar to that of Aki's, described in the previous section: They both did not feel that they need to draw particular attention to their Japanese identities, but they also were not hiding it:

> So I am living as a painter in the world. It's not that I ignore that I am Japanese, and I am not hiding that I am Christian. God created me, and also I am living in the world. And I am living as a painter. I don't need to specify the Japanese part or Christianity, I just want to use the talent I got from God. Very simple.
> (I. F., 15 April 2020)

Here, Isaac tells how his religious and ethnic identities are subordinate to his identity as a painter. Being perceived as a painter is more important than being perceived as a Japanese or a Christian. For Hiroya, Tadasuke, and Isaac, their relationship to their "Japaneseness" is somewhat separated from their personal lives and work.

In Yuko's case, her relationship to her Japanese identity is not as straightforward, as she feels somewhere in-between of being an American and Japanese:

> At the same time, Japanese people look at me, and it looks like *gaijin* work. And Americans, any non-Japanese person, they are like, "Your work is so Japanese," and that's kind of who I am, you know? I don't feel I'm American, I don't feel I'm a Japanese. But Japanese look at me like I'm a *gaijin*, and Americans look at me, like, oh, that Japanese person. So, my goals is to do work that best represents myself, and that's how people see my work, then that's exactly who I am.
> (Y. S., 6 January 2020)

The feeling of being stuck in between these two identities also feeds into Yuko's work: while using many Japanese imagery and references, her work feels "foreign" to the Japanese and very "Japanese" to foreigners. This represents her own ethnic identity for Yuko: too foreign for a Japanese, too Japanese for an American. Being a member of a particular ethnic group does not imply the need to understand an individual's relationship with their ethnic identity, but also, it often means understanding one's relationship with other members of an ethnic group. In some

cases, becoming an active member of wider ethnicity-based networks might be a source of great opportunity, while for others, it might be seen as a limiting force, preventing them from expanding to their true potential.

In short, "racialized" identities change with the geographic, social, and cultural context where individuals find themselves. For these Japanese artists, who constituted the racial majority in their country of origin (Japan), racial identity was not as salient as it becomes upon arriving in a more racially diverse context of the U.S., especially NYC. "Racialized" groups in the context of the U.S. not only receive different access to various resources but also make the members of such groups internalize certain stereotypes dominant among the majority members. This, as a result, alters the perception of the artists themselves about their own identities, social placement, and even artwork. Moreover, feeling connected or disconnected from one's ethnic identity impacts how an artist approaches their artwork. As we saw in Hiroya's example, using Japanese imagery in his work felt wrong because he did not feel connected enough to use it naturally in his art. Yuko's work, on the other hand, is rich with Japanese references and symbols. However, she uses them in a "*gaijin"* way to express her ambiguous identity of being something between a Japanese and an American.

7.3 Role identities

The positions one occupies within interpersonal relationships (such as parent, daughter, cousin, friend, co-worker) are called role identities. Unlike group and social identities, described in the previous section, role identities are not always with a

person across all situations and emerge from an interaction with an owner of a counter-role (for instance, parent and child, two friends, an employer, and an employee) (Stets & Burke 2014).

To consolidate and maintain a particular role identity, it must be supported by other people. An identity can be verified when the behavior and appearance of an individual match culturally and socially shared meanings, expectations, and behaviors associated with that particular role (Stets 2013). If others see an individual in the same way that the individual perceives themselves, then identity verification was successful and resulted in positive emotions and increased identity commitment. If, on the contrary, the verification was unsuccessful, it results in negative emotions and a decrease in identity confidence. When non-verification comes from significant others, the negative emotions tend to be more intense (Stets & Burke 2014).

Arguably, the most significant relationships throughout one's life are often those bound by familial ties: parents, spouses, and children. Thus, they have the most power in validating their identity. In the following sections, I will describe the participants' relationships with their family members from the lens of artist identity.

7.3.1 Artists by themselves

Before embarking on a journey of understanding the artist identity concerning other identities, it is beneficial to establish what the artist identity is like on its own. In this section, I will share the participants' experiences of being alone in their studios, what motivates them to create artwork, and what value they derive from the process.

For many artists, the process of creating art resembles a meditation practice:

> And drawing is still important to me, you know, for… My mind… It's kind of like a meditation, and, you know, using another brains.
> (T. G., 14 July 2021)

Tadahiro recognizes the personal importance of making art because it helps him clear his mind and use it differently than what he is used to in his daily life. Sonomi feels similarly: "When I work, it's almost like a meditation for me" (S. K., 1 March 2020). For her, devoting the time to concentrate solely on her work allows her to put away the worries and stay in the moment:

> When you do art, you kind of [have to] be present, so I can be, like, calm, and not worry about what's going on.
> (S. K., 6 November 2020)

She explains that focusing on her artwork and entering the meditative-like state allows her to connect better with her sense of self: "So for me, doing artwork, I could be myself, not worry about, like, what's going on outside. So I can be myself" (S. K. 6 November 2020). The process of creating art, then, becomes a tool of self-reflection, in which an artist is supposed to constantly check in with themselves if they want to create honest artwork:

> So, it's always a process. I always have to ask myself when I work. That's why it's kind of like a meditation. It's always looking at myself inside. Because if I don't do that, it will be… The artwork is for somebody else. I don't know (laughing). So I always have to be honest.
> (S. K., 6 May 2021)

The themes of "honesty" and "truth" in artwork resonated with other artists as well:

> Many variations of what art is, who make art to put your ego and then suffer or happiness as a theme, as a main subject, I think that's nice, that's truth, that's what art is.
> (K. M., 5 March 2020)

According to Sonomi and Keiko, honest, true art is the reflection of one's real self. To create an authentic piece of art, one has to keep checking in with oneself and reflect. Takashi feels similarly. He believes that without understanding who he is, he cannot paint honest work:

> But the point I thought they were asking, what is my originality? What do you do, where are you from, then what kind of paintings do you do? Anything like that. These are the questions they asked me, but the point is, who is me? Right? <…> I cannot answer that question clearly. Who am I? I cannot start painting my original paintings.
> (T. H., 12 March 2020)

For Takashi, understanding who he is was essential to create original artwork, which would accurately reflect his vision:

> Maybe I always looked for, you know, my personality in art, I mean, where is my unique one. I think, unique expression to my work. It's very important for me, because of, you know… because I'm looking for unique, my personality of expression in arts, it's really important for me.
> (T. G., 14 July 2021)

Yuko feels the same way. As an artist, she intends to create artwork that would reflect her authentic self the best. Moreover, she needs to make sure her chosen way of expression extends to the viewer as well:

> So, my goal is to do work that best represents myself, and that's how people see my work, then that's exactly who I am.
> (Y. S., 6 January 2021)

There are many ways to make artwork, and each artist has their own unique set of reasons why they do what they do. One common thing among them is their

commitment to access their true self, their inner self, and express it in their work. Quoting Keiko, "painting is something that you create from nothing. So it pretty much reflects you, your inner, whatever" (K. M., 5 March 2020). The process of painting can also become a reference point, which helps to better understand oneself over a more extended time:

> But once you do something, you find yourself a little bit, sometimes better, or different from yesterday, right? Anything is… Or, a year ago. And… I think that's the big part of painting. It's very addictive, once you get into it.
> (H. K., 7 August 2020)

Staying honest in creative work is personally significant for the artists. It helps them to understand themselves better, connect to their inner selves, and also connect better with the viewers through exposing themselves and revealing their personalities:

> I think I have a responsibility to the society, I guess. Because some artists say, oh, you need to, I don't think much about it. But at least, I have a responsibility to complete what I'm thinking, not to give up easy, and stick with it, and struggle with my idea, or, you know, myself. So that's what. Focus on. And… As a responsibility side, I have responsibility to [express] how I feel the world, and try my best to get myself to connect to the art. And then people maybe find something from that.
> (K. M., 5 May 2021)

To sum it up, the participants associate the creative process with a meditative state, which provides space for self-reflection and pondering. Accessing this state allows the artists to create "honest" works, or, in other words, the works that are the most representative of the artist as an individual. From the quotes analyzed in this section, the links between art and identity become more apparent. Artists believe that good artwork reflects an artist's inner self in the most "truthful" way, and without knowing who they are, artists cannot create original artwork.

7.3.2 Artists as children

In the imagination of many, being an artist equates to a lifetime of poverty, suffering and uncertainty. Parents can become very protective over their children's future, pushing them towards a stable career and secure family life. This was the case for approximately half of the participants.

Tadahiro shares his memories:

> So I wanted to be like a comic artist. But, you know, very… Japanese parents, like my parents, and… Conservative. And anxious about our lives, you know, becoming very poor artists. <…> So, maybe, you know, usual parents, you know, wanted to be, like, very stable life… <…> They didn't want me to have a job like that, so design was better for them.
> (T. G., 23 May 2020)

Since his childhood, Tadahiro envisioned himself engaging in creative work. However, his parents encouraged him to pursue a safer career in design. When conducting interviews, Tadahiro worked as a visual artist for a U.S.-based company and created personal work after his day job. Sophia's family was also not particularly enthusiastic about her dream to become an artist:

> Not at all, they didn't like [me becoming an artist]. Because my dad is a scientist, so he wanted me to become a scientist. And then my brother, I have an older brother… He is a scientist, too. So then they hated it when I came [to New York]. For 10 years. It's long, for many years my mom was so upset, and they didn't like it at all. But after 10 years, they gave up.
> (S. C., 17 March 2020)

Sophia's relationship with her family was tense for almost a decade because she decided to move to New York and pursue arts. Shigeno shares a similar story:

> My older sister <…> loved art and she taught me many things, and she gave me art books, and… I really liked art from the beginning, actually. And then I wanted to be artist someday. I've been dreaming for my, maybe eight, nine years old? But my father, he didn't like that. <…> Actually, when I was 17 years old, he [father] took me to Ueno park <…> And there's lots of artists who are painting portraits on the streets. He said, do you want to be like that? He said. And then, they cannot make any money. And I couldn't say anything. (S. I., 10 November 2020)

Shigeno went to a law school in Tokyo, and after graduating, worked in sales. Ultimately, he decided to quit his job and relocate to New York to pursue his childhood dream. Echoing Sophia's story, after going to New York, Shigeno was not on speaking terms with his father, who later came around and confessed that he regretted not supporting Shigeno's decision to go to an art school.

Yuko's story resembles Shigeno's in terms of quitting her corporate job to pursue her childhood dream. She was dreamt about going to art school since she was a child, but her parents advised her to decide on a more stable career. She enrolled in a business program and worked at a major company for more than a decade before quitting her job and moving to New York to study illustration. In the following quote, she summarizes the general sentiment shared by many parents regarding the image of pursuing a career in arts:

> So, I think parents want [their kids] to get a job and find a nice husband, become, like, really successful in their companies, get married, and get a stable life, you know? <…> So I think my parents… That was a good path for me to have a stable life, instead of, you know, like parents who are not artists or don't do art… And when I do lectures, I talk about van Gogh, like, van Gogh is from a hundred years ago, but that's like the life of an artist my parents know of. And that's like, a life of suffering, right?
> (Y. S., 6 January 2020)

For the children growing up in non-artistic households, the intention of becoming an artist was not met enthusiastically by the parents. Takashi's case was different. He grew up in a family producing decorated Arita porcelain, or *Arita-yaki*

有田焼. While his family did not explicitly oppose his aspiration of pursuing fine arts, there was an expectation of continuing family business:

> I was supposed to take care of my father's job, and for *Arita-yaki*, it's a lot of drawings and paintings on them like this (shows a picture). <…> So I was going to ask him to consider and continue paintings and drawings, and I was not interested in porcelain (laughing). So mainly, I was going to graduate in art school <…> And then again, I kind of fought with my father to continue porcelain painting. And at that time my brother <…> ended up taking care of the family's job.
> (T. H., 12 March 2020)

However, not all participants had a dream of becoming an artist since they were children. As I already described in section 6.2.2 in Chapter VI, Sonomi arrived in New York City as a tourist, where she met local artists and musicians. It was only then that she decided she wanted to pursue art. While her friends were supportive of her decision, her mother disapproved of her choice at first:

> All the friends that are still friends were all supportive [of artistic career]. But I guess about my mom, I showed my work one time, and she same, and then all she had to say was like, she didn't like the color or something And I was very disappointed.
> (S. K., 1 March 2020)

It took Sonomi nearly ten years to make her feel fully acknowledged by her family and friends:

> And then one time I was like, okay, when I have a show in Japan, I want to have a nice solo show. I want to be kind of… A little bit more professional here, then I want to do it there. It took me maybe a little more than 10 years after that. <…> And all my friends, and family that I haven't seen forever, and my mom… Everybody came. And I finally felt like they recognized what I really do.
> (S. K., 1 March 2020)

Sophia had a nearly equivalent experience. Initially, her family did not particularly like the idea of Sophia living as an artist in New York City. However, after ten years since her practice, she had a solo show in a temple. The monk was a

close family friend. Eventually, the monk convinced Sophia's parents that it was a right decision for her to stay in New York:

> Yeah, after 10 years, I had a show in temple. And then monk was kind of, our teacher. Like, my parents' teacher, he was a friend of my grandparents, or something. Then he said to my parents, I draw paintings in United States, my drawings, so alive and more white, but when I draw something in Japan, it's very tiny, small, it's not very happy. So then he said, maybe I should draw in New York, not Japan. And he said that to my mom, and my mom was finally okay. He says so. Yeah. Because since I was born, we were very close to the monk's family. So the monk's wife is my mom's same school and college. Then they are very close. Yeah. I think my dad was accepting a little before, because he was always helping around different countries. He lived in Japan, but every year he was in different countries for conference and visiting. So he was more easier than my mom.
> (S. C., 17 March 2020)

The acceptance by significant others, such as family members, is an integral part of increasing the salience and commitment of an identity, which are linked to the experience of positive emotions. Therefore, the opinions expressed by parents are crucial in their children's psychological well-being. As observed from the quotes, the majority of the respondence struggled with parents who were unsupportive of their dreams of becoming artists. Some of the respondents received an education in the fields advised by their parents, only to quit their corporate jobs later and pursue an art career.

To sum it up, the narrative arch of ultimate acceptance by the parents seems to be pivotal for some artists, like in Sonomi and Sophia's case, seems to resemble finding the last missing piece of a puzzle and brings inner confidence in their identity as an artist. In the following section, I will describe the impact of the acquired family on the maintenance of a positive self-perception of the artists.

7.3.3 Artists as parents and spouses

A birth family has a tremendous influence on the trajectory their children might choose to follow in the future. However, the acquired family has a significant impact on the art practice and general wellbeing of the artists. Getting married and, in particular, having children often requires major re-adjustments from the artists in terms of their resources and time management. Out of fourteen respondents, nine are married, and three are currently parenting.

As I already mentioned in the previous section, the process of identity verification is even more meaningful when conducted by significant others (Stets & Burke 2014). For Maho, for example, the encouragement of her husband plays a vital role in her art practice and general wellbeing:

> [My husband] is very helping, supporting me, and accepting my style, and even [if] I don't like some piece, but, you know, he is supporting me. So, I'm so grateful. *Megumareteiru to omou*[1].
> (M. L., 31 August 2021)

The support and acceptance of one's spouse is an essential resource that contributes to maintaining one's identity. In some cases, it could even indirectly become a reason for developing a new aspect of identity, as it happened with Tadasuke. As we remember from section 6.2.2 in Chapter VI, Tadasuke moved to New York to be together with his wife. At the time, he worked as a graphic designer and enrolled in an art school due to his wife's suggestion:

> I [went to Art Student League] from my wife's recommendation. My wife told me, if you don't want to go to the language school, and you learned some English, painting is close to design, so maybe it's better to go there.
> (T. J., 8 May 2020)

[1] I feel blessed.

As Tadasuke proceeded with his artistic journey, he realized that he was interested in pursuing art professionally. Even though initially it was his wife's idea, she was astounded by his decision at first but ultimately accepted the change. Not everybody, however, had a spousal acceptance of their art practice.

While still living in Tokyo, Aomi knew that she wanted to become a part of the global contemporary art scene. However, she felt restricted by her marital responsibilities, such as taking care of children and supporting her husband's career. At the time, she could not concentrate on creating her artwork, and felt that when she had a husband and kids, it was a "big, big lost time," which made her feel "always angry" and "frustrated" about her husband (A. K. 25 July 2021). Moreover, her status as a housewife prevented others from seeing her potential as a professional artist:

> He permit me to learn something, but it's... It's so... Learn is ok, but at that time, where I go to practice, it's a housewife, and, like a... Their past time. I'm one of the housewives, and I spent my time for something like a... <…> So I belong to such kind of situation for twenty years... And, went to... Learn kimono dying also, teacher is a craftsman, and he always says, you are not professional, you are not professional, you cannot become professional, always keep saying like that. Because I'm a housewife. And I come to learn just out of curiosity, and, yeah.
> (A. K., 25 July 2021)

Aomi was not the only one who faced such bias directed at married women who practice art. As previous research suggests, both artists and non-artist populations tend to generalize and dismiss married women as "women hobbyists," or "some people like housewives who call themselves artists" (Bain 2005; Yoshimoto 2005). In other words, spousal support or disapproval and marital status by itself have the

power to make a considerable impact on the self-image and the public perception of an artist.

However, an even more significant adjustment, as reported by the participants, was having children. Aki felt like having a child adds dimension in terms of negotiation between daily life and ideology:

> And of course, over summer, BLM happened, and there was march everywhere, and I had to decide if I can join the march or not, and I applied for joining few that felt safe for me, because I was with the kid also, so it was a lot of negotiation between politics, and… A day job, and… Daily life, I guess. <…> And I met up with a few friends, who are artists, and who have kids, so that's… <…> I mean, concerns are very similar.
> (A. S., 18 December 2020)

In the face of social and political movements happing in the United States, it was tough because Aki felt like, as residents, "everybody had to do something" and "take a stance" (A. S. 18 December 2020). Being a mother to a young child was an increased responsibility she had to take. Apart from the conflict between motherhood, daily life, and politics, the mode of art production also had to be adjusted. Both Aki and her partner are practicing artists who were challenged with finding new ways to carve out time for art:

> We just had to work after the kid goes to bed, and it's, you know… It's definitely slower than… I don't know how… How the artists did it, who had kids. It's hard! It's very hard… Yeah, somehow… People figure it out, so… Yeah. I have confidence, because people have done it, and it's normal, but… It appears impossible at a time (laughing).
> (A. S., 22 July 2021)

Finding time and resources for art while raising a child is arduous, and might even seem impossible, and made Aki consider giving up her art practice:

> As a mother, I have to… Let the job part, like, the teaching side take over for a while. It's just because I have to… yeah, first, I have to make money, and two, the job is actually… <…> Maybe I have to give up to trying to save art. Because maybe art is not like that. I am trying to carve time for art, trying to create space for art, but maybe it's not worth doing that. Maybe it's completely different type of thing. And I have to find out how that formula works. Because I have been in the past three years, I've been in a defensive mode to protect art, and I don't see winning the game through that. I think, kid will be demanding more at least another decade, and academia is shifting, and…. Cannot give up kid… I mean, I can give up a lot of things, but I think I'm gonna give up that kind of… Sacred space for art, because… It's not healthy either [for me nor] for art.
> (A. S., 22 July 2021)

Here, Aki is deliberating which aspects of her life she could "give up." She cannot stop being a parent, and she cannot stop earning money for a living, so the only thing that could be given away is art. What she is describing is the conflict between obligatory role identities and voluntary role identities. The former are the socially expected identities of individuals to take on throughout their life, for instance, spouse, parent, or worker. These identities do not necessarily reflect who they are, but they are normative in society and not easy to withdraw from (Stets 2013). In Aki's situation, the worker and the parent identities are obligatory identities, the ones that she feels she cannot give up. Her artist identity, on the other hand, is voluntary.

Voluntary identities are described as giving more agency to the individual, as one can choose whether or not to assume a voluntary identity. For example, one can choose whether to be someone's friend, a yoga practitioner, a vegetarian or a ballet dancer. Voluntary identities, then, are thought to represent an individual's "true self" more than obligatory identities. However, when the disadvantages of having this identity begin to outweigh the advantages, they are easier to quit (Stets 2013).

The root of Aki's conflict is the competition for time and resources between her obligatory and voluntary identities. While artist identity is more straightforward to give up than the identity of a parent or a worker, it still has a solid personal

significance and high saliency in her identity hierarchy, making a choice an excruciating experience. Both Aki and her life partner are practicing artists, and both are experiencing parenting together. Nevertheless, the strategies they chose for their identity control are fundamentally different:

> He's willing to give up his art. And I'm not willing. He's really ready to give up any time. He's, like, really perfectionist. So the minute he cannot devote his time for art, he's ready to give up. And I'm facing the same thing that... Ok, I'm... I cannot have enough devotion, and I have a hope that I have to change the art, and I feel like we're just very different, you know, our approach to art is very different. He would rather not make it if it's not perfect.
> (A. S., 22 July 2021)

Aki's partner is more willing to give up his artist identity than Aki. For him, being an artist means creating perfect art exactly the way he envisions it. This seems to be an essential attribute of being an artist, and he is unwilling to change it. Quitting an identity altogether seems like a more logical option than altering the meanings he embedded in an artist identity. Aki's approach is different and results in the so-called identity change:

> And I want to see what that imperfect failed version looks like. So... I don't think I'll give up, but it might become bad (laughing). You know? And even bad can be good, that's what art does, so I have to figure out how to do it, you know?
> (A. S., 22 July 2021)

Identity change occurs when, over some time, the meanings embedded in a particular identity change either because of a change in a situation, in the salience of identities, or a conflict of identities (Stets and Burke 2014). Unlike her husband, Aki re-configured the meanings she embeds into her identity as an artist over time. Instead of quitting, she changed the standards of her identity.

In short, the verification of identity by a spouse is crucial for one's commitment to identity and general well-being. Like in Tadasuke's case, spousal

support can encourage an individual to take on a new identity, and like in Aomi's case, disapproval can result in the abandonment of a dream, anger, and frustration. Having children is another major life event, requiring significant re-adjustments in daily life and identity management. As we saw in the example of Aki and her partner, the ways of managing and navigating existing identities for parents can be completely different. Aki's partner is more comfortable with quitting the artist identity because there is no time and resource to engage in his art practice according to his standards with the new parental identity. Meanwhile, Aki takes a different approach and re-negotiates the meanings she attributes to her artist identity to maintain it.

To sum it up, changes in social status, such as becoming a spouse or a parent, affect the artists' mode of production in terms of time and resources and self-image in terms of identity control and management.

7.3.4 Artists as workers

The absolute majority of artists hold two or more jobs (Lena & Lindemann 2014; Bain 2005), and almost all participants of the current research were employed part-time, full-time, or engaged in art-related freelance practice. Having an additional source of income is often crucial for their survival. However, many artists find themselves at an intersection between their interests as an artist and their interests as breadwinner. On the one hand, having a stable job ensures a secure income, allowing the artists to pay their rent and continue their artistic practice. At the same time, less resource is left for engaging in art-related activities.

Sophia shared her experience of finding a balance between work and time for art. After arriving in New York, she found a job as a Japanese language teacher:

> But then they asked me to teach six times a week. So.. yeah, five days plus one day for Saturday school. So that was too much. [I] tried to get out, but I have visa from them, so I couldn't say anything. So for one year I worked for six days. And the next years they were dropping off, so I could do only Saturday. Anyway, I got less, and I kept painting more. And then I got green card, so that was ok.
> (S. C., 17 March 2020)

The primary reason why Sophia moved to New York City was to become a part of the contemporary art scene. While working six days a week provided her with a visa and a source of income, there was no time left for painting, the very reason behind her migration. After receiving her green card, she only engaged in part-time employment. Sophia explains the reasoning behind her decision in the following way:

> Everybody ask me why I don't do full-time, but the, full-time, I don't have time for art, so I cannot be that. So I do part-time job. And then even, like, with money, I'm still… Luckily, I am still surviving. Yeah, I just… Hopefully, I can sell more.
> (S. C., 14 May 2021)

Sophia's priority of making time for art, instead of choosing secure employment, resonated with the experiences of other participants as well.

In a situation when oppositional identities conflict, it generally results in psychological distress. According to Burke's (2003) identity control theory, there are three ways to alleviate the discomfort. The expectations for both identities should change. One of the identities should become less important than the other, or situations in which conflicting identities are activated simultaneously should be avoided. Sophia chose the latter option. The obligation to work six days a week conflicted with her artist identity, which occupies a high ranking in her identity hierarchy. In order to resolve the conflict, she chose not to seek full-time employment, even if it results in less financial stability or social benefits:

> But I need more time to do artwork. It takes long time to, yeah, make one painting. So then… That's why I am taking part-time job, or temporary jobs. But my friends are thinking, that is not good idea during the pandemic. But I still… Yeah. I still want to have part time to paint, not for the health insurance, so (laughing).
> (S. C., 1 November 2020)

Before she could find that resolution, however, Sophia spent a long time in an attempt to balance her language teaching position with her artist identity. Eventually, her choice was to avoid the situation that caused the distress. Takashi also found himself in a similar situation of a conflict of interests. Similarly to Sophia, eventually he decided to avoid the situation of identity conflict, but it took some time to make the decision:

> So then I ended up [being an artist's] assistant. After that, the very next day I needed to go there, and I started [my job as an] assistant, ended up for nine and a half years. That's quite a long time. I kind of wasted. Yeah, kind of. Of course, I could live, because he pays me well, but, well… My own paintings, maybe, kind of wasted, yeah. But I, as an assistant, I'm kind of, to say by myself, is kind of odd, but I'm really, I don't know how to say, *sekininkan ga aru* [2]. I want to do my full power. If I do assistant, I use my full power, right? So how do I keep up my paintings?
> (T. H., 12 March 2020)

From the quote, we can observe how his artist identity clashes with his identity as an assistant, both role identities. Moreover, another dimension of identity, person identity, emerges from the story. Takashi describes himself as *sekinin ga aru* or someone who has a strong sense of responsibility. Person identities tend to be more salient than group or role identities because they remain across other identity categories (Stets & Burke 2014). In this case, his identity as a responsible person forces Takashi to "use full power" in his job as n assistant. However, it raises a dilemma: How is it possible to allocate time and resources for art if all the energy is

[2] I feel the responsibility.

spent on a job? After working as an assistant for almost a decade, Takashi decided to quit and support himself through other, less-demanding, art-related sources of income.

Hiroya also had the experience of working as an assistant for a famous artist in New York City. He describes his experience in the following way:

> For five years, I worked for a famous sculptor, I was a studio assistant. <…> So, I was working close with him, through him, I felt like I was touching New York art scene, you know? And also I was able to observe how the artist life is. Because, you know, he doesn't have a job, his work is art, you know? Just being an artist. So I had a pleasure to see that, you know.
> (H. K., 7 August 2020)

Similar to Takashi, Hiroya worked as an art assistant. His story, however, does not indicate any particular distress regarding the job. On the contrary, Hiroya feels like, through his position as an assistant, he had a chance to get closer to the ideal life of an artist. In a way, the figure of that famous sculptor emerged as a prototype. A prototype serves as an image, symbolizing the "ideal" group representative, and all the other group members aspire to resemble. In this case, the group is "artists," the prototype is the sculptor, and Hiroya is one of the group members.

Aki also did not exhibit particular signs of identity conflict, despite working a full-time job. After graduation, she worked as a full-time employee at an import and export company. For her, having a job unrelated to art was something that "everybody was doing" and did not conflict with her artist identity.

> After graduation I just worked as a, you know, full-time job at an import-export company. It had nothing to do with art, but it was a skill that I had that I could do just to support myself. I was an artist who was doing a day job that I didn't care about. And that's pretty much everybody. It might be different in earlier times, but economically speaking, it was impossible for emerging artist to support themselves just through art. Very much everybody was doing – looking for some kind of job to support your art. So, yeah. It wasn't, it was very common.
> (A. S., 4 May 2020)

In this case, Aki felt like by taking a day job that she "didn't care about," she was like everybody else, like every other artist. I already mentioned the existing "living like an artist" narrative in section 2.2 Chapter II. Earning a living from a working-class job remains one of the more vital cues of leading a "bohemian" lifestyle. (Lingo & Tepper 2013). Because of the embeddedness of the stereotype into the image of an artist, it is perceived by both artist and non-artist populations as an attribute of an artist's lifestyle. Therefore, it does not cause an identity conflict between the role identities, but on the opposite, might even verify one's identity as a "struggling artist" or a person with an "artist lifestyle."

Many of the respondents at one point or another undertook such jobs: "I [worked as a] waiter, and delivery guy for the flower shop, something like that" (T. H. 12 March 2020), "I started from a dishwasher in a Japanese restaurant in midtown. And I worked there for three years" (S. I. 10 November 2020), "And as a job I do everything. Display to a commercial thing, to various thing" (K. M. 6 March 2020). While the circumstance of working part-time is seen as less than ideal by the respondents:

> I used to work any other jobs on the side. That was always kind of like side jobs that I wanted to not to do anymore if I am successful. But right now I just want to do only what I want to do, and think about how I can make living with it.
> (S. K., 1 March 2020)

At the same time, in many cases, it is also perceived as an inseparable part of being an artist or using the word used by several respondents, "surviving" as an artist. At the time of conducting the interviews, most of the respondents were engaged in employment related to the art field in one way or another. One of the most popular

choices among the participants was that of an art educator, consistent with previous research (Bain 2005). Even though Aki and Yuko both teach at universities, their situations are very different. Yuko is a professional, full-time illustrator:

> So, most of my income comes from freelancing. <…> Teaching… I mean, I started teaching because I thought it was an honor to [be] asked to teach, because it was quite after I started freelancing. And then I stuck around.
> (Y. S., 6 January 2021)

For her, the overlap between the two identities is minimal. As the majority of her income comes from her creative work, making art does not depend on her employment status. Therefore, the identities of an illustrator and an illustration teacher, while having a shared meaning, do not affect each other too much.

Aki's situation is different, as she is a full-time faculty at a university:

> And my next worry is when I can get back to art. Because right now I can't do any art. I can barely function between… I might be okay after school ends, but now I have a couple of weeks of school left, and then zoom settings for forever… yeah, it's crazy, 12 hours sometimes. So after these zoom settings, can I actually do art or not? That's my issue.
> (A. S., 4 May 2020)

Several studies have explored the interrelationship between the artist and the teacher identities (please refer to Chapter II section 2.4 for an overview). According to the scholars, the central tension of maintaining the identities of a practicing artist and an art educator arises from contradicting expectations: creativity and genius from an artist, and mediocrity and good organizational skills from a teacher (Hennekam 2017; Hatfield et al. 2006; Zwirn 2006; Orsini 1973). While the maintenance of both roles did take a toll on Aki's wellbeing, the main problem seems to be the lack of time and resources due to being employed full-time rather than a conflict between the roles of an artist and an art educator. She believes her experiences to resemble that of any other full-time job:

> It [job] is definitely taking a part [of headspace], but that's, like, that's what the job is. So if I was working in another place, it would probably be the same. You know. I'm doing a full-time job. So, you know. I'm… It's just that… Yeah, I don't know if it's good or bad, but I think it's good, because it could… It could potentially affect my work in a good way. Hopefully. In the future.
> (A. S., 22 July 2021)

In other words, neither Aki nor Yuko's experiences did not reflect the identity conflict described by the previous research on artist and art educator identities. This, however, does not deny the accuracy of the existing literature but rather illustrates the diversity and complexity of perceptions and experiences among the artists. One thing that did correspond with Zwirn's (2006) research is the. Gender imbalance in the art education sphere. Apart from Aki and Yuko, who work for universities, two other artists, Sonomi and Sophia, offered private and public classes, and another artist, Sato, was studying to receive her teaching certification. Out of eight female artists interviewed for this research, at least half were engaged in teaching, in contrast to one out of six male respondents. On the other hand, male artists tended to engage in what Lena and Linderman (2014) refer to as "border occupations," such as visual design, graphic design, or, in the case of Hiroya, art conservation.

In conclusion, the majority of the artists held multiple jobs to support their art practice and lifestyle. The ways the artists perceived their day jobs concerning their artist identity differed depending on the individual meanings associated with what it means to be an artist and the type of job they were engaged in. For some artists, having multiple sources of income enhanced their artist identity, either by perpetuating the narrative of a struggling artist or by identifying with other artists in their extended circles, where having a day job and creating artwork is normalized. For others, the identities of an artist and a worker conflicted with one another, causing

distress. The artists' central dilemma was balancing the benefits of financial stability with a disadvantage of a lack of time and resources for their art practice. Furthermore, for some, the two identities remained largely unaffected due to the absence of a meaningful overlap between the identities.

7.4 Myth-based identities

The previous chapters have briefly covered the influence of mythology and collective imagination on developing artist identities. In Chapter III, I reviewed the existing literature, which addresses the question regarding the artist identity. According to the previous research, there is a lack of comprehensive answers, unlike many other highly skilled professionals. Due to unregulated work environments, the characteristics and desirable qualities associated with the artist identities often derive from the past (please refer to Chapter IV for a more comprehensive overview). They are intertwined with many artist-related narratives, such as the " starving artist," the "bohemian artist lifestyle," or "mad genius artist."

Such myth-based identities are widespread among the general public and the artists themselves, and the traits and qualities sometimes contradict each other. It is essential to recognize these myth-based identities, as they form a particular "prototype" of an artist figure, which have the potential to become an unattainable point of reference, and therefore create a degree of identity confusion and trigger an unsuccessful identity verification process.

This chapter will highlight some of the stereotypes and popular tropes related to artist identities, as they emerged during the interviews. In section 7.4.1, I will demonstrate how the artists themselves define being an artist. In the following section,

7.4.2, I will address the narrative of the "trained artist," and I will explore whether, according to the artists themselves, professional training is necessary for building a career in arts and what resources does formal education provide. The last section, 7.4.3, will address the myth of the "starving artist" and the artists' complicated relationship with money.

7.4.1 Who is an artist?

In Chapter III, section 3.2, and section 3.3, I addressed who an artist is? Different sources offer different definitions, and there is no consensus even among the artists themselves. UNESCO argues that anyone who makes artwork and asks to be recognized as an artist is an artist (UNESCO. General Conference, 21st, Belgrade, 1980, 689).

People have their definitions of who an artist is. For some, it is someone who shows in galleries, or someone who has dedicated their life to art, or someone who "lives like an artist," or someone who has an arts degree (Taylor and Littleton 2008; Bain 2005). Others attempt to define an artist through all the things an artist is not: An artist is not women hobbyists, an artist is not someone who calls themselves an artist, an artist is not a bored housewife (Bain 2005). Nevertheless, for others, being an artist means maintaining a coherent self-image and being persuasive in front of other artists (Menger 2001). Historically, artists have been healers, priests, shamans, tools of God, secluded geniuses, revolutionaries, and rock stars, which makes the question even more complicated (Pappano & Rice 2013; Turner 2005; Feldman 1995; Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi 1973).

Among the artists who participated in the study, everybody had their definition as well. Tadahiro did not have a definite answer to what it means to be a professional artist:

> I am not sure about professionally, I mean, yeah. So... Making money is a professional? I don't know. But I wanted to pursue my work, just only that. Because... Personally, they are simple, I think. you know, just making some art. It's a very simple way, and I don't care, you know, becoming a great artist, becoming a famous artist, like, you know? Like in contemporary art scene artist, because it's a little tough for my mind. Yeah... Maybe, making money is very important, yet, I can make money as a design director, and... yeah, I don't want to get int advertising art scene.
> (T. G., 23 May 2020)

Contrary to the popular belief that an artist is supposed to make a living by selling his art, Tadahiro does not believe that making money is what makes an artist an artist. Many other artists also shared this view in section 7.4.1 of the current chapter, stating that financial success does not necessarily reflect the quality of art and the artist's creative potential. So what makes an artist an artist, then? For Shigeno, it is the inexplicable sense of urgency that he compares with addiction:

> It's a natural thing. I cannot quit <…> It's kind of like for alcoholic, why are you doing it? They don't have an answer. <…> you know, [being an artist is] like an alcoholic people. You know. I cannot stop, you know. And if don't make art, it means, you should die. That's the same meaning for me.
> (S. I., 25 July 2021)

For Shigeno, then, what defines an artist is an uncontrollable desire to create art. The creation and the resulting objects of art are, then, what defines an artist. However, is an artist still an artist if they do not create art? In sections 7.3.2 and 7.4.2, I shared the story of Aki, who has been struggling to find time and resources for her art practice because of the increased workload at her day job and added responsibilities of parenting. Similarly to Shigeno, she used to believe that an artist is

supposed to be constantly engaged in production, but in order to maintain her artist identity, she had to find new ways to reconfigure its requirements:

> I don't think I... Being productive in art-making was... The necessary measure of being an artist. So I think... It was ok in the end. But I gave up... The notion of "production," like a, pretty much, through the summer, I guess.
> (A. S., 18 December 2020)

In other words, regardless of the challenges and lack of time to create physical work, her artist identity remains central to her self-image.

For Isaac, being an artist means using the gift that he received from God:

> I don't know if you read the Bible, so I just want to explain you... When I read the Bible, there are these words... So, I am living in the world that God created. And that's written in the Bible. That's my world. So, I am living as a painter in the world. <…> I just want to use the talent that I got from God. Very simple.
> (I. F., 15 April 2020)

Similar to the views expressed by the artists in previous quotes, Isaac does not associate being an artist with making money or having regular exhibitions or having an art career. Being an artist is something that comes from within, from God, from an urge "like an alcoholic" (S. I. 25 July 2021), from one's conviction that one is an artist, regardless of productivity. Takashi and Sonomi summarize this point:

> So even if you get like a waiter, two thousand bucks a month, and then a thousand bucks for art, you are an artist. If you declare yourself an artist, you are an artist, it doesn't matter.
> (T. H., 12 March 2020)

> Oh, ok, so I think, artists can be anybody who... lives like artist (laughing). I guess, artists, they are committed to be artists. But everybody is an artist in a way, and even just practicing every day... So, a s long as they think they are artists, they are. But some people do every day, but they say, it's just hobby, then it is just hobby, I guess. Because that's what they think.
> (S. K., 6 May 2021)

For Sonomi, the principal distinction between an artist and a hobbyist is the level of commitment. For example, in a situation when two people spend an equal amount of time on their art, and one of them thinks of themselves as an artist, while the other one does not, both people are correct. In other words, for one person, the artist identity is essential and ranks high in the identity hierarchy, while for the other person, an artist identity might not even exist in their hierarchy since they do not perceive themselves that way. Sonomi illustrated this example with her own experience:

> I was talking to somebody, and she asked me, how you define "artist"? I said, like, when I decided to say it to people. Like, when people asked me, especially in New York, they always ask, "what do you do?" Because a lot of people do two or three things. So, I used to say, at that time I was probably a waitress, so I used to say, "I'm a waitress, but I do art on the side." But at one point, I decided to say, "I'm an artist, but then I work as a waitress." (laughing) So, I switched, but it was hard for me to say at first. Like, kind of like… Not confident? But when I started to say it, slowly, I became comfortable. And I guess, that's when I became an artist.
> (S. K., 1 March 2020)

Sonomi, too, was struggling with the acceptance of her identity as an artist. At first, she was more comfortable introducing herself to the job that sustained her financially: waitress. Working exclusively as an artist is an aspiration and an unspoken pressure that many artists feel from inside and outside the artistic community (Hennekam 2017). However, the reality is that because of the instability of the art market and the oversupply of artists and creative workers, the majority of artists, including recognized artists, have to keep multiple jobs in order to support themselves (Lingo & Temper 2013; Joy & Sherry 2003; Menger 2001).

Both Yuko and Sonomi were not typical "art graduates' who went to an art college after high school and pursued that path right away. Yuko quit her corporate job

in her thirties to get formal training as an illustrator in New York. Sonomi, originally a nutritionist, spontaneously moved to New York in her twenties and pursued painting and sculpture in the Art Student League of New York, an art school with rich history and many notable alumni (including Ai Weiwei, Jackson Pollock, and Georgia O'Keeffe), but with no specific degree programs or grades.

During her art degree, Keiko, who was trained at a Japanese university in *nihonga* painting, did not feel like she was "trained to belong" in the art world. Accepting herself seems more like an accomplishment (Lena and Lindemann 2014), an acceptance that comes from within:

> And then I [went] to this beautiful park, which is this nature near city. Because Philadelphia is very large, and I have a car, so I can, you know, go around, and then think about something I can do. And then that kind of thing makes me feel very good. When I do [tree] rubbings without thinking about creating something for exhibition, I just have to find myself. And to me, that's the moment of getting interested in art, really. So [connecting to yourself] is maybe the starting point of becoming an artist no matter what they call it. Because it's not for somebody else. You don't necessarily have to be called by somebody else an artist. I feel that that's the moment I became an artist, because very honestly, from the heart, I really wanted to do something creative to save myself.
> (K. M., 5 March 2020)

In conclusion, throughout history, the role of an artist has been in a dynamic relationship with the social and cultural context, constantly changing and evolving. Today, there are many definitions of an artist and at least as many ways of being one. For the majority of the participants, being an artist was related to, first, an internal, rather than external, motivation to create artwork, and second, recognition of oneself as an artist. The latter proved to be not easy, as it depended not only on the self-acceptance of the artist but also on the ability to express this identity to others.

7.4.2 The trained artist

If someone aspires to become a lawyer, graduating from a law school is necessary. If someone wishes to be a medical practitioner, medical school and years of residency are non-negotiable. If one dreams of becoming a university professor, obtaining at least a Ph.D. is the standard way. However, is it important to graduate from an art school to become a professional artist?

The answer to this question is ambiguous and does not have a clear answer. Some believe that receiving formal art training is crucial, and one cannot call themselves an artist without it (Taylor & Littleton 2008). Others believe that the only merit of an art school is the exposure to professional networks and the embeddedness into the art world, as they are being "trained to belong" in it (Lena & Lindemann 2014). The experiences of the artists participating in current research are also vastly different.

While living in Japan, Sophia was taking private oil painting classes from a teacher. After moving to New York City, she enrolled in a four year certificate program at the Art Student League of New York:

> I liked one of the teachers. So I stuck with him. I took his class for 4 years, because I thought he was very special, very New York-style. He was shouting, and using the f-word, s-word a lot (laughing). Sometimes he disappeared, and sometimes he started singing suddenly. Anyway, it was so much fun in his class, yeah. Because he's like that, and his students are crazy. So every time, somebody is fighting each other. So it was super crazy. But the good thing was, I could paint my, not really my style at the time, but then I can paint every day, I was very happy for me. So I just keep painting, painting, painting.
> (S. C., 17 March 2020)

After graduating from high school, Takashi enrolled in an art program at a famous art university in Tokyo and ultimately received a doctorate in Japanese painting. Upon his graduation, he felt like the art community in Japan pays and excessive attention to the academic credentials of the artists instead of focusing on the artistic potential:

> And then, *nihonga* artist in Japan is quite limited society. Where you are from, who is your teacher. They kind of study your background, not paintings. (T. H., 13 April 2020)

For Takashi, the fact that he learned from a famous *nihonga* artist at one of the most prestigious art schools in Japan did not seem relevant to his art:

> I went to *Geidai*, and I studied under a famous guy, but it's not important for me. It is my painting, what [else] are you looking for?
> (T. H., 13 April 2020)

As Lena and Lindemann (2014) wrote, art graduates are, in a way, molded to be a part of the art world. Some artists, like Takashi, might find this practice limiting, as it shifts focus from their artwork to the reputation of their academic *alma mater* and mentors. For other artists, having graduated from an art school helps legitimize their artist identities, as they learn among other artists, interact and exchange ideas with them, thus reinforcing their artist identities through daily interactions with peers (Lena & Lindemann 2014). Aki is an example of such an artist:

> I went to grad school mostly for visa, but, like, it did… Legitimize my, uhm… Yeah, I think, but just sheer amount of time I devoted for it, I realized, yeah, this is what I'm doing. And then knowing people, teachers, and colleagues, who are devoting their lives to that, I felt very comfortable. Around the time I was graduating, I was like, ok, so this is, this is what I'm doing.
> (A. S., 4 May 2020)

Even though initially going to an art school was not an attempt to consolidate her identity as an artist, Aki realized that the amount of time and resources she dedicated to it, as well as the consolidation of interpersonal relationships of other professionals in the field, eventually made her feel confident with her identity as an artist:

> It later became my core group, you know, or philosophy that I learnt and cultivated through that school became my foundation, my art voice, in a way. <…> I think I only felt comfortable calling myself an artist after grad school.
> (A. S., 4 May 2020)

In other words, for Aki, the resources provided by an art school, particularly human relationships, became instrumental in legitimizing her identity as an artist. Art school was where she found her unique voice as an artist, secured her place in the professional network, and developed a system and an outlook, which later became the basis of her art practice.

Yuko enrolled in an art school later in life. After graduating a business school and spending nearly a decade working in a corporate world, she decided to pursue her dream of becoming an artist. She recollects her thought process:

> And at that point, I was very self-conscious about not pursuing art school. So everybody who said they went to art school, I felt extremely inferior. And I just couldn't talk to them. <…> And I came to the conclusion, that the only way to overcome it is to go to an art school.
> (Y. S., 6 January 2020)

After completing her art degree in New York, she realized that the feeling of inferiority that she has been dealing with was merely a mental block:

> After I've been to art school, I am not afraid of people who went to art school anymore. I mean, I am obviously not (laughing). But I mean, it's like, a funny thing, right? These mental blocks, you know… This fear, how we overcome our fear, sometimes have to make you go through it, it's the only way to overcome it, and once you go through it, it's not anything scary anymore.
> (Y. S., 6 January 2020)

Yuko's conclusion regarding the importance of the art school somewhat resembles Aki's thoughts. More than acquiring technical skills, Yuko found the principal merit of an art school in its environment, which encourages students to understand themselves better and express it in their artwork:

> You know, after I went back to art school, I realized this black box wasn't that mysterious, it's not alchemy to teach. You know, you learn how to draw, how to paint, but the best thing you learn at an art school is, like, if you study with good instructors, it's sort of like, four years of… like, you know, psychotherapy? Understanding who you are. I think it's the most important part of being in art school. You are forced to psychoanalyze yourself, in like, why you do what you do, who you are, and how you put it on paper or canvas.
> (Y. S., 6 January 2020)

Like Yuko, after graduating high school, Shigeno did not pursue his dream of becoming an artist. Instead, following his father's recommendation, he enrolled in a law school and worked in the corporate world for several years. Unlike Yuko, he never went to an art school and continued to work on his artwork independently.

> So I had to make some artworks in my small apartment, and I made some, and I brought them to some galleries, and they all rejected, and they asked me, you know, I told you that, which art school did you graduated. And which party of the art group do you belong to? And did you get any prize or whatever. And there was no way, I thought. Yeah.
> (S. I. 10 November 2020)

At the time, Shigeno felt that he did not graduate from an art school, which prevented him from being recognized by the galleries and other art professionals. However, looking back at this experience now, he feels differently:

> And, actually, at that time, my art was really horrible. You know, that's my excuse. Like, oh, because I didn't graduate art school, and nobody is interested in me and my artworks.
> (S. I., 10 November 2020)

Shigeno's sentiment parallels with Yuko's "feelings of inferiority" compared to the art graduates:

> Because it [was] kind of my complex, actually, that I didn't go to art school, I didn't graduate any art school. <…> But you know, I was young.
> (S. I., 25 July 2021)

Yuko solved this problem by enrolling in an art school, and Shigeno solved it by continuing his art practice. I already mentioned that there is no correct answer to whether one should graduate from an art school to become a professional artist. Some people believe that it is a necessity, while others think that it is not. There is a third domain in which not having an art degree is considered a merit: Outsider art. Outsider art is a self-taught art, often created by ethnic minorities, uneducated, poor, and disabled. It is seen as an opposition to the existing art system, which favors white, straight male artists (Fine 2003). Fine (2003) argues that self-taught outsider art is, at its core, the purest form of identity art, and the life stories and biography of an artist become the primary marketing and sales point.

Art education does not end with an art school. As Hiroya told me, four years of an art school "was not enough" (H. K. 21 July 2021) for him to thoroughly educate himself in art. For him, his day job at a conservation studio became a vital learning resource in terms of acquiring the technical skill and getting more involved in the art scene:

> At my day job, which is conservation studio, I've been working there for probably 12-13 years, but gradually I feel like it was a good lesson for me, like, take an overlook of what art scene is. It was more like, you know, realistic, talking to private gallery owners, or, you know, seeing the scene. I think that's, I feel like I'm still studying in that sense.
> (H. K., 21 July 2021)

Shigeno recollects his experience working as a gallery assistant. On the one hand, the work felt frustrating because instead of focusing on his art, he had to

support other artists, but on the other hand, it provided him with a better comprehension of the art world system and introduced him to a network of other art professionals:

> It's a job for supporting others, actually. But I learnt a lot of things, and because of my boss, he knew collectors, and I went with him to buy artworks, and many famous artists came from Japan, and we had a show in SoHo gallery. I learnt a lot, but yeah…
> (S. I., 10 November 2020)

To sum it up, there is no consensus in society and even among artists regarding the necessity of receiving an art diploma to be a professional artist. Ultimately, the most valuable assets, according to the artists, acquired at an art school are relationships and a safe space for understanding oneself better. Through the daily interactions with their colleagues and mentors, art students tend to consolidate their artist identities faster than the artists who did not go to an art school. Ultimately, receiving an art education is not complete training. It provides the necessary tools and fluency in the art world, while further professional advancement can be achieved from a plentitude of other resources, including but not limited to art-related day jobs.

7.4.3 The starving artist

Artists have a complicated relationship with money. On the one hand, they are expected to be selflessly devoted to art. This expectation, internalized by many artists, has its roots in the myth of art combined with the romantic artist archetype: Art is sacred, and artist is someone who pursues beauty and self-actualization at the expense of their own material needs (Bille et al. 2017; D'Souza & Gurin 2017; Abbing 2002). On the other hand, like everybody else, artists need money to survive, buy art supplies, and pay studio rent.

Some of the artists participating in the current study also believe that making money is not compatible with the identity of an artist: “If I do art for money, that’s not my style. That’s not a painter.” (I. F., 15 April 2020). The artist who makes artwork specifically for sale is considered to be a commercial artist:

> Commercial artist is making art for a client. And then the final decision is made by client, not the artist. But fine artists, they have the final decision. <…> They need to make something that they express to the world, that’s the most important part.
> (S. I., 25 July 2021)

In other words, the difference between being an *artist* artist and a commercial artist is in the type of reward. The commercial artist expects an external reward in the form of financial compensations, fame, or recognition. Non-commercial artist depends on the internal or psychic reward, the pleasure, and joy of creating artwork (Bille et al. 2017; Abbing 2002).

Being motivated externally is frowned upon both by the society and the artist community due to the romanticized notion of an artist and their selfless devotion and commitment to art. At the same time, there is a contradictory expectation for professional artists to survive solely by selling their artwork. Particularly in the Japanese context, “‘professional [artist]’ means ‘earning money,’ and ‘amateur’ means ‘not earning money’” (Shioya 1998, 19). Tadahiro does not necessarily see it that way: “I am not sure about professionally, I mean, yeah. So… Making money is a professional? I don’t know” (T. G., 23 May 2020).

For the majority of artists, finding a balance between the “commercial” and the “selfless” art is not an easy task, as they can relate to both reasonings:

> It's kind of a struggle to go completely sales, towards sell, or… <…> I struggle. Sometimes I am, you know, how I can have freedom, how can I make freedom. Maybe, a grant, or a job, or maybe something else to make money to get the freedom. I have no idea. But just day by day, keep up, up, up. You know. Because, as you know, I am not an established artist with collectors waiting, so I just have to find a way to, how to make time, and, you know, to do what I wanted to do.
> (K. M., 21 May 2021)

Keiko struggles with leaning more towards sales. For her, having money means having the freedom to create more artwork. This sentiment is consistent with Abbing's (2002) argument that as soon as artists reach a sufficient amount of money to make art, they tend to lose interest in earning money. From this perspective, selling art is a part of a creative process, ensuring that the artist can continue making artwork and sustaining a lifestyle that leaves enough time and resources for creativity.

> I want to be able to have a comfortable living, but I don't want to do the work that I don't want to do anymore. So I don't have to do, like, I want to concentrate on my work, but it's not like… Something that I don't have to do, like, I want to concentrate on my work, but it's not like… Something that I have to think about selling. So to make it pure, I just want to combine.
> (S. K., 1 March 2020)

Sonomi's goal is to earn a comfortable living primarily through selling her artwork but not depending on it so much that she would be pressured to create "commercial" pieces for survival, which she believes would make it not "pure." In other words, to keep art "pure," selling art should remain the means of continuing artwork, rather than the end goal. Hiroya shares a similar view:

> The simple answer, I would just have it in my mind is, just the money part, to transact whatever you created into money, you need to use the market. But that doesn't necessary… Make you a better artist, even though your art is selling. I think it's separated. But it's important to… Make a living off your art as an artist, to sell… <…> In the end, I feel like both of them are definitely important.
> (H. K., 21 July 2021)

He believes that while selling artwork is important, good sales do not indicate the quality of the artwork or someone's worth as an artist. Keiko seems to agree with Hiroya. Market success, reviews by the critics, and the actual creative process are often separated:

> That's maybe, I could say, art. <…> It's nice if you want to do something, and then, you know, you get financial support. But sometimes, like, recognition from the critic doesn't… Equal to market success. Because some people are really focused on selling, and, you know, for the rich people, they can decorate with beautiful pieces. So if you have a couple of clients, you can survive, you can pay rent, you can pay food, so it's a lucky case if you want to do that. But in my case it's a little bit more conceptual, so… But the motivation is in me. That's maybe the art. I never think too much about sales. And I don't mind doing some other job, so… But now I don't have my job, so it's kind of stuck. But really.. That's part of, I could say, magic, why… Maybe, because… Some people say, if you can't sell it, why are you making it?
> (K. M., 21 May 2021)

For Keiko, not making art for sale constitutes a "part of the magic" of being an artist. The primary driver behind creating artwork is her motivation from the inside rather than the financial gain. Other artists also note that the process of selling art provides not only monetary but psychological rewards, such as appreciation and recognition by the buyers. Sonomi shares her thoughts:

> Some people [get] really connected [to my art]. Or buy artwork, it's very cool that they want to… Because art, it's not necessary, you cannot really eat, it's not clothes, it's not, like, you have to have space. You don't have to buy art. It's not like a necessary stuff. But somebody actually spends money to it, that's something beyond their, I don't know.
> (S. K., 6 May 2021)

Shigeno has a similar experiences:

> Somebody bought my paintings. I really appreciate it, because, you know, this is my artworks, and it's not made for them, actually. But they say they like it, and they pay, you know. It's… My artwork is not very expensive, but not so cheap. And they pay for that. And I really appreciate that, because I can continue my art activities for some time. I really appreciate. And that is another excitement.
> (S. I., 25 July 2021)

For both Sonomi and Shigeno, other people interested in investing in their artwork have considerable personal significance. It allows space for connection with the people who appreciate their art and serves as a checkpoint of the identity verification process. The "behavioral requirement" of an artist is to produce and sell artwork. When the requirements of a particular role are met and recognized by the others from counter roles (in this case, the buyers), the identity is verified. Successful verification makes them feel positive emotions, or the "internal reward," which in turn reinforces the existing identity (Stets & Burke 2014; Abbing 2002):

> Those situations gave me confidence, and regular exhibitions are really really good. On the business-side, but more on the mental side, actually.
> (S. I., 10 November 2020)

To put it simply, selling artwork feels good because it proves to the artists that they are "legitimate." As it can be seen from Shigeno's quote, situations like that give confidence and feel good mentally because they pass the verification process and increase the salience of the artist identity. However, it is essential to note that artwork sales are not an easy process in balancing the selflessness of creation and the economic benefit of selling and finding and managing the ways to sell the artwork. Some artists find themselves in a constant search of the best market and are attempting to adjust to its needs:

> And again, I am, I am looking for an art market here, and then… My guess is, like, through online, people, the market is getting a little busier, and then.. But then, I kind of doubt, and then… Maybe something cheaper, kind of like prints, some thing that can they can print on demand, online… Those, kid of, criteria, are going to, I feel, get pretty busier, because, as many people are working home, and some people want to change that kind of the room, the atmosphere, so some people are like, they want to have a painting, but not spend much on those kind of decorations, right? So it's going to be, maybe, 200, 300 [dollars] maximum. So… And then, it's getting harder, people are not spending. So art market is going to be a little bit busier. But, like, really, really middle artists, and then… Not so much expensive, not so much… I hope some paintings would be sold, and then it's going to be much easier to survive, and then it will probably then starting some class, nihonga class, and then… Now, I am thinking if I should start an online class, or no.
> (T. H., 4 November 2020)

Depending on the needs of the market and the changing spending habits of potential buyers, Takashi is considering ways in which he could adjust his art practice: perhaps, to launch a series of art prints based on his artwork, or start working more in a smaller scale, or perhaps to begin teaching online classes. Finding potential buyers is not an easy task because, as Sonomi mentioned earlier, art is not "necessary," people do not need art for their survival or basic needs. She also acknowledges the struggles of selling art:

> Selling art is not easy. And you never know, like… I did a lot of shows in the last two years, because I try not to work, and I want to do it. And even though I have more shows, it's not necessary that I sell. I sell, sometimes a lot, sometimes nothing. I cannot really expect to… It's not like, I don't know.
> (S. K., 1 March 2020)

Exhibiting art at galleries or producing merchandise with artwork images are popular ways to sell art. As Sonomi noted, this is associated with uncertainty and a lack of a stable source of income. As a result, the majority of the artists choose to engage in secondary employment, which would secure their financial situation.

The artists' relationship with money is not an easy one and is dictated by a combination of social and cultural meanings embedded in the figure of an artist. Artists are expected to be selflessly devoted to their art, and at the same time to be

able to survive solely from their art practice. Many artists have these expectations internalized, leading to an internal dilemma of balancing the creation of "pure" art and "sellable" art. While the "starving artist" narrative might be an exaggeration, scholars agree that many artists tend to find themselves in relatively low-income situations compared to other professionals (Bille, Løyland, and Holm 2017). As a result, the majority of artists chose to seek additional part-time or full-time employment.

7.5 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to explore how different identities affect the artist identity. In the first section, I presented the implications of belonging to social categories.

During the interviews with the artists, race/ethnicity and gender emerged as the most significant categories. Both ethnic and gender identities, as suggested by the identity theory, provide a social structure, dictate access to resources, and have the power to span across the role identities. Being racialized as "Asian" in the context of the United States had two critical ramifications: 1) as Asians, they were put at the bottom of the American art world hierarchy, which tends to prioritize white and black artists, and 2) as Japanese, they tend to be "orientalized" and perceived as "exotic" by the others.

Some scholars believe gender is conceptualized as having a more substantial impact on a person's experiences than racial/ethnic identity (Alcoff 2006). When identified as a female, it is common across many occupations to face certain disadvantages such as lower pay, less room for professional growth, and prejudice.

However, the research revealed that gender tends to affect artist identities by influencing other role identities indirectly. For example, the social norms and expectations for women with parental or spousal identities are often more demanding than their male counterparts. This may result in limitation of resources (for example, time and energy for mothers, like in Aki's case, or financial dependence on spouse, like in Aomi's case) and more lengthy requirements for successful artist identity verification (such as the internalized need for external sources of identity legitimization, for example, through education), which was not observed among men during the current study.

Another finding that derives from the analysis of this chapter is that competition for resources (time, energy) might occur when two or more identities are activated simultaneously and occupy a similar section (for example, occupation category, and identities of an artist and a worker). Sophia and Takashi's struggle with balancing their day jobs with their artistic practice serves as an illustration for that. However, whether the two identities are within the same section depends on an individual's meanings related to a particular identity. For example, for both Sophia and Takashi, both artist and day job identities involve earning money, while for Yuko and Tadahiro, the artist and job identities are in separate sections because their income relies only on one of them. A similar competition for resources occurs when a voluntary identity (artist) clashes with an obligatory identity (parent, spouse). As we saw in Aki and Aomi's case, their obligatory identities of a parent (Aki) and a spouse (Aomi) clashed with their voluntary identities of artists, preventing them from exercising their artist identity to the extent they would like.

In the case of artists, myth plays a big part in creating and projecting a specific image. The role of myth and identity formation is somewhat similar to the role of a social category. The myth has the power to affect the artist identity and indirectly, through the artist's identity, affect other role identities, such as parent, worker, or migrant.

In short, the relationships between multiple identities are complex, dynamic, and zealous. They are tough to de-tangle due to many individual factors, such as upbringing, character traits, lived experiences, and other social and cultural factors.

Chapter VIII: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The final chapter relates the conceptual framework with the empirical data. The analysis confirmed that the identities are heavily affected by external social factors (Chapter VI) and are in a dynamic relationship with other identities (Chapter VII). This chapter argues that identities constitute a complex overlapping system, highly affected by external socio-cultural factors and individual subjectivities. Identities affect each other both directly and indirectly and are in a reciprocal relationship with the environment. In the case of artists specifically, myth and collective imagination are significant in the identity verification process and might affect the artist's behavior in other roles, such as a spouse, a parent, or a migrant.

Some of the major themes the empirical data analysis revealed were the role of the artist identity in migration behavior; the impact of the socio-cultural and historical factors on the meanings associated with identity; the role of a geographical location and its resources for the consolidation of artist identity; the direct and indirect impact of gender on other identities; the relationship of the artist identity and obligatory identities (worker, parent, spouse); and the impact of the myth on identity verification and expression.

8.2 Identity and place

Identity theory is primarily built upon Mead's symbolic interactionism and its premise that "society shapes self shapes social behavior." According to Stryker's (2000) formula specification, "commitment shapes identity salience shapes role choice behavior." Both Mead's and Stryker's formulas are valid, with a shift in the emphases either towards more sociological or more social psychological perspectives. However, my research findings suggest a lack of attention to the social and cultural context in identity research in Stryker's formula.

The importance of socio-cultural factors and historical context to developing their identities emerged during the interviews with the artists about their migration experiences. It became even more apparent after completing the comparative analysis of the art world development and the social standing of the artists in Japan and Euro-American traditions in Chapter IV. Mainly the reasons for migration and the post-migratory experiences in New York became instrumental in recognizing the significance of socio-cultural context.

8.2.1 "Rational choice" migration and artist identity

Economically speaking, Japan is recognized as a highly developed country. The improvement of the financial situation, therefore, was not the primary factor behind their migration. On the contrary, many respondents understood the financial risks of transitioning to an arts-based career and expected to engage in low-skilled jobs to support their artistic practice. In other words, for Japanese artists, priority was not financial gain. For instance, Aomi's ambition to become a "universal kind of

artist," or Takashi's motivation to move abroad to examine Japanese painting from the perspective of the "outside world" might seem like irrational reasoning because they do not address any particular dissatisfaction with politics, living standards, or insufficient opportunities (O'Reilly 2012). However, I argue that if we examine the migration behavior through the prism of identity theory, it is not, in fact, irrational.

When an identity is salient and prominent, it occupies a high position in the internal identity hierarchy. The higher the identity position, the more often it gets activated across the situations, and the more often it serves as a lens for interpretation and behavior (Stets & Burke 2014). The data reveals that for the majority of the respondents, primary reasons for migration were related to art in one way or another: To learn contemporary art, to understand the juxtaposition of Japanese art and global art, to be able to access art easily, or to develop a career as an artist. It can be concluded that the decision to migrate was conducted with an activated artist identity, and therefore was rational from the point of view of the activated artist identity.

8.2.2 Being an artist in New York City

New York City became an important milestone in the artist identity consolidation among the participants of the study. For approximately half of the respondents, New York was not their primary destination choice, and two participants could be classified as "accidental New Yorkers," who decided to pursue art only after living in New York for some time. Among the artists who made a deliberate choice to migrate to New York with the purpose of art production, however, the attractiveness of New York was based on its image as the "center of the art world."

After living in the city for some time, the majority of the artists recognized the benefits it can offer for their artistic practice, such as flexible job market, network, art events and opportunities, and normalization of an artist as an occupation. These assets are consistent with Florida's (2003, 2005) conceptualization of "creative cities" and provide ample resources for verifying artist identity. The participants recognized and appreciated these resources, which turned into "retain" factors, when analyzing the situation from a migration studies perspective and provided means for consolidating artist identity from an identity theory perspective.

8.2.3 Socio-cultural factors in artist identity consolidation

In Chapter IV, I conducted a brief historical comparison between the development of the artist identities and the art worlds in Japan and Euro-American tradition. Some of the principal differences, deriving from the unique historical contexts of the two regions, are the different structure of the art world, the perception of the artists by the larger society, and, on a more philosophical level, the conceptualization of the aesthetics and the purpose of art.

The cultural and social contrast between Japan and the United States became apparent to the artists after living and working in New York. One ordinary matter pointed out by several artists was the difference in entry into the art world. It is difficult to be accepted into the art community in Japan because "always they ask me which art school did you graduate, something like that" (S. I. 2021). Interestingly enough, the sentiment that the art scene of New York provides more freedom from one's academic background was shared by both self-taught and professionally trained artists. Takashi, who has a doctorate in *nihonga* painting, also expressed his

frustration with the gatekeeping of the art world in Japan: “where you are from, who is your teacher. They kind of study your background first, not the paintings” (T. H. 2020).

Another difference rooted in the socio-historical circumstances of both regions is the social perception of art and artists in society. Takashi, among other participants, pointed out that “America, or New York, has considered artists as a job [unlike Japan] <…> That is why I like it [in New York], actually” (T. H. 2020). Identity theory suggests that when the internal image of self matches the way others perceive us, it results in successful identity verification, which increases our self-esteem, and increases the salience of identity, moving it up the identity hierarchy. Compared to the Japanese society which “doesn’t understand contemporary art” (A. K. 2021), and therefore does not understand what exactly artists are doing and why they are doing it. The social perception of artists in New York provides a more favorable environment for artist identity verification and, in the case of Sonomi and Tadasuke, artist identity formation.

8.2.4 Development of a “New York artist” identity

In identity studies, geographical location has long been overlooked by scholars. The term “place identity” refers to “memories, ideas, feelings, <…> meanings, <…> and experiences” related to a particular physical location or a setting, filled this gap (Proshansky et at. 1983). While criticized for being theoretically weak and lacking evidence that it holds the same level of importance as other aspects of identity, place identity is perceived as a good starting point for geographically-

oriented identity research. It might fit into more developed identity theories, such as social identity theory (Huage 2007).

My findings suggest that New York City's place identity fits into the definition of a group identity, as theorized in identity theory. First, it represents a structure. Second, it dictates rights and obligations, and third, it provides access to resources and relationship networks (Stets and Burke 2014). The majority of artists decided to migrate to New York City for cultural production, with their artist identities activated when making the decision. The resources available in New York City, such as professional networks, opportunities, flexible job market, and social acceptance, played an imperative role in artist identity verification for many. For others, New York City became the primary place of artist identity conception, where they have just begun their artistic journeys.

As it can be observed from the examples above, artist and place identities were often activated simultaneously. Identity theory suggests that identities that are often activated together may overlap and develop shared meanings. This was the case with several participants, who developed distinct "New York artist" identities based on the importance of New York to their self-image as artists. In other words, place identity fits well into identity theory, as it frames the access to resources and, similarly to other aspects of identity, is in a dynamic relationship with other elements of the identity structure.

8.3 Managing multiple identities

The recognition that the self comprises multiple identities has been in the scientific community since the late 19th century. Several attempts have been conducted to theorize the structure and dynamics between the identities within the self. However, there is still a severe lack of qualitative empirical studies that would focus on more than two aspects of identity at a time. One of the current research goals was to address this gap and explore the connections between multiple identities, particularly their relationship to artist identity.

In this section, I would like to emphasize three points that emerged from the analysis of the empirical data. First, the different ways of identity conflict management; second, the direct and indirect imprint of gender identity on artist identity; and lastly, the significance of myth and collective imagination on identity verification and expression.

8.3.1 Resource conflict among occupational and artist identities

This thesis is designed on the premise that people have multiple identities. Identity theory differentiates between three bases of identity: Group identities, role identities, and personal identities. The majority of identities are role identities. They emerge through interactions with the holders of the counter-roles, such as parent-child, student-teacher, husband-wife. If several role identities are activated simultaneously, they can enhance one another or conflict with one another.

It was established in the earlier chapters that the absolute majority of the artists hold two or more jobs (Lena & Lindemann 2014, Bain 2005). The data

suggests that being an artist can sometimes be included in occupational identity, while other times it can be excluded, depending on the subjective perceptions of the research participants. Some artists might see their day job as an integral part of their lifestyle as an artist. For others, it might be merely a source of money to sustain their art practice, and yet for others, it might occupy an entirely different identity aspect. The findings suggest that the artists' subjective perceptions of their day jobs substantially impact how their occupational identities interact with their artist identities, whether they conflict with them, enhance them, or have little to no effect.

One of the most popular employment options among artists is teaching art. Literature is abundant on the identity conflict caused by artist and art teacher identities, emphasizing the identity conflict stemming from the differences in skill sets, expectations, and social status (Hennekam 2017, Hatfield et al. 2006, Zwirn 2006, Anderson 1981, Orsini 1973). However, the experiences of the participants of the current study were not entirely concordant with these studies. While often there was a degree of identity conflict, its primary source was traced not the different expectations or social status but rather to the conflict of interest and resources, such as time, energy, and money.

8.3.2 Direct and indirect imprint of gender on artist identity

One of the more prominent identity bases is social categories. Social categories encompass visible identities that are not easy to change or alter, such as gender and race. These identities span horizontally across other identity categories because they have the power to affect other identities in the majority of situations.

The research findings suggest that gender overall has more impact on artist identity than race/ethnicity. Similar to race/ethnicity, gender can impact artist identity directly. For example, identifying and being perceived by society as a female directly affects artist identity in less professional opportunities, societal bias, and pigeon-holing women artists as "hobbyists" or "bored housewives."

Unlike race/ethnicity, gender identity can indirectly affect artist identity through other identities, such as spouse, worker, parent, or migrant. For example, gender affects spousal identity, as social roles and expectations for wives are often different from role expectations for husbands. Wives are often expected to give up their career aspirations, support the husband, and perform more housework responsibilities. In Aomi's situation, we can see how gender identity indirectly impacts artist identity through her identity as a wife:

> [My] teacher is a craftsman, and he always says, you are not professional, you are not professional, you cannot become professional, always keep saying that. Because I'm a housewife.
> (A. K., 8 April 2020)

In this quote, Aomi expresses her frustration with not being perceived as a professional artist. Her teacher's and her husband's image did not match her self-perception as an artist, thus failing the identity verification process.

Other examples of indirect influence of gender would include the inability to make the "total commitment" to art, something that is expected from an "ideal" artist (Miller 2016), due to gendered parental responsibilities; difficulties in pursuing a career in a conservative patriarchal society or a male-dominated industry, and the subsequent decision to migrate; internalized social norms and gendered upbringing

which encourages women to seek legitimization more than men from external sources, such as academic credentials (Bain 2004).

8.3.3 The role of the myth in identity verification and expression

Apart from being individual actors, artists belong to an imagined community of artists who share similar beliefs, values, myths, and expected behavior patterns. According to social identity theory, however, dispersed, each group has a prototype or an imaginary character with attributes and characteristics of an "ideal" group member. The characteristics of a prototype vary individually depending on the context. However, it tends to have some common themes. In identity theory, the expectations and social norms attributed to identity are conceptualized as identity meanings.

The artists tend to be particularly affected by such myths and expectations due to unregulated work environments and the inability to intermingle with peers and adopt a shared workplace culture (Bain 2005). One of the few environments, when artists get a chance to interact with their colleagues consistently daily is an art school, and that way, art graduates are "trained to belong" in the art world (Lena & Lindemann 2014). The sense of belonging (more than an art degree) becomes a valuable asset for the artists, as it helps legitimize the artist's identity in the eyes of others. Exhibiting characteristics associated with the prototype serves as proof of one's legitimacy as an artist as well.

Many stereotypes can be traced back to a particular historical moment. For instance, a widespread archetype of a tortured, eccentric male genius is an image that became popular from the Renaissance. An example quality of an "ideal" artist is to be

selflessly devoted to art. This often translates into some other stereotypes, such as "starving artist," "bohemian lifestyle," and creating art "for the soul, not for money," and as a result might alter behavior in other dimensions of life, to match more closely the prototype of the artist.

8.3.4 Multiple identities and human subjectivities

Each individual has a unique set and juxtaposition of identities, depending on personal characteristics, lived experiences, upbringing, exposure to particular cultures and societies, and other circumstantial factors. As I began analyzing the empirical data, it became clear that the identity processes highly depended on a combination of personal and circumstantial factors. For example, the different ways the artists managed occupational and artist identities (Chapter VII section 7.3.4), the ways they addressed identity conflict between voluntary and obligatory identities (Chapter VII section 7.3.3), or to which extent they embraced the artist trope in their lives (Chapter VII sections 7.3.1, 7.4.1 and 7.4.3), all depended on their personal history, character, and past experiences.

The majority of research conducted within the framework of identity theory utilizes quantitative methodology. Among the many benefits quantitative studies provide, sometimes they can be dismissive of human subjectivities. The methodology chosen to conduct this research was based on biographical narratives and in-depth interviews with the participants, which provided more depth and complexity to understanding their occupational identities and, at the same time, more ambiguity. While it was not easy to find a balance between theoretical generalizations and the abundance of human subjectivities, I felt it was essential to showcase the complexity

and ambiguity of human experiences.

8.4 Concluding remarks

I began this thesis with Jackson Pollock's quote: "Every good artist paints what he is." As we analyzed the empirical data, it became apparent that "what he is" is a complex dynamic structure of identities. The artists participating in this study hold many identities: Asian, Japanese, men, women, migrants, artists, workers, children, parents, spouses, and New Yorkers, to name a few. All these identities are further shaped by their identities and external circumstances. The variety and complexity of artists' identities became challenging in generating common principles of identities' interaction.

One of the significant findings is the complexity itself. The qualitative approach became instrumental in discovering artists' subjectivities and the impact of socio-cultural factors on identity formation and expression. This methodological decision helped me reveal a more nuanced and refined view on identity formation and interaction, which was not emphasized in identity theory research, prioritizing quantitative methods.

The research also found the dynamism of gender identity and its ability to influence an identity directly and indirectly, through other (mostly obligatory) identities, primarily due to the internalization of gendered social norms. Finally, the mythology of artist identity emerged as one of the influential factors in artist identity verification and expression.

I believe that the current study sets an important precedent of a qualitative empirical study in identity research. Some potential future research directions might include designing a combined quantitative and qualitative multiple identity study by asking the participants to provide a rank order of their salient identities (similar to Uemura's (2011) study) prior to the in-depth interviews. Another direction might be exploring the direct and indirect impact of gender identity in other groups and communities. Yet another potential area might concern a more thorough examination of how myths and social tropes affect an identity.

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Appendices

Appendix I. List of artists

Initials	**Full Name**	**Dates of the interviews**
A. S.	Aki Sasamoto	2020/05/04, 2020/12/18, 2021/07/22
A. K.	Aomi Kikuchi	2020/04/08, 2020/10/31, 2021/07/25
H. K.	Hiroya Kurata	2020/08/07, 2020/11/10, 2021/07/21
I. F.	Isaac Fujiki	2020/04/15
K. M.	Keiko Miyamori	2020/03/05, 2021/05/21
M. L.	Maho Laplante	2020/02/21, 2020/11/16, 2021/08/31
S. Y.	Sato Yamamoto	2020/03/02, 2020/11/16
S. I.	Shigeno Ichimura	2020/11/10, 2021/07/25
S. K.	Sonomi Kobayashi	2020/03/01, 2020/11/06, 2021/05/06
S. C.	Sophia Chizuco	2020/03/17, 2020/11/01, 2021/05/14
T. G.	Tadahiro Gunji	2020/05/23, 2020/11/14, 2021/07/14
T. J.	Tadasuke Jinno	2020/05/08, 2020/12/12, 2021/07/14
T. H.	Takashi Harada	2020/03/17, 2020/11/04
Y. S.	Yuko Shimizu	2021/01/06

Appendix II. Japanese eras table

縄文時代	*Jōmon jidai*	14,000 BCE – 300 BCE
弥生時代	*Yayoi jidai*	300 BCE – 250
興奮時代	*Kōfun jidai*	250–550
飛鳥時代	*Asuka jidai*	538–710
奈良時代	*Nara jidai*	710–794
平安時代	*Heian jidai*	794–1185
鎌倉時代	*Kamakura jidai*	1185–1333
室町時代	*Muromachi jidai*	1336–1573
安土桃山時代	*Azuchi-Momoyama jidai*	1560–1600
江戸時代	*Edo jidai*	1603–1868
明治時代	*Meiji jidai*	1868–1912
大正時代	*Taishō jidai*	1912–1926
昭和時代	*Shōwa jidai*	1926–1989
平成時代	*Heisei jidai*	1989–2019
令和時代	*Reiwa jidai*	2019–

Appendix III. Informed consent statement

_____, you are invited to participate in a series of research interviews organized as a part of my doctoral research. I am currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Tsukuba, researching artists, migration, and identity.

As my thesis is focused on the experiences of artists, born and raised in Japan, who lived in New York City for more than one year at the time of the study, I would like you to share your life stories and your experiences as an artist living and working in this city.

If you agree to participate in this research, I will conduct several rounds of interviews that last approximately one to two hours, depending on the conversation flow. With your permission, I would like to make an audio recording of our discussion. At any point during or after the interview, you may request me to delete the recorded data from the interview.

In the majority of the studies, similar to this, the participants' real names are usually anonymized. However, there are studies in which participants are willing to keep their real names. As we will be discussing your artwork, please let me know your preferences regarding the name you would like me to use in the thesis. You can change your mind regarding this and let me know at any time before my final submission, and I will make the necessary adjustments.

If you prefer to have this information in a written form, I shall prepare a written consent form.