

Critique

The artwork presented was a series of three drawings by the artist as a way to reimagine herself as a manga character. Each of the characters had their own style and were from different manga narratives. The artist also tried to explore varying degrees of masculine, and feminine characteristic on each of the characters. While the artist thought thoroughly about each character's personality, it's unclear if she thought as thoroughly about the presentation of her artwork, or backstories as well.

First, the drawings are in black and white, none of the characters have any color, nor was a possible color scheme mentioned in her presentation. While leaving the pictures black and white leaves room for imagination for the viewer, it doesn't help in terms of helping us, the viewer, but these characters into the greater narrative of the manga. Color would of helped convey time period, further develop personality, and make the character's relatable to the viewer. Also during her presentation why was only one character's name said? This made it confusing and hard to follow. As for the original artwork, not the finished "collecting cards" why did the artist choose to only one character drawn into a scene? I think the artwork could have benefitted from all characters being drawn into a scene so that we could place them better; and if each original drawing had background the series would be more cohesive. Lastly, why did the artist make new characters when she could have just changed existing ones?

The first character presented in the series was Ali Wistalia. Ali is an academic, explorer, and Prince Zen Wistalia's older sister, which makes her a princess in the grand narrative of *Snow White with the Red Hair*. I wouldn't say that Ali is a feminine or masculine character. Her dress is not traditionally feminine especially for a story that takes place where horses are still the main mode of transportation, and princes and princesses are part of social dichotomy. But considering that another character in the story, Kiki, is one of the Zen's aides, who also enjoys sword fighting, and protects Zen, having a princess who could do the same and have her own autonomy in this kingdom is believable. What I question is the princess being engaged to another woman, specifically the head Herbalist who works for her. Granted, we don't know her fiancé's past or social status, but I'm skeptical that a kingdom that disapproves of their prince marrying a commoner would they silently let their princess marry a woman.

The second character in the series is Racheal Harper, Elanor Campbell's older sister and daughter of a Viscount. She is dress for a ball, and her ball gown would have benefitted from color. She does look like most women in the manga series, sort of plain and nothing sticks out about her in the artwork, besides the lace detailing and tight lip, and she does not look like she wants to be at the ball. What sticks out is her personality on the back of the "collecting card". She is not like her younger sister Elanor who is just trying to find a husband and does not that much, or her older sister the Countess Mildrake who is independent and outspoken. Racheal Harper seems almost too independent, especially since she has her own shipping business. While women were governesses, tutoring kids from the gentry and above, it is highly unlikely that she would have the education to start and manage her own company

The last character in the series is Kyo Inari and is the least believable characters created by the artist. Maybe the artist was channeling her angsty teenage years, but Kyo seems too angry

to be a shojo character. Also, while there is male-male relationship in Tanemura's original work, it seems highly unlikely that there would be an openly lesbian character in a shojo story.

However, if the artist only intended for the Shizumasa, the student council president, to know that she was interested in women, or if he caught her, then I would believe Kyo a bit more. In the character profile for Kyo there are unanswered questions such as: what line of business will she take over? Or where is she going to college?

This project would benefit from color to give characters more depth. Lastly, it would also help if we could see these characters interacting with characters from the original storyline. I wonder how this project would benefit from redrawing pages from the manga, or creating an arc with her characters in the greater narrative of the manga.

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