

# Symmetry: Culture and Science

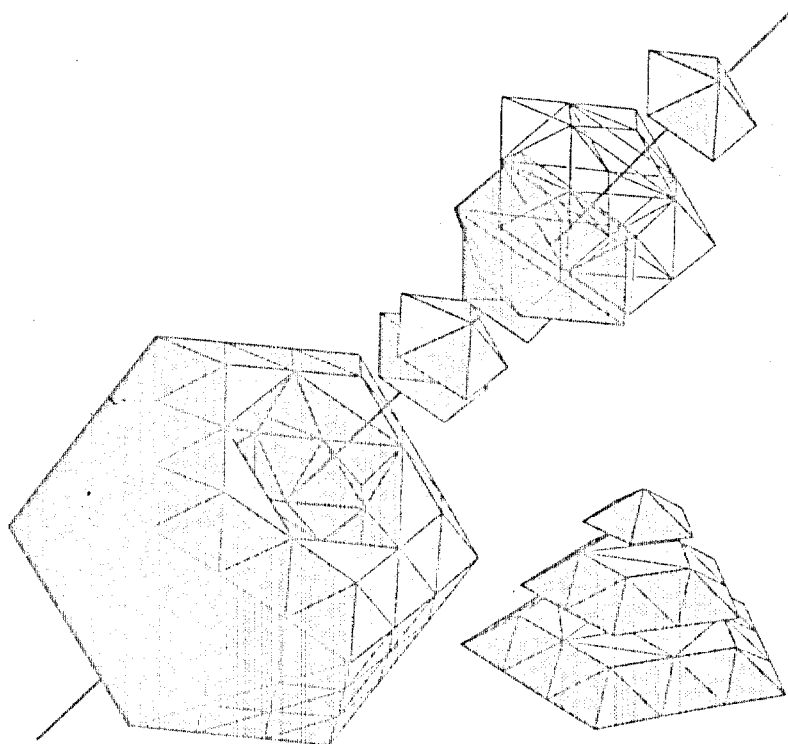
© ISIS-SYMMETRY

**Symmetry of Patterns, 2**

The Quarterly of the  
International Society for the  
Interdisciplinary Study of Symmetry  
(ISIS-Symmetry)

Editors:  
György Darvas and Dénes Nagy

Volume 3, Number 2, 1992



A FEW THOUGHTS AROUND THE INSTALLATION JAPANESE GRAFFITI

Per Hüttner

c/o Sweger, Baggensg. 14, 111 31 Stockholm, Sweden

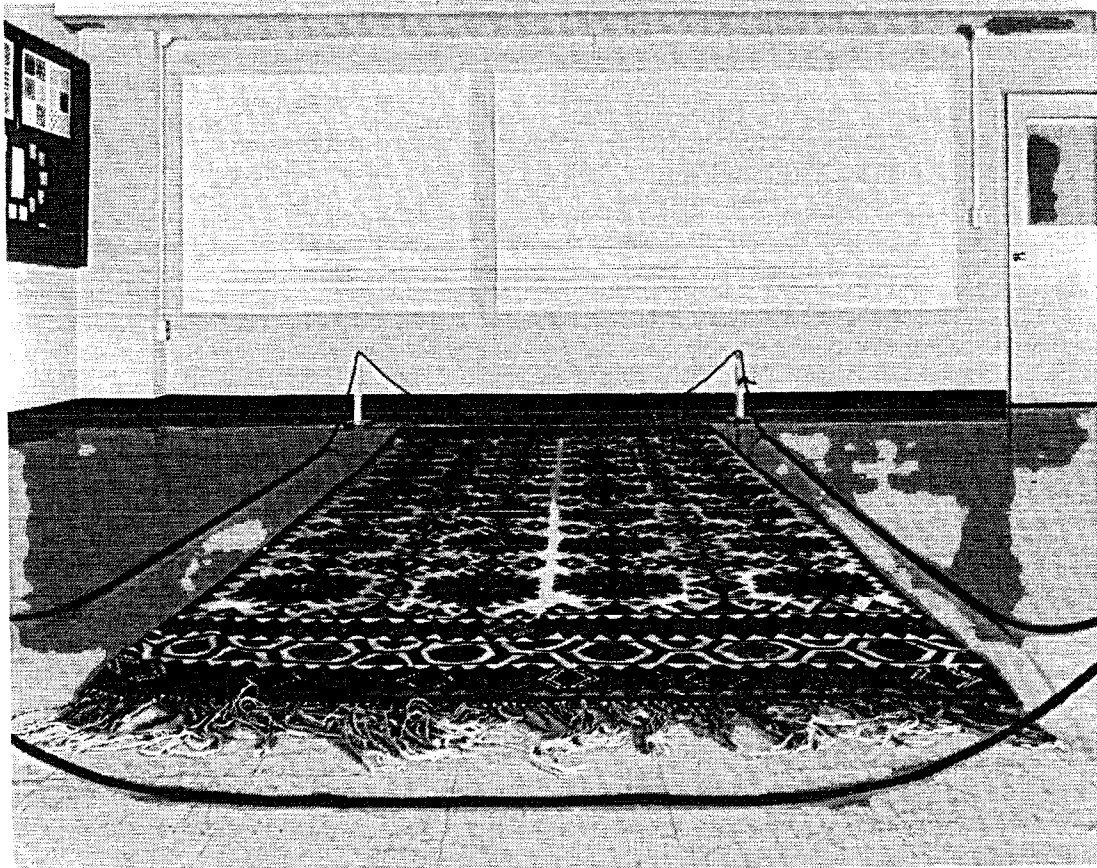
My artistic work revolves around the concept of the body/individual and it's relation to social and political power structures. In my site specific installations I often use medical science as a startingpoint to trigger philosophical reasonings around western democracy and it's relation to the media, ethics (religious leftovers) and science.

I often use the concept of quantum mechanichs metamorphosed in many different forms in my work. To have two contradictory concepts parallelly that both can be true depending on the viewing point of the beholder, creates an extremely interesting symmetry. This symmetry is a lot more powerful than that created by sheer abolition of absolute truth or the concept of the ideal, which has been the focus of a lot of attention in contemporary art in recent years.

When one accepts this plurality of truths one becomes free to juxtapose contradictory statements or to mix elements with no apparent connotation to previously unseen contextual units. This gives the artist and the beholder keys to read, or visualize patterns that never before have been seen in human cultural behavior. The best example of this so far is the midi-technics and what it has meant to contemporary black music.

So in one respect one can regard my installation "Japanese Graffiti" as a Hip Hop version, or more pointedly a remix, of a problem that has been a central theme in my work for a long time - the relationship between rational and emotional. These two enteties could be represented by a large number of other opposites or simply by the two hemisperes of the brain. In the installation I've chosen the latter to express this duality. I've copied excerpts from a paper by Professor S.F. Witelson of the Mc Master University, Hamilton, Canada on the functional asymmetries in the human brain. I have copied these texts in for direction to create a pattern. This pattern turned to be very similar to that of details in Turkish rugs. I evolved this to not simply copying the texts on top of details from various rugs but also to include the actual rug as an integrated part of the installation. The prescence of a 19th century rug together with the visual distortion of the texts challanges our conception of cultural conventions. Not only does it force us to question cultural borders and the eurocentricity of these conception, but it is also questioning our preconceptions about signs outside the written language as a means of communication.

The primary reason for using science as a metaphor and as an integrated part in my work is to try and understand our cultural inhibitions. We have taken aboard a great deal of misconceptions about nature, which seems to create a problem in our relation to our bodies. Christian ethics clearly states that we're above nature. This seems to be refering to the mind and we're stuck with our bodies that is still on the other side. It is a problem that's been dicussed since the concept of mind was brought alive, but maybe if we can reestablish the symmetry between mind and body if we learn to take aboard more contradictory information. And not constantly be refering to our mind but sometimes give our bodies a chance.



Japanese Graffiti, 1992, approx. 5x2x5 m, ink on paper and 19th century Central Anatolian Kilim rug, Installed at Synergetics Institute, Hiroshima, Japan. The rug by kind permission of J. P. Willborg AB, Stockholm.