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The Trans/Nationalism in Japanese Craft Design in the 21st Century

In his book *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism* (2002), Iwabuchi Kōichi observes an ironic phenomenon that Japanese popular culture serves to recenter Japan in Asia and propagate modern 'Japaneseness' yet is not in contradiction with transnational cultural flow. Iwabuchi's problematisation of trans/nationalism which exports nationalism transnationally challenges the theories of those who have a utopic hope for transnational diversity. This paper explores this phenomenon of trans/nationalism and the visual discourse of 'authenticity' in the field of design (i.e. craft design) in Japan in the 21st century. Branding and rebranding of the national-style will be discussed with particular focus on the two government-led projects: 'Japan Brand' and 'Japanesque Modern'.