



Report on International High School Arts Festival 2012 in Japan
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Going to Japan, has been the most enriching trip I have ever been on and I am very grateful to have this valuable experience. Through out this trip, I got to experience much of the Japanese culture and their lifestyle. I strongly feel that learning the culture and lifestyle of others, can benefit me in terms of my art as art is very much influenced by them. Many of my favorite artists like Van Gogh have reflected their influence of the Japanese culture in their work.

Japan is very different from Singapore and I was not expecting it, although I prepared myself before the trip for it. It is a whole new experience and is something one had to experience for them. One surprise I got from Tokyo was that everyone there is very friendly and helpful towards us, and I was very surprised by that. In Singapore, it is rare to see people who are genuinely helpful and sincere about it but in Japan, it is their way of life.

I have always wondered why Japanese designers designed their products in a way that is very simple, yet functional and user friendly and I realized that they are influenced by the Japanese lifestyle and the unconscious thoughts of people's actions. For example, when people eat out, they need a place to put their bags. Usually in Singapore, people place their bags either on their laps, on the floor or sling it around the backrest of their chair, however the Japanese came up with a ledge in which customers can place their bags under the table so as to allow them to enjoy their food and eat comfortably. The ledge is compact and thus does not take up much space yet perform its function well. I like how most of the things in Tokyo is very simplified, unlike Singapore or other parts of Japan. This again has to do with Tokyo's culture and lifestyle of the people living there. Tokyo is filled with city life, filled with busy people bustling around going about their routines, therefore does not have much time for leisure and does not care much for complicated designs. Thus, most of their products are simplified and minimized to the basics of what the product is about. This is evident through Japan's major store brands like Muji and Uniqlo. Muji is famous for their simplicity yet very functional products and Uniqlo, for their clothing basics.

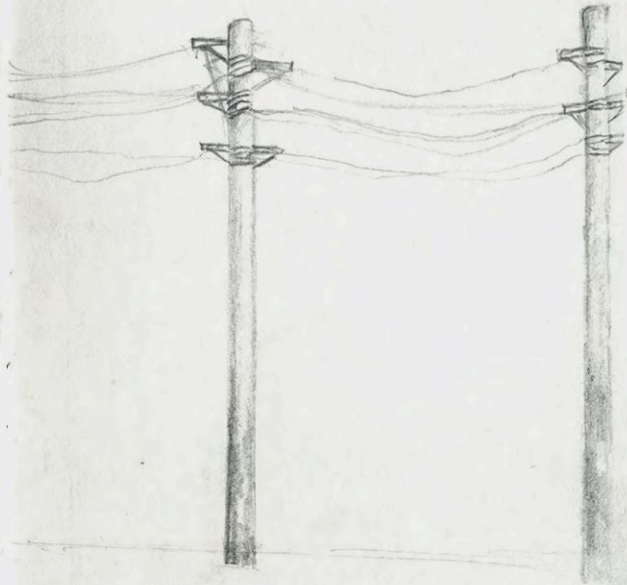
Throughout the trip, I found myself analyzing many things and from my observations around Tokyo, I found myself learning much more than what I can learn within the four walls of the classrooms. It is a totally different learning experience when you are viewing the objects with your own eyes, interacting with it and probably exploring with it through little 'experiments' than viewing them in pictures. In classrooms, it is much more limiting and restricting as whatever we learn, is from what the teacher teaches, in other words through the teacher's perspectives. This trip also helped me improve my skills in observation and exploration. I learned how to make more in depth observations and also how to apply those observations into my daily life and my art classes. In school, we only make observations when we are instructed or have a reason to do so, however from my trip, I learned to make those observations myself and have also cultivated a habit out of it.

I also got to visit many famous museums like design 21-21, the building that showcases products from plus minus zero and the Mori art museum and was very lucky they were exhibiting some very interesting exhibits of various artists. I enjoyed my trip to viewing the plus minus zero products because although I have viewed the exhibits in pictures, I never understood why the products were something worth admiring, however after interacting with them, I finally understood why. The products were created very seamlessly and even though they carry very simple designs, it is very pleasing to the eye. I also enjoyed the sculptures placed around Roppongi area, as I was very fascinated with the locations chosen for the works. I never knew how placement and the environment could affect the artwork till then.

This trip was filled with a lot of out of the box learning experiences and along with that, I learned to capture and record those observations down through my sketchbook. I also learned that learning is not limited to allocated places such as classrooms or museums but it is everywhere one goes to.

I got to learn so much over the short 5 days I got to spend there. I never would have thought how much I could learn overseas and I am truly grateful for this exposure.

Japan. 2012. 07.5 - 2012. 07.9.



wires commonly seen
around Tokyo.

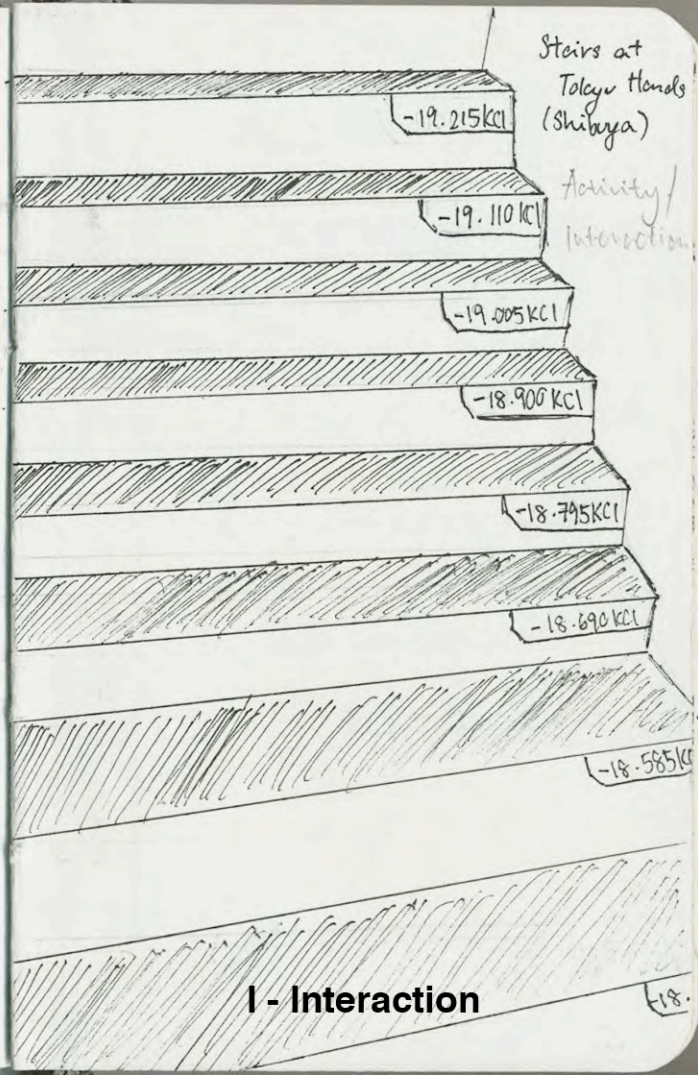
E - Environment

*environment different.
*placements differ.



Like many places, Tokyo has many of these wired poles and it is very common to sight them. Although they are pretty much the same (in appearance) with the poles from example Bangkok, I find them extremely interesting.

I feel like they compliment the surroundings in Tokyo unlike Bangkok where they look like an eyesore.

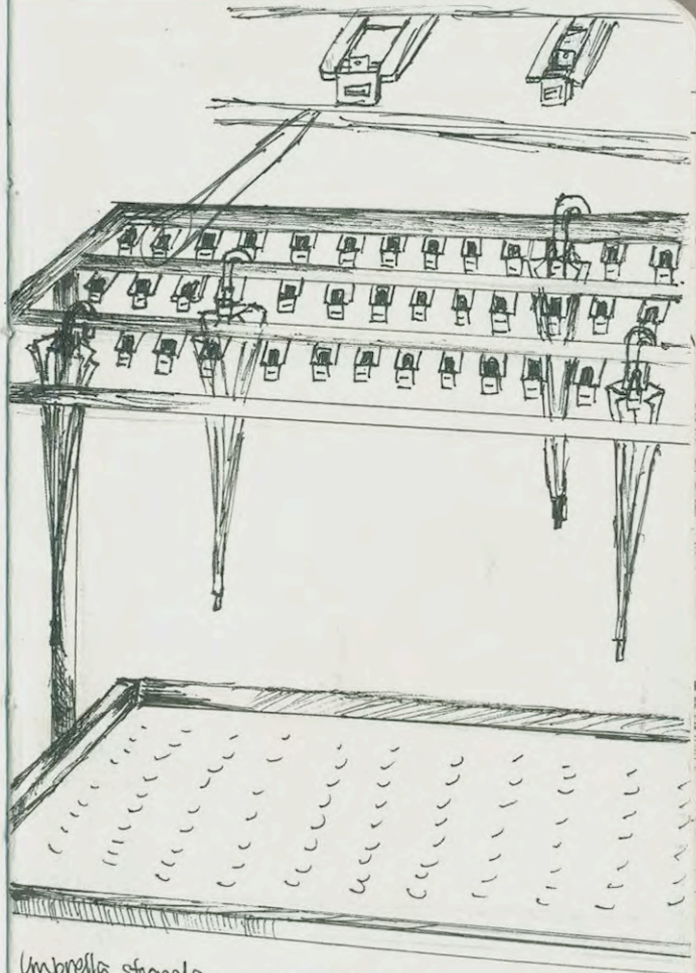


I never thought by adding on a label, I would actually have fun climbing stairs.

Many women today, even with their obsession with weight rates/dislike climbing the stairs. I myself really dislike climbing stairs, I find it exhausting and everytime I am required to climb stairs, my mood shifts immediately to reluctance and annoyance.

This label $\sqrt{- \text{ } KCI}$ found on the steps gave me the activity a twist, an exciting one that could change people's idea or feelings towards climbing stairs.

I strongly feel they should have it in our school where there are stairs everywhere.



Umbrella stands.

U - Users

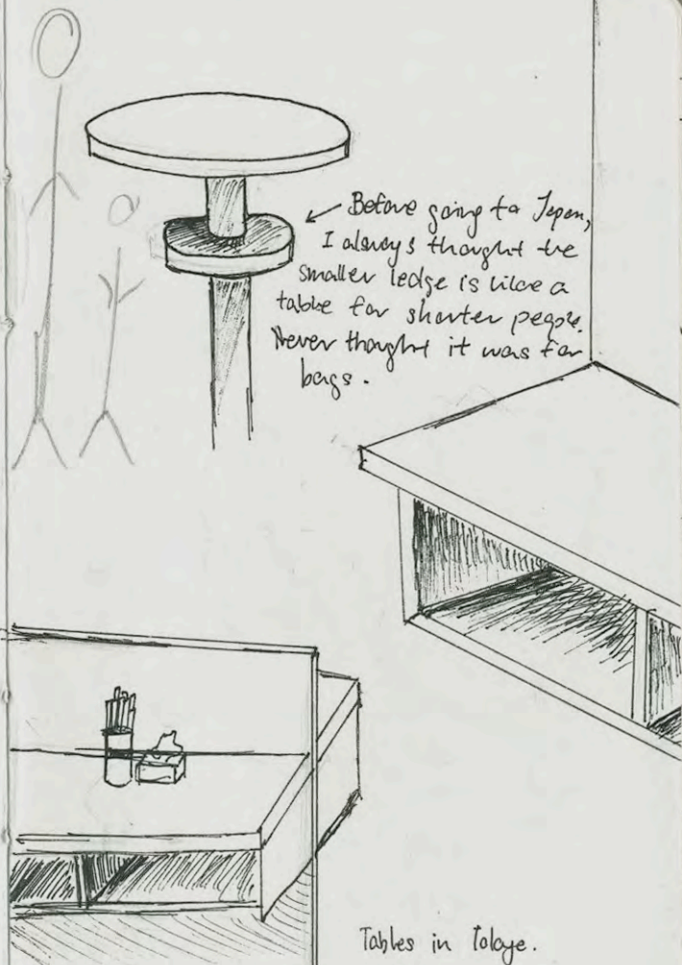
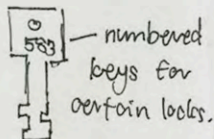
Umbrella stands like this can be found almost everywhere around buildings/shops. It stores many umbrellas at once and keeps them safe.

Although many might feel that the lock and key provided is to prevent people from stealing your umbrella, I feel that it also avoids mix ups.

There can be a chance that people have the same umbrella therefore with 'allocated' slots there will not be any confusion.


* simple. (user friendly)

* secure. (safe).



A - Activities

#1. Japanese designers really take into account the uses while designing their products. Most of the tables I see have a ledge for people to put their bags so that they do not need to worry about their bag while eating. This allows the customers to fully enjoy their meal.

Usually people place their bags behind them, over the chair  or on their lap however it is not exactly ~~very~~ very comfortable. Or else they'll leave their bags on the floor.

The ledge under the tables are not space consuming yet they are able to temporarily 'store' your bags. It's a simple yet practical idea.

*2. Most of the tables in Dote / food stores are standing tables. Most of the patrons to these shops are business men / women who are in great hurry (especially in the morning)

* convenient for them and standing tables can 'fit' more people.



it curves up to provide a 'stool'

normal saucers.



it curves in.

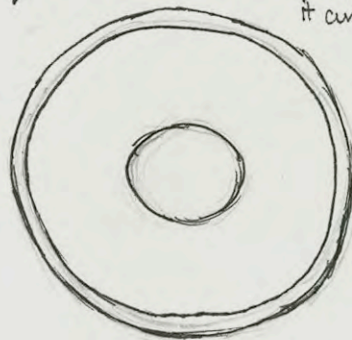


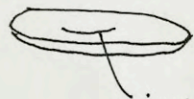
Plate design.

O - Objects

The saucer curves up in the middle to provide a stand for the cup. *Different from regular saucers.



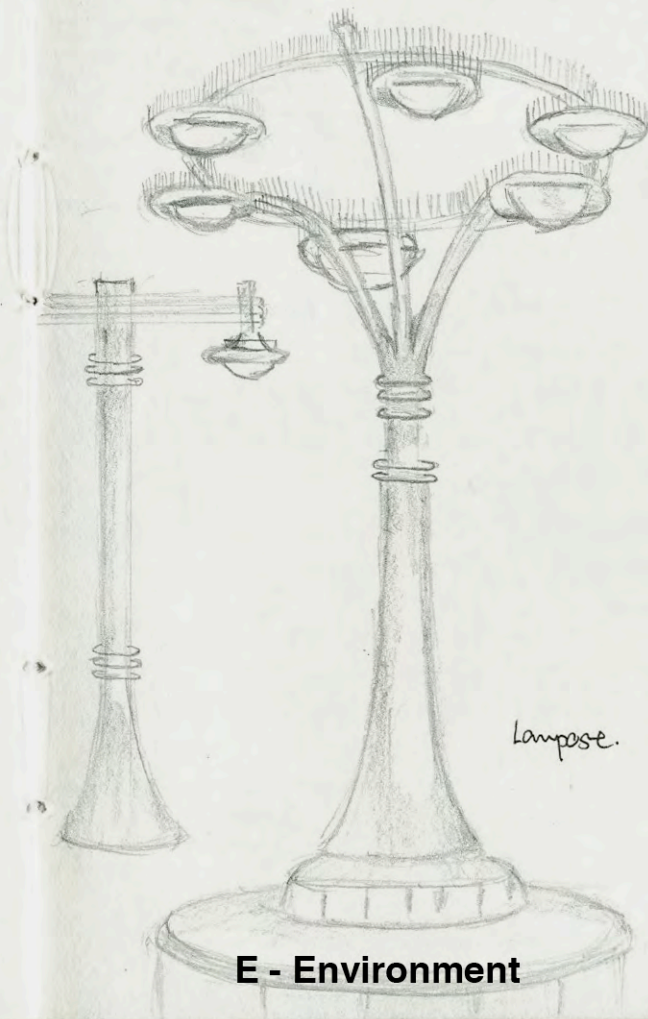
design.



regular.



just curves in.

what does the extra protrusion do?



Lampose.

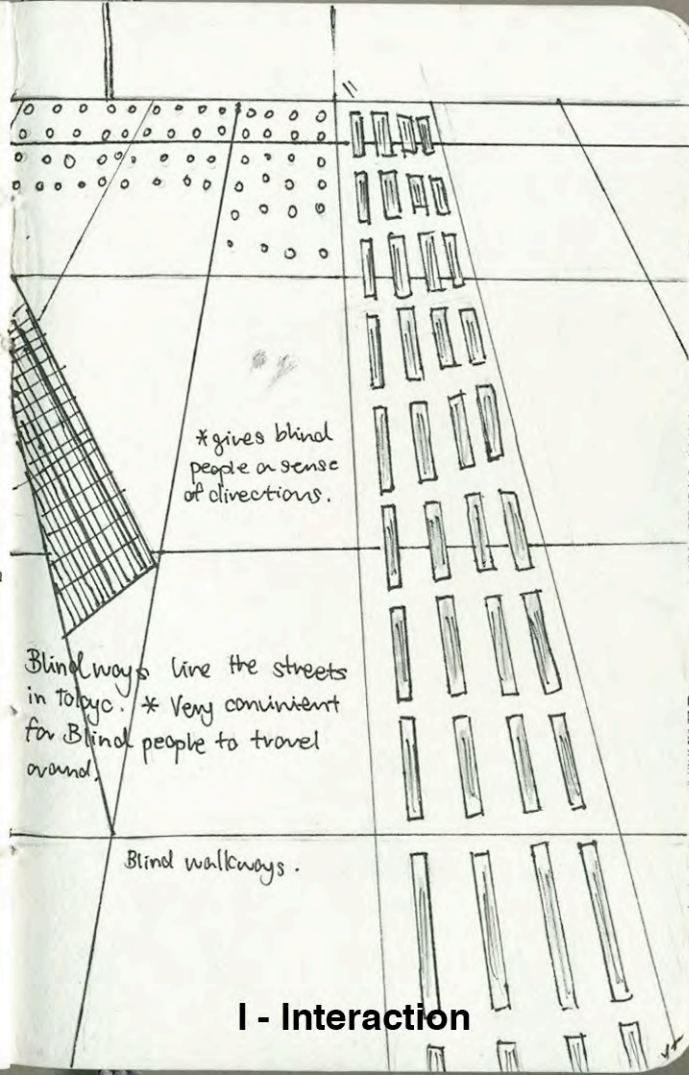
E - Environment

I was very surprised how firstly there was spikes on the lampost and secondly how the shape was  unlike the other lamposts in the area  which were more T-shaped.

However than I realise there was a seating area underneath the lampost which surrounds the lampost. The spikes prevent birds from landing and realising waste on anyone sitting on the seats, while the structure ensured that the seating area is generally protected from bird wastes or them dropping onto anyone.

* The spikes prevent droppings on anyone's head however does not mean the seating area is free from bird droppings.

! the birds can land on the seats.

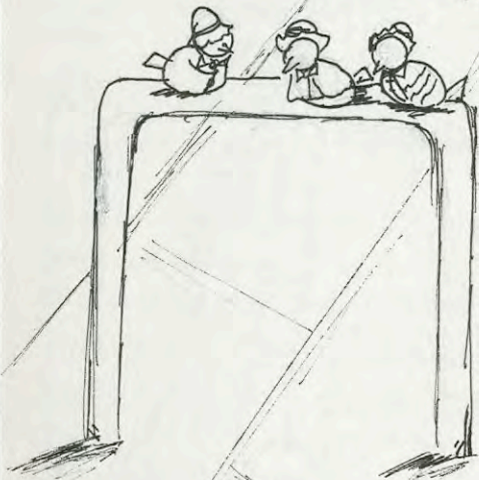


* gives blind people a sense of directions.

Blind ways line the streets in Tokyo. * Very convenient for Blind people to travel around.

Blind walkways.

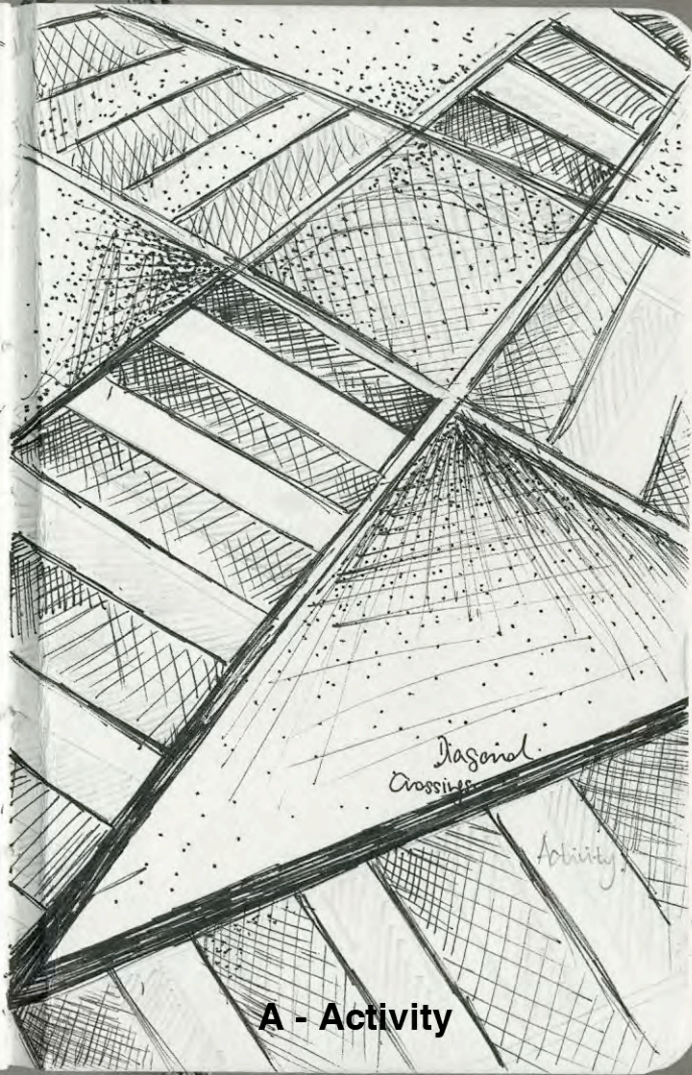
I - Interaction



* It was a very interesting sight to see metal birds embedded into the metal barrier. And they were clothe. It draws attention to it and the area around it.

Sculptures on barriers.

O - Object



Diagonal
Crosslines

Activity

A - Activity

Japan, other than their food, culture, sights, they are also quite famous for their diagonal crossing.

Diagonal Crossings makes it convenient for pedestrians and it also save time.

Singapore.



you have
to cross 2 traffic
lights
when you can
just go diagonally.

Japan.

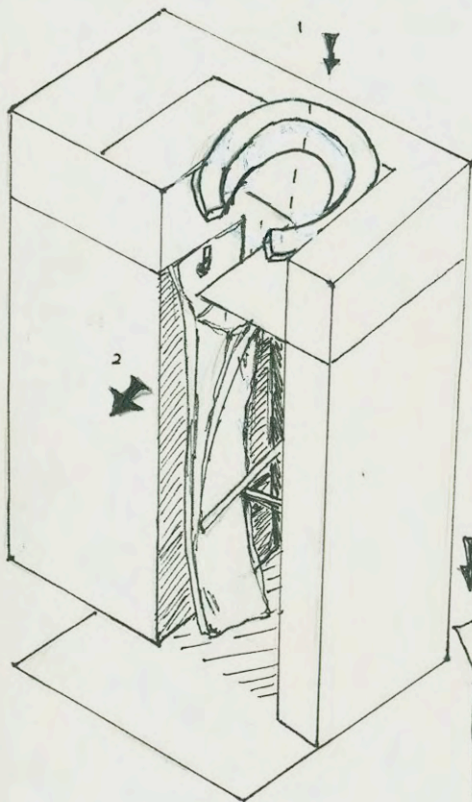


Save time.



good for Japan's
busy. → lifestyle.

2 easy steps.

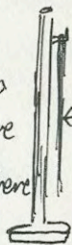


U - Users



This plastic disposal is very different from those in Singapore.

The ones in Singapore have to be placed manually unlike the stand in Japan where you can place your wet umbrella in a plastic bag in 2 easy steps.

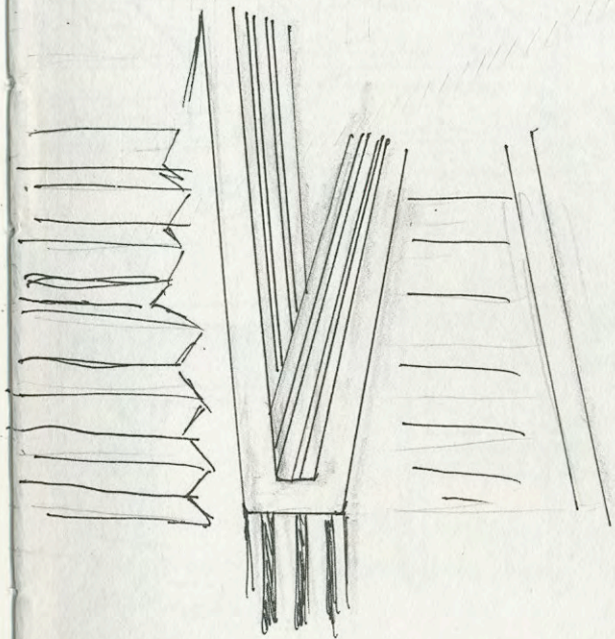


← plastic.

* ~~saves~~ saves time. Efficiency.



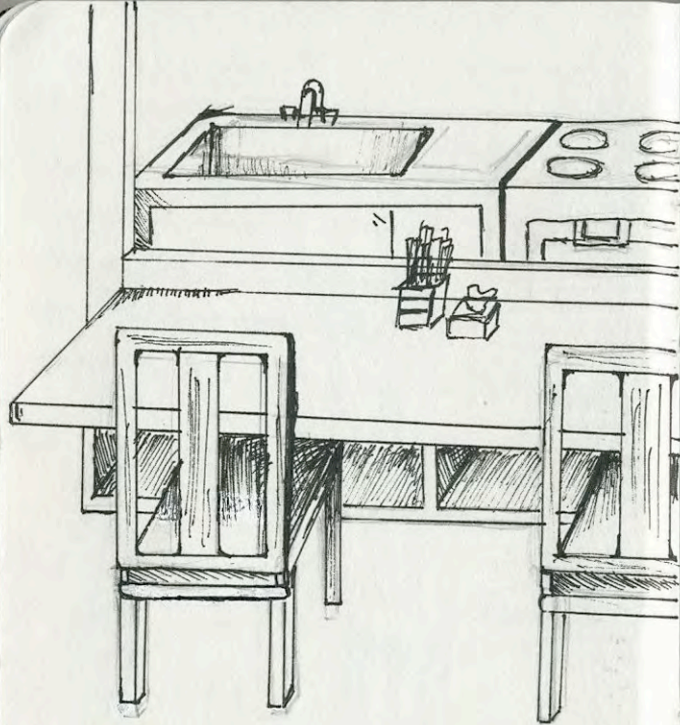
suit their busy lifestyle.



bars in-between stairs. They act as a safety net for people who might be clumsy.

A- Activity

Activity.



Setups like this is very common *environment* in eateries in Japan.

- 1) Provides efficient service.
- 2) Very manageable for the workers.
- 3) Can cut down on manpower/(waiters)

E - Environment

sushi



*Love how at every ~~rest~~ eatery, there is a location for customers to return after meal.

they can easily get customers order from the kitchen.