



Visual and
Performing Arts

Equity Art Study: from the film “Memoirs of a Geisha”



“Snow Dance” Scene

A nine-year-old girl, Chiyo, is sold into the slavery of a Geisha house in 1929. She is mistreated and abused by the owners and the head geisha Hatsumomo who becomes jealous of her dazzling beauty. Eventually rescued by Hatsumomo's rival Mameha, Chiyo is tutored in the Geisha arts becoming the famed Geisha Sayuri. However, her life of privilege and wealth becomes threatened by the presence of World War II, an event that will change the world of the Geisha and Japan forever.

Notes:

Let's Explore

Spend some time reading the summary of the film and then watch the video clip

- *What do you notice?*
 - *Who is the dancer and why was the screenwriter/choreographer inspired to feature them?*
 - *What do you learn about the dancer?*
 - *where might this be taking place, and when?*
 - *What makes the dancer different or special?*

- *What do you wonder?*
 - *What is going on? What surrounds the dancer?*
 - *What happened before the time of the dance, and what might come next?*
 - *Are there different ways to see the situation, or is it clear what is happening?*
 - *Have you ever seen someone or something like the dance? If you have, where did you see it?*

- *How does it make you feel?*
 - *If the dance depicts an action, would you ever do something similar?*
 - *Do you see yourself in the dance? In what way?*
 - *Do things or feelings in the dance remind you of anything?*
 - *Does the title of the dance affect how you feel about it?*

Write down your thoughts and share with family and friends...

The Four Artistic Processes



RESPOND: Explore and Understand

- What dance moves have impact? Why do you think the choreographer chose them?
- What do you notice about patterns, levels, tempo and mood of the dance?

CONNECT: Relate to the artwork

- How does the dance make you feel? Why?
- If you could interview the choreographer or the dancer, what questions would you ask?
- What do you think the dancer is feeling? Do you feel an emotion in the dance, such as anxiety, tension, or restlessness?

CREATE: Make your own art

- Write a poem or short essay reflecting on the way the dance makes you feel, or a subject similar to that depicted by the dance.
- Draw or paint an artwork or take a photograph that has a subject similar to that depicted by the dance.
- Imagine you are the choreographer who created the dance. Write what they might say to describe their reason for choreographing the dance, from their point of view.

PRESENT: Share your artwork

- Share your creation with family or friends.
- Take a moment to share what you have discovered in the process.