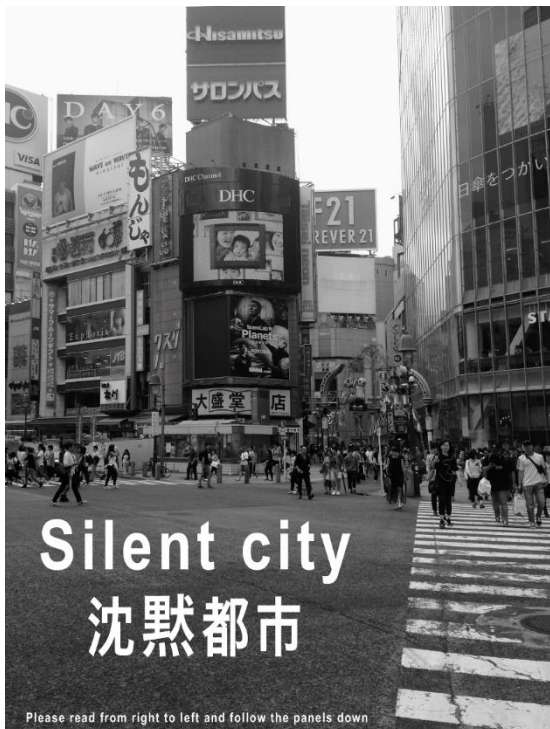


“Silent City” by Flora Lee



For her final output Flora developed a manga in which she reflected not only the sensory landscape of Tokyo, but also the sociality and everyday life of Tokyoites through her main character's navigation through the cityscape. In her exegesis, excerpts of which you can read below, Flora explains her choices for the mode of representation and how she has conveyed sound in her work to the reader.

“Being exposed to sound focused sensory research then reading Plourde’s observation that Tokyo is a “sound saturated society” (2013, pg. 160), I knew what I wanted to focus on. There exists in Japan a deeper cultural awareness and appreciation of noise and sound that is not understood in the West. Polly Barton agrees that there exists a set of invisible basics of onomatopoeic terms that are fundamental to society yet often overlooked (2021, pg. 20). Barton’s book acted as the catalyst for my project’s idea since I have long been a manga reader that often overlooks its unfamiliar and untranslated sound effects (SFX). Barton’s impassioned argument for the importance of these words revealed to me their value. With my new understanding I wanted to create a manga that would highlight the importance of sound and raise awareness of this hidden language. [...] I had the initial premise: a manga omitting spoken dialogue that would tell its story exclusively through SFX in order to force the reader to acknowledge them.”



“Creating the manga taught me many things about the benefits of visual research. The distinction between giongo, words that mimic sounds, and gitaigo, non-mimetic / non-auditory mimicking sounds (Barton, pg. 28), becomes clearer when seeing them used. I purposefully used the romanisation of the SFX alongside recognisable english onomatopoeia to help convey how the words function. Dasgupta’s concept of an “emotional scape” (pg. 374) I explored by mimicking the characters bleak outlook on life in the comics’ monochromatic colour scheme. A particular benefit of using drawing as visual research in comparison to photography is that I can curate specific visual elements that subtly convey an idea. The structure of the manga is itself cyclical in reference to the Yamanote line’s key feature of repetition (Coates, pg. 231).”

