

**The KAUST School**

**Extended Essay**

**Research Question**

**Subject:**

**Word Count:**

**Name:**

**Candidate Number:**

**Supervisor:**

**Date:**

# Abstract

**Japanese rock gardens: just a garden or a work of Art? I chose this as my essay**

**question because of my fascination of the beauty of Japanese rock gardens. As an art**

**student myself, I found them, the Ryōan-ji Temple’s garden in particular, to be**

**aesthetically compelling. Therefore, this brought forth the questioning of whether such**

**aesthetically rich gardens can be considered as a works of Art.**

**The main part of my investigation for this essay was done in books. I even**

**attempted to get a primary source from one of the authors, Peeters. Unfortunately, he**

**continually failed to answer my email. Another major part of my investigation was the**

**visiting of a Ryōan-ji replica in Drome, France, not two hours away from where I live. I**

**visited this replica, took photos and interviewed the man who had it created and took**

**care of it, Régimbeau. I also majorly used his book in my investigation. The last part of**

**my investigation took place in reading articles on the Internet about Japanese rock**

**gardens as well as Zen principles.**

**In my essay I focused on defining a work of art through the principles of Art and**

**Design so that therefore I could apply these definitions to the Ryōan-ji. By following**

**through on this step-by-step process, I came to the conclusion that if one defines art**

**through the Western principles of Art and Design, then the Ryōan-ji can be called an**

**artwork.**

**Word Count: 240**

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**Introduction**

**“Obtain the greatest knowledge of what is real while knowing that you will never be**

**able to learn everything and that there will always be something hidden from you” (qtd.**

**in Régimbeau 1)**

**This citation by Siddhârta emcompasses the thought process and designing**

**intention put behind the creation of the Ryōan-ji Temple’s rock garden, effectively**

**making it the embodiment of this Zen ideal.**

**Part One – Introduction of Japanese Rock Gardens**

**Part Two – What Defines Art?**

**Works Cited**