

Wabi-Sabi is like a clear stream, it blends humans, nature, and artificial environments together. (Yang, 2021) Wabi-Sabi celebrates imperfections and transience, and finds beauty in simplicity and natural aging processes. Unlike most other philosophies of East Asian aesthetics which value symmetry and balance, Wabi-Sabi breaks away from these aesthetic standards and embraces asymmetry and imperfections. (Yang, 2021) Additionally, this type of aesthetic encourages a people to appreciate the current moment as part of their meditation and practice of mindfulness and achieving inner peace similar to those found in Zen Buddhism.

The four principles developed for the Japanese Tea Ceremony by Tea Master Sen No Rikyu (1522-1591), are as follows: Harmony, or the relationship humans have with nature; Respect, or how humans view themselves and every thing and person surrounding them; Purity, or the physical and spiritual state of order; and Serenity, the feeling of peace and tranquillity created through the fulfilment of the other three principles. Every detail of the Tea Ceremony, from the architecture of the room to the landscaping and the tableware, is thoughtfully crafted and selected to create perfection so that the ceremony is devoted only to the act of making tea. Because of the perfect design that eliminates all imperfections, the ceremony creates a very spiritual, focusing on the act of making tea with great attention to detail, silence and tranquillity. (Maksimovich & Blagoevich, 2024).

3. CREATIVE METHODS

3.1. DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The author's creative process is based on qualitative methods and starts by conducting literature reviews to create a theoretical foundation from which to develop their shot design. The author used Begleiter's and Bowen's theories on composition; Bowen's theory on different shot types; and Bordwell and Thompson's theories on how to show space and depth to guide the author in using shot design to express serenity.

The author has also conducted an additional visual analysis of advertisements and animations including ones that have East Asian influence and are related to Terran's animated advertisement. Visual observation and analysis of these advertisements help the author better understand how composition, depth and space as well as shot type, can contribute to the visualisation of serenity. Observations from this visual analysis were used to inform the design for two shot selections (Tea Ceremony and Water Blossom) within Terran's advertisement. This final storyboard will serve as a reference guide to the animation and post-production teams in order to produce the animation based on the author's vision of translating Terran's branding philosophy into an animated short-form advertisement communicating serenity.

3.2. CREATIVE FOCUS

The author as the storyboard artist, will create the storyboard for Terran's animated advertisement, which will be done in a full 2D animation style. The author has completed a number of visual and theoretical research studies to develop a shot design for this animated advertisement which can successfully communicate Terran's brand aesthetic identity of serenity inspired by East Asian culture. Through the completion of these studies the author expects to develop their shot design so it is able to communicate serenity.

3.2.1 Background

Terran's animated advertisement will be done in the form of a one minute (made up of four fifteen second scenes) animated advertisement, which is the optimal format and length for *Tiktok* and *Instagram Reels*. Every 15-second scene tells the story of each of the four scents. Each storyboard will be created with *Procreate* on an *iPad* giving the author control of every aspect of the scene. The animation phase will use a combination of frame-by-frame animation, and motion graphics to create a smooth, dynamic visual experience. With this method, the author's team hopes to convey the unique mood and story behind each Terran fragrance.

The author as the storyboard artist, will be developing visual storyboards for Terran's animated advertisement. This role will take the ideas and concepts and create a series of shots (storyboards) from these ideas. Storyboard artists are also responsible for maintaining consistency between the visual environments of each shot and the character designs created by other artists working on the project. In addition to maintaining consistency with the overall design of the project, the author will collaborate closely with all the other roles involved to ensure that the storyboards match the project's objectives.



3.2.2 Reference Works

For Terran's animated advertisement the author used several reference materials to help design shots that convey serenity. To do this, the author identified three relevant works (Gucci Bloom Perfume Advertisement, Lancôme illustrated advertisement series and a short, animated film titled Resilience) to see how the theories researched can be applied in real-life applications.



Figure 3.1 Gucci Advertisement. Source: Instagram @guccibeauty (2023)

One of references used by the author, is an advertisement for the perfume "Gucci Bloom" created by illustrator Nouriflayhan. The advertisement appeared as an Instagram Reel on Gucci Beauty's Instagram page. It shows a style of advertising that is like what the author aims to create (frame-by-frame illustration and motion graphics combined to produce a visually appealing/relaxed visual experience).

This advertisement uses a symmetrical composition, limited movement, and centred placement of the object. All of the decorative elements, flowers, butterflies and zodiac symbols surround the product, and are placed equally from each side of the product which creates both a sense of symmetry as each side possesses equal visual weight. (Begleiter, 2010) By having the illustrations and other elements surrounding the product, they help create a “frame,” establishing the product as the focus or subject of the illustration.

The artist utilizes a medium shot, which is a shot size that lets the product have a majority of the frame; however, it also provides sufficient visual detail of the surrounding illustrations for the viewer to gain an understanding of the visual context of the product. The medium shot provides a good compromise between showing the primary subject, while providing enough view of the surroundings to provide a clear visual context for the product. (Bowen, 2018).

To establish space and depth, the artist used layers of planes in order to establish an illusion of three-dimensionality; although the illustration may appear flat and simple, the use of layered planes provides depth and space within the illustration. The floral elements and butterflies are in the *foreground*, the product is in the *middleground* and the *background* is a plain color. Through the layering of planes, the artist was able to create a three dimensional space with two dimensional illustrations.

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Figure 3.2 Lancôme Advertisement. Source: ccipic.com (2023)

The Lancôme illustrated advertisement series by Chinese artist, Jude Chan, is a visual reference that demonstrates the ways in which serenity can be visually expressed using composition, shot types and space and depth. Each illustration merges traditional East Asian aesthetic motifs (botanical illustration, animal symbolism, seasonally representative landscapes), with Lancôme's products creating an image that appears serene. Since Terran's creative goals are centred around the combination of traditional and modern themes, the illustrations are both relevant to reference for Terran's animated advertisements.

Regarding composition, Jude Chan uses a variety of near-symmetrical arrangements throughout his works; each frame is arranged in a way that is both visually balanced and physically stable, thus evoking serenity because the frames carry almost equal visual weights on either side. Chan has used soft, gentle images in his works including softly rounded branch structures, white clouds and repeating flower patterns which evoke the smooth motion found in many cinematic scenes of tranquillity. A direct translation of these visual elements will result in the author's ability to create similar visual flow in their shot design by organizing environmental elements in a manner consistent with the idea of a serene experience.

The illustrations also utilize layered planes to create multiple *depth cues*, i.e., *foreground* flowers, mid-ground placement of Lancôme's products, and backgrounds painted in decreasing color intensity. The layering creates an environment where the subject (Lancôme's product) is framed but not overwhelmed, while the separation between layers creates a space for the audience to "breathe" and therefore experience an immersive and 3D tranquil space. (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019) These Lancôme illustrated advertisements by Jude Chan represent a medium shot (even though they are still illustrations) with the placement of the product at the center of the image and the environment that surrounds it (such as floral arrangement, seasonal landscape, lanterns, or symbolic animals), taking up most of the frame.



Figure 3.3 Screenshots from Resilience. Source: youtube.com (2023)

Resilience, directed by Yunie Choi, is a 2D animated short film lasting two minutes and thirty-two seconds, depicting the gradual transformation of a soldier's corpse and its surrounding environment over time. Rather than using fast pacing or dynamic movement, the film adopts a slow time-lapse format in which the world and environment change, but the camera stays still. Due to this audience is positioned as an observer, forcing the audience to reflect, creating a meditative visual tone. The tone that this film created can be applied to Terran's animated advertisements.



Figure 3.4 Composition in Resilience. Source: youtube.com (2023)

Resilience shows no dramatic change in composition. While the soldier's body is constantly the main visual focal point using the "rule of thirds", the visual of the world around him changes from being barren and broken, to one of greenery and foliage, but the composition is laid out does not change much during the film. Maintaining the same composition creates a consistent feeling of settling in with the scene for the audience.

While the overall style of the film is relatively flat due to its two-dimensional style, the environment is divided into different layers of planes, *foreground* (rocks, grass and trees), *middleground* (the character), and *background* (structures of nature). This is what allows the environment to appear to have depth. (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019) The layering of depth in this film could serve as a reference for the author when it comes to designing their own shot layout to create an immersive experience for the audience.

Lastly, the shot type used in all the scenes in Resilience are *wide shots* that encompass both the subject and the changing environment. In keeping the same shot type throughout the film, Choi achieves continuity. The audience is not brought in closer through close-up shots or pulled back further through extreme *wide shots*. Instead, the *wide shot* provides the audience with a stable platform to view the changes that occur without distraction. As such, the *wide shot* used in Resilience demonstrates how the selection of shot type can influence the emotional tone of a scene, providing a valuable example of how shot type could provide a serene tone to the scenes in Terran's animated advertisement.

3.2.3 Production Stages

a. Research and Concept Development

The research and concept development phase began with an extensive study of theories related to composition, space and depth, and shot types to establish a strong conceptual foundation for Terran's animated advertisement's shot design. Begleiter's and Bowen's theories on composition contributed to assist the author in how to create a composition that is engaging and evokes serenity. Christopher Bowen's explanation of shot types clarified how variations in camera distance and framing may influence the shot's mood, clarity, and the audience's understanding of the shot. Meanwhile, Bordwell and Thompson's theory on space and depth helps the author understand how to create an immersive, three-dimensional space even with 2D animation.

In addition to these theories, research was also conducted on the concept of serenity in East Asia. Through this research, the author found theories on Wabi-Sabi which explains how imperfections can convey serenity; as well as theories on Tea Ceremony philosophies by tea master Sen No Rikyu. (Yang, 2021) This research is very important in aligning the visual approach of the advertisement with Terran's brand identity, which is inspired by East Asian culture.

The theoretical studies were then used in the author's visual reference analyses to observe how serenity is conveyed in real advertising and film contexts. The Lancôme advertisements by Jude Chan, the Gucci Bloom commercial by Nouriflayhan, and the short, animated film Resilience by Yunie Choi became the author's primary visual references. These works were analysed for their use of composition, shot type, and use of space and depth. By analysing these references, the author can visualise what the theories look like when applied in a real and finished work.

From the research, the first major creative decision is to apply either the rule of thirds or a symmetrical composition in Terran's shot design. Using symmetry may complement the perfectionist and orderly manner of Tea Ceremonies, as the ceremony requires full devotion to the ritual of tea making. (Maksimovich & Blagoevich, 2024). While using the rule of thirds can help create a more dynamic and interesting shot. (Bowen, 2018) This approach aligns with the brand's identity, reinforcing the serenity associated with Terran's East Asian-inspired themes.

The animated advertisement will have a 2-D style; however, research indicated that space and depth can powerful tools in visualising a three-dimensional space, which will create a more immersive shot. Drawing upon Bordwell and Thompson's ideas of layered depth, the storyboard must create a distinction among the *foreground*, *middleground*, and *background* elements to allow the audience to visualize the scene as a real space. To achieve this goal, the depth in the storyboard should be implemented to evoke an immersive yet serene atmosphere to avoid overwhelming the audience.

As per Bowen's theory on shot types, the primary shot type for the storyboard will be the *wide shot*. This shot type is optimal for showing the character as well as its surrounding environment. This shot framing aims to allow the audience to experience the serene environment (consisting of plants, natural textures and gentle movement) while showing the character's role in the shot. Compared to extreme *wide shots* which may feel too far away, the *wide shot* provides sufficient space to convey the feelings of the shot while providing emotional connection to the audience.

Further to this, philosophies like Wabi-Sabi, which find beauty and serenity in imperfections. (Yang, 2021) As well as Tea ceremony philosophies that highlight the importance of order and perfection in every detail. (Maksimovich & Blagoevich, 2024) These two philosophies on serenity will also be taken into consideration when designing shots for Terran's animated advertisement.

Aside from the theories used, the author also explored other theories like *Zen Buddhism* as an East Asian philosophy that emphasizes serenity, as well as other theories on composition like the *Golden Ratio*. However, the author decided that these theories weren't the best fit for the project. Theories on *Zen Buddhism* are too closely related to religion, while the *Golden Ratio* offers too many limitations when it comes to creating a composition.

b. Storyboard Creation

Only after finalizing the environment design and character design for Water Blossom and Tea Ceremony by the environment artist and character artist can the storyboard be created. Since the storyboard needs to accurately reflect the spatial arrangement of the animation it is a part of, as the author's first obligation it was necessary for the author to carefully review the provided sketches of the environments, the character designs and the floor plans in order to create consistent storyboards.



Figure 3.5 *Water Blossom* alternative sketch 1. Source: Author (2025)

In the first Alternative Sketch for the *Water Blossom* shot the three aspects, composition, shot type, and space and depth, can be seen. Compositionally, the subject, the crane, is positioned in the centre of the screen and is surrounded by lily pads, rocks and distant architectural structures (the pagoda). This provides the audience with an obvious and easy to see focal point (the character); however, the centred position of the character creates a static visual arrangement, which makes the shot appear much less dynamic and predictable. (Bowen, 2018)

The shot type is a *wide shot*, showing both the crane and its environment without overwhelming detail. This allows the space to be understood while still positioning the subject as the main visual anchor. However, because the subject is centred rather than positioned using compositional guides such as the rule of thirds, the composition might look static and unbalanced. (Bowen, 2018) Space and depth is suggested through the separation of *foreground* rocks, the midground crane, and the *background* pavilion and mountains

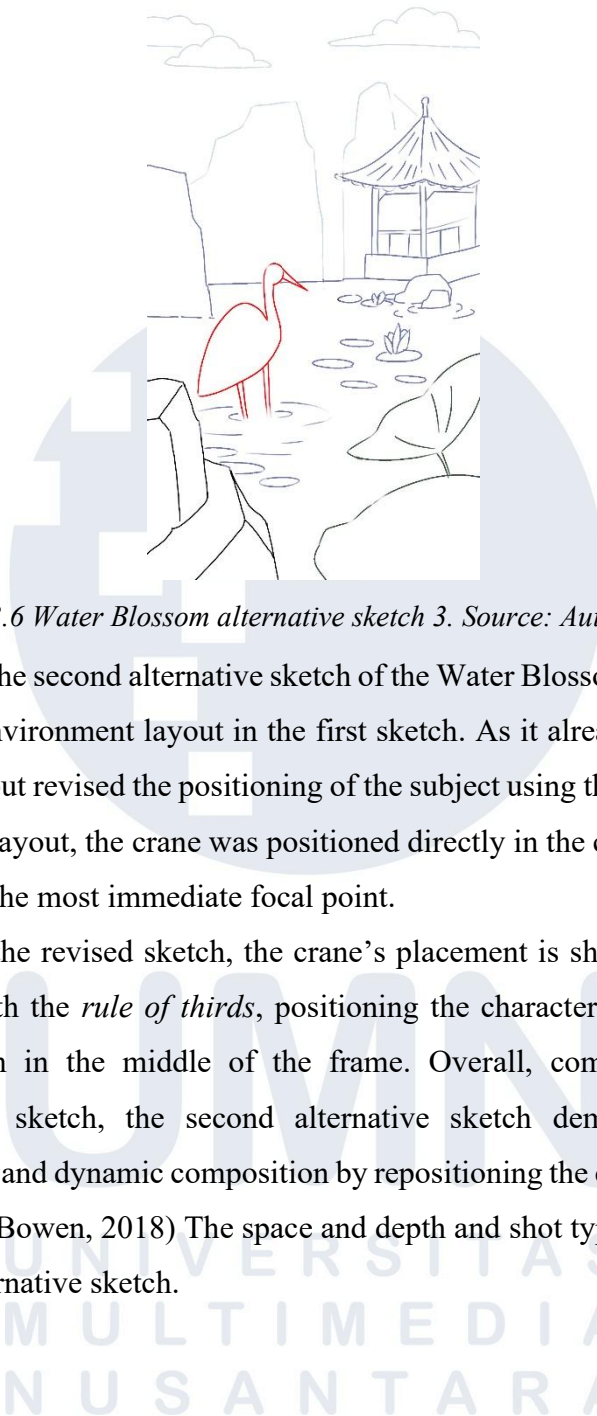


Figure 3.6 *Water Blossom* alternative sketch 3. Source: Author (2025)

In the second alternative sketch of the *Water Blossom* shot, the Author kept the environment layout in the first sketch. As it already depicts what is intended, but revised the positioning of the subject using the *rule of thirds*. In the initial layout, the crane was positioned directly in the centre of the frame, making it the most immediate focal point.

In the revised sketch, the crane's placement is shifted to align more closely with the *rule of thirds*, positioning the character slightly off-centre rather than in the middle of the frame. Overall, compared to the first alternative sketch, the second alternative sketch demonstrates a more interesting and dynamic composition by repositioning the crane using the *rule of thirds*. (Bowen, 2018) The space and depth and shot type remain the same in this alternative sketch.



Figure 3.7 Water Blossom alternative sketch 3. Source: Author (2025)

In the third alternative sketch for the Water Blossom shot, the author has attempted to use a different shot type. In this version, an *extreme wide shot* is used as opposed to a *wide shot* that was used in the previous two alternative sketches. This version features an expanded view of the environment and distant elements of the landscape. The subject's placement remains the same as the second alternative sketch with the crane positioned just off centre creating a more interesting composition by using the *rule of thirds*. (Bowen, 2018) However, even though the audience can view more of the environment, the character becomes less defined as the focus of the shot.

Overall, the author's choice of using an *extreme wide shot* lets the environment to take up more space. This helps in illustrating the ambience better. However, consequently, the crane appears too small within the composition, causing it to blend into its surroundings rather than being the focus of the shot.



Figure 3.8 Tea Ceremony alternative sketch 1. Source: Author (2025)

In the first alternative sketch for the Tea Ceremony shot, the author decided on a *medium-wide shot* type that placed the rabbit character in the right *foreground*. Although this composition provides clear visibility of the interior set pieces and the character, the overall composition appears cramped. The elements in the *foreground* occupy a large portion of the frame, leaving limited space for the environment behind them to be seen.

The author used *depth cues* through layered planes of the *foreground* tatami lines, *middleground* furniture, and the *background* garden which is visible through the open doorway. However, because most of the frame is dominated by interior objects, the garden in the *background* isn't too clear. As a result, the mood the author aims to convey through the shot might not be fully communicated in this alternative sketch.



Figure 3.9 Tea Ceremony alternative sketch 2. Source: Author (2025)

In the second alternative sketch for the Tea Ceremony shot, the chosen shot type is changed to a *wide shot*, allowing the audience to see more of the surrounding tea ceremony environment. Even though the character appears smaller because of this change, the audience can grasp a better understanding of the mood through the extended context. Overall, improvements can still be made to this sketch.

The composition still positioned the rabbit character using the *rule of thirds*. While this placement aligns with principles of dynamic composition, the surrounding environment is structured with heavy symmetrical elements, such as the shoji panels, ceiling beams, and tatami floor lines, causing the asymmetrical composition and highly symmetrical architecture to clash. The framing of the environment doesn't look the best, with some furniture getting cropped out.



Figure 3.10 Tea Ceremony alternative sketch 3. Source: Author (2025)

The third and final alternative sketch for the Tea Ceremony, the author uses a symmetrical and balanced composition, intending to complement the symmetry in tea ceremonies and the surrounding architecture. In this version, the author maintains the shot type, the *wide shot* type, which provides significantly more room within the frame, allowing the audience to take in a fuller view of both the interior tea space and the garden beyond the open shoji doors.

Space and depth also looks clearer in this version, with more visibility that aims to help its audience have a better understanding of the *foreground*, *middleground* and *background* planes. The author also repositions the electric fan to the left side of the composition to keep it visible. By doing this the author hopes to build a more 3-dimensional space.

c. Storyboard Finalisation



Figure 3.11 *Water Blossom* final storyboard. Source: Author (2025)

The second sketch was chosen as the final storyboard for the *Water Blossom* shot, as its composition, space and depth, and shot type align with the theories the author implemented during research. The composition utilizes the *rule of thirds* to create a dynamic composition that also highlights the subject (the crane) as the focus of the shot. The crane is further emphasized as the main subject, as the author uses environmental elements such as rocks, lotus pads, and the pavilion in the *background* to surround it like a “frame”.

A layered space and depth is shown by organizing the shot into multiple plane layers. The author used layers of planes to emphasize depth, these layers consist of *foreground* elements like rocks and lotus leaves, *middleground* features such as the crane and lily pads, and the *background* structures like the pavilion and mountains in the background. This layered depth is used to build an environment that is more immersive and has more depth. (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019)

The chosen shot type which is a *wide shot*, gives the audience enough distance to see the environment while keeping the crane focal point. This choice aligns with Bowen's theory, suggesting that *wide shots* can help situate characters within their world and convey their relationships. (Bowen, 2018) The audience is given enough space to appreciate the natural surroundings: water, plants, and architectural structure, without losing sight of the central subject.

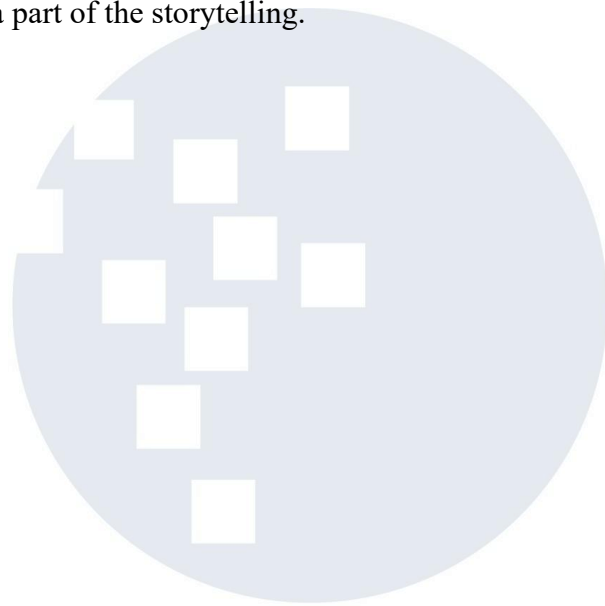


Figure 3.12 Tea Ceremony final storyboard. Source: Author (2025)

The final Tea Ceremony shot chosen by the author is the third alternative sketch. The choices that are made in composition, space and depth, and shot type support the aims the author has in mind. The symmetrical composition is influenced by the symmetry created by the shoji doors, the tatami layout lines, and the centred placement of the tea table.

Space and depth is shown by the author through layers of planes. The floor occupy the *foreground*. The furniture and character occupy the *middleground*, and the garden is as the *background*. This layered depth cue allows the audience's eye to move slowly through the shot.

The chosen shot type, a *wide shot*, highlights both the subject and the environment, which is useful for showing how a character interacts with the environment around them. By showing the audience a wider environment in the shot, the author wishes to help the audience understand where the character is and how they relate to the world around them, making their existence a part of the storytelling.



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3.2.4 Workflow Flowchart

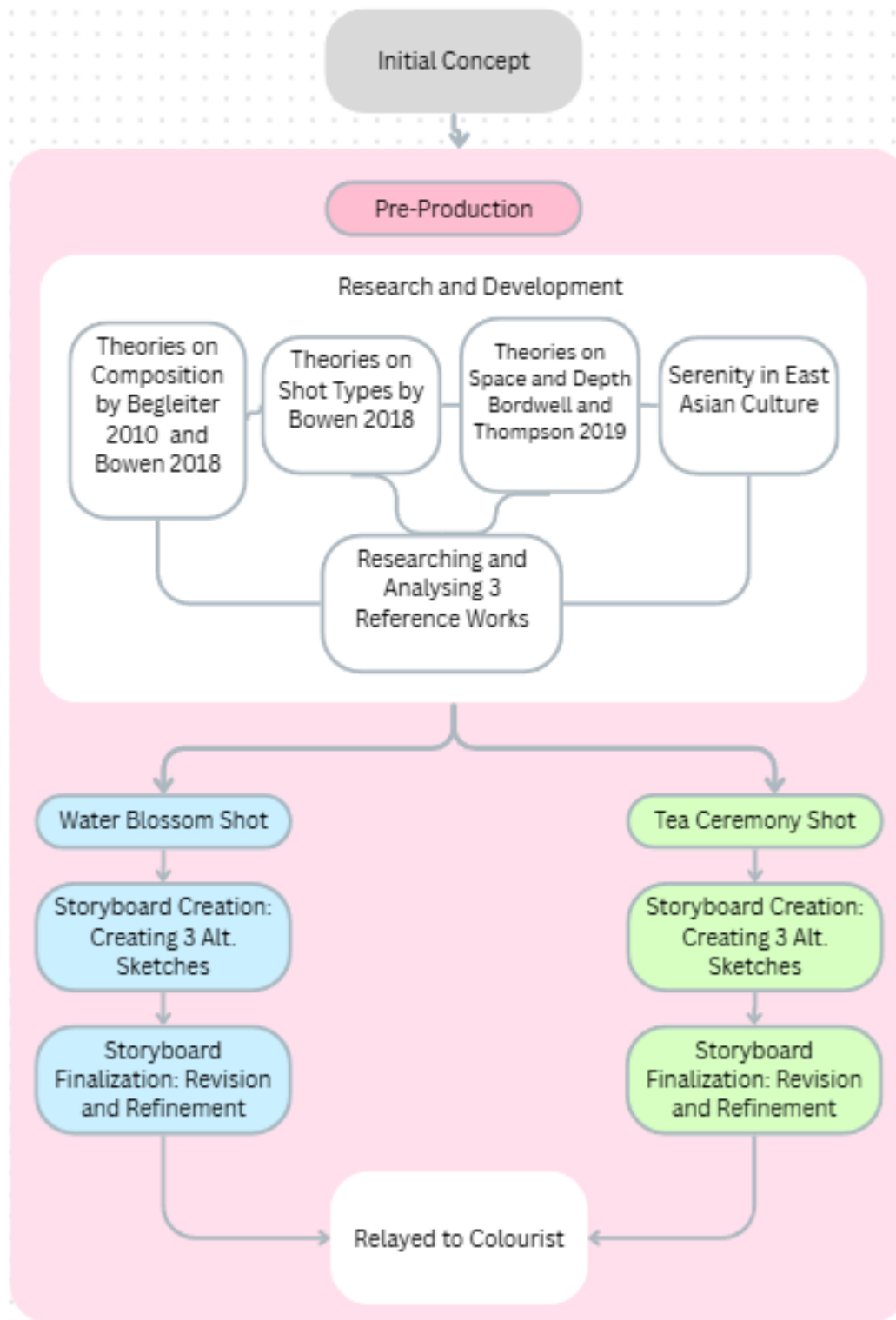


Figure 3.13 Storyboard Workflow Flowchart. Source: Author (2025)