

# Wabi Sabi

Embracing Asymmetry, Simplicity, Imperfection and Transience in Art

# Wabi Sabi

Wabi-sabi is a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete.

It is a beauty of things modest and humble.

It is a beauty of things unconventional.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmHLYhxYVjA> (first--history)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv0axESMCeE>

# Japanese Ceramics

## Skip

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISyg2ybk5-c> (3 mins. Example)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uappkfYwfOI>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vf2EH6vHWtQ> ceramics

# Wabi Sabi Pottery

Wabi refers to the kind of beauty found in asymmetrical, uneven or unbalanced things. **The asymmetry of a ceramic bowl** is an example of wabi. Sabi is the beauty of aged things and speaks to the impermanence of life through the passage of time. An example of sabi is the lovely patina found on a rusted old metal wall.

Wabi sabi is a difficult concept to pin down, wabi can be translated as "tranquil simplicity" and sabi as "patina or rust," referring to the beauty that comes with age and the wear of daily use. With the development of the tea ceremony in the sixteenth century, utensils exhibiting the wabi sabi aesthetic became popular. They were often used alongside elegant imported Chinese vessels to create striking visual contrasts. These ceramics date from the late sixteenth century CE to 2011, revealing the long history and continued vitality of the wabi sabi ideal.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hxs8uOdvxM> (smarthistory)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqFW2XbAAqM> (long no words)







# Kazuhiko Kudo

Originally from Kanagawa Prefecture, Kazuhiko Kudo relocated to Asahikawa in Hokkaido, purely to work with the city's source of *Kenbuchi* clay. Though roughly 200 million years old, this ancient clay had never-before been used for ceramics—until now.

After five years dedicated to studying *Kenbuchi*, the *yellow kohiki* technique was developed. As the name implies, the technique allows one to pull a beautifully subtle shade of yellow from the clay. Kudo uses the *yellow kohiki* technique in his work, creating truly original pieces that all begin with ancient materials.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uappkfYwfOI>









# Margy Malan

This film by [Green Renaissance](#) features [Margy Malan](#), who lives in South Africa. Her pottery and stitching, her home, her ideas about failure and perfection and good enough — her life is her art.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FV4hq\\_gdNhQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FV4hq_gdNhQ)

“We’re always focusing on perfection and whole things. But nothing can be whole, the reality is. Things can be beautiful in their brokenness. So for me sometimes it’s not necessary that we get fixed .... A piece is good enough. A piece of it. A piece of life; it’s good enough.”







# Kazunori Hamana

“Clay is a natural thing; it changes. I don’t want to fight with nature, so I follow it.”

Kazunori Hamana was born in Osaka, Japan, in 1969 and grew up in Amagasaki, Hyogo Prefecture. Since his childhood, he has been driven to pursue a deep philosophical interest in the nature of how the universe functions on micro and macro levels. This awareness of impermanence and the transience of earthly things has guided his work and lifestyle. In this vein, Hamana left his home at the age of fifteen to stay with local farmers in rural Hyogo Prefecture, and to work the land and care for the livestock at an agricultural school nearby. After a period of studying in Humboldt County and San Diego, CA as a college student embedded in a hippie milieu, the artist found himself drawn back to his home country and his Japanese identity. He later settled in a rural fishing village in Japan’s Chiba Prefecture, where he currently divides his time between working as an organic rice farmer, a fisherman, and an artist.

Hamana draws upon the ancient traditions of ceramics in Japan while cultivating new, inventive techniques in shaping, glazing,

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCDvzGm0U\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCDvzGm0U_g) (1min)



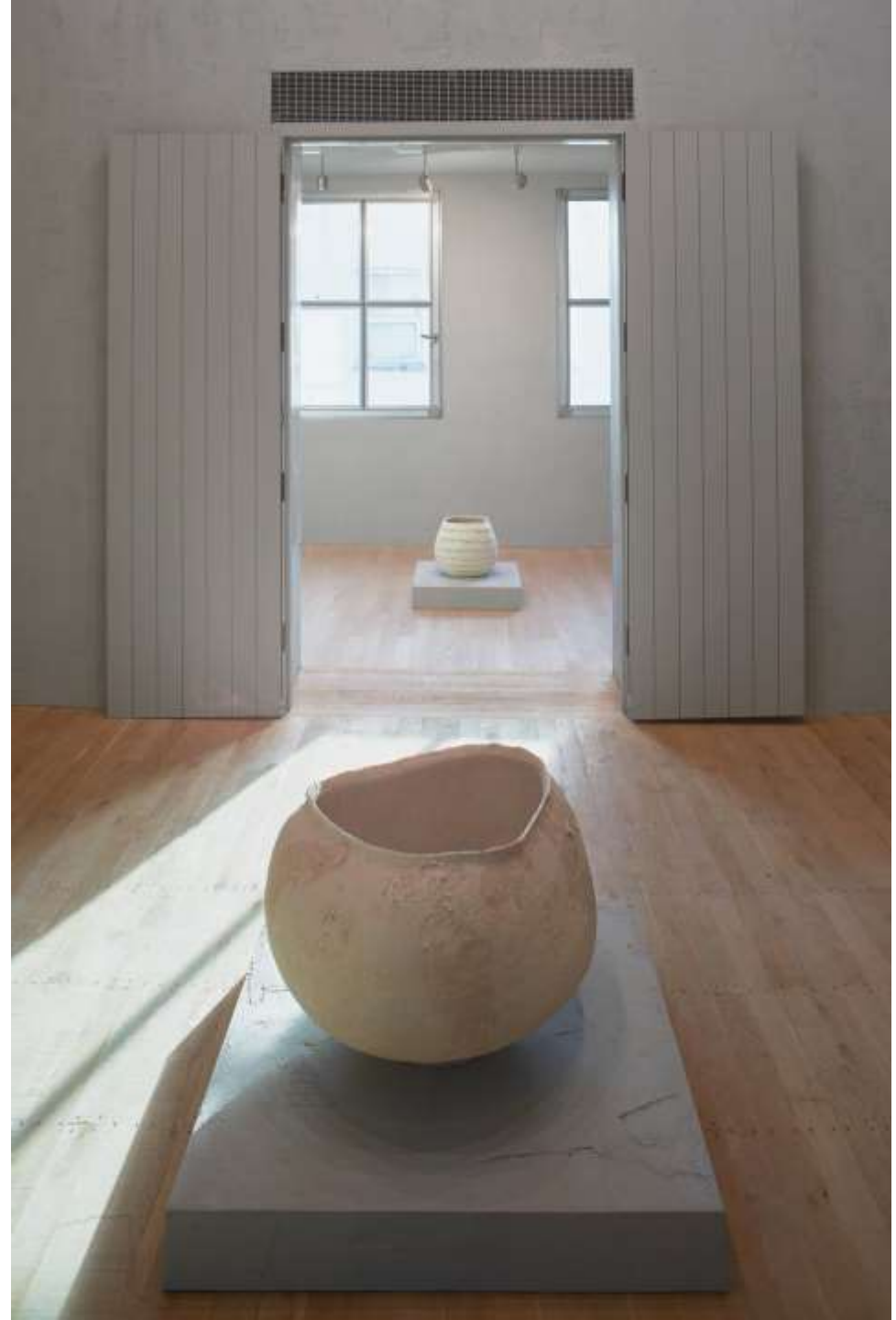












# Kintsugi (Golden Joinery)

Kintsugi, also known as kintsukuroi, is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending the areas of breakage with lacquer dusted or mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum, a method similar to the maki-e technique.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBUTQkaSSTY> (start)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9LMKGte0UU> (use)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3mZgs0vkDY&t=58s>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IT55\\_u8URU0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IT55_u8URU0)













# Wabi Sabi Garden Design

Wabi sabi can be defined as “beauty in imperfection” and can incorporate asymmetry, incompleteness, impermanence, and simplicity. In addition to gardens, wabi sabi influences many other aspects of Japanese art and culture, such as the tea ceremony and pottery making, and it is also seen as a way of life. A garden based around wabi sabi incorporates natural and manmade elements in a way that allows visitors to appreciate their humble and imperfect forms. This typically involves using not only plants but also stones and weathered manmade objects as design elements.

Read more at Gardening Know How: Wabi-Sabi Garden Design: Implementing Wabi-Sabi In Gardens <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/design/ideas/using-wabi-sabi-in-gardens.htm>

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bv4SeVn\\_BvM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bv4SeVn_BvM) (no words)













# Wabi Sabi in Architecture

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iiNGAlMI5NI> (wabi sabi house)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhmX0EPD1XU> (interior no words)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzG\\_Wmgdhhg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzG_Wmgdhhg) (no words)













# Tadao Ando

**Tadao Ando** (安藤 忠雄, *Andō Tadao*, born 13 September 1941) is a Japanese [self-taught architect](#)<sup>l</sup> whose approach to [architecture](#) and [landscape](#) was categorized by architectural historian [Francesco Dal Co](#) as "[critical regionalism](#)". He is the winner of the 1995 [Pritzker Prize](#).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMxfEcs8Owo> (use this)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwuEgjVQir8> (use this)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j70jmsq28P8> (Church on the water—no words))

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJpDmtVLmE8> (no words)















# Wabi Sabi Interior Design

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HyN8Gp-otSk>





# Wabi Sabi in Art

## **May Britton & Lorrie Saunders: Wabi-Sabi**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qt3JXQmtxPo>

# Photography

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyCumQ78Zol> (use this overview)

# Nan Goldin

Nancy Goldin is an American photographer. Her work often explores LGBT bodies, moments of intimacy, the HIV crisis, and the opioid epidemic. Her most notable work is *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, which documents the post-Stonewall gay subculture and Goldin's family and friends.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1H6OJfDGWA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MgS8U1Y0UY>  
(use this—Julia Margaret Cameron)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r\\_rVyt-ojpY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_rVyt-ojpY)











# Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879)

Julia Margaret Cameron was a British photographer who is considered one of the most important portraitists of the 19th century. She is known for her soft-focus close-ups of famous Victorian men and for illustrative images depicting characters from mythology, Christianity, and literature.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ya7XWByKks>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WihqLONImqc> (use this)







*Howe life*

*14 1/2 1/2*

*Julia Leonard James*



# Tod Hido

Todd Hido is an American contemporary artist and photographer. He has produced 17 books, had his work exhibited widely and included in various public collections.



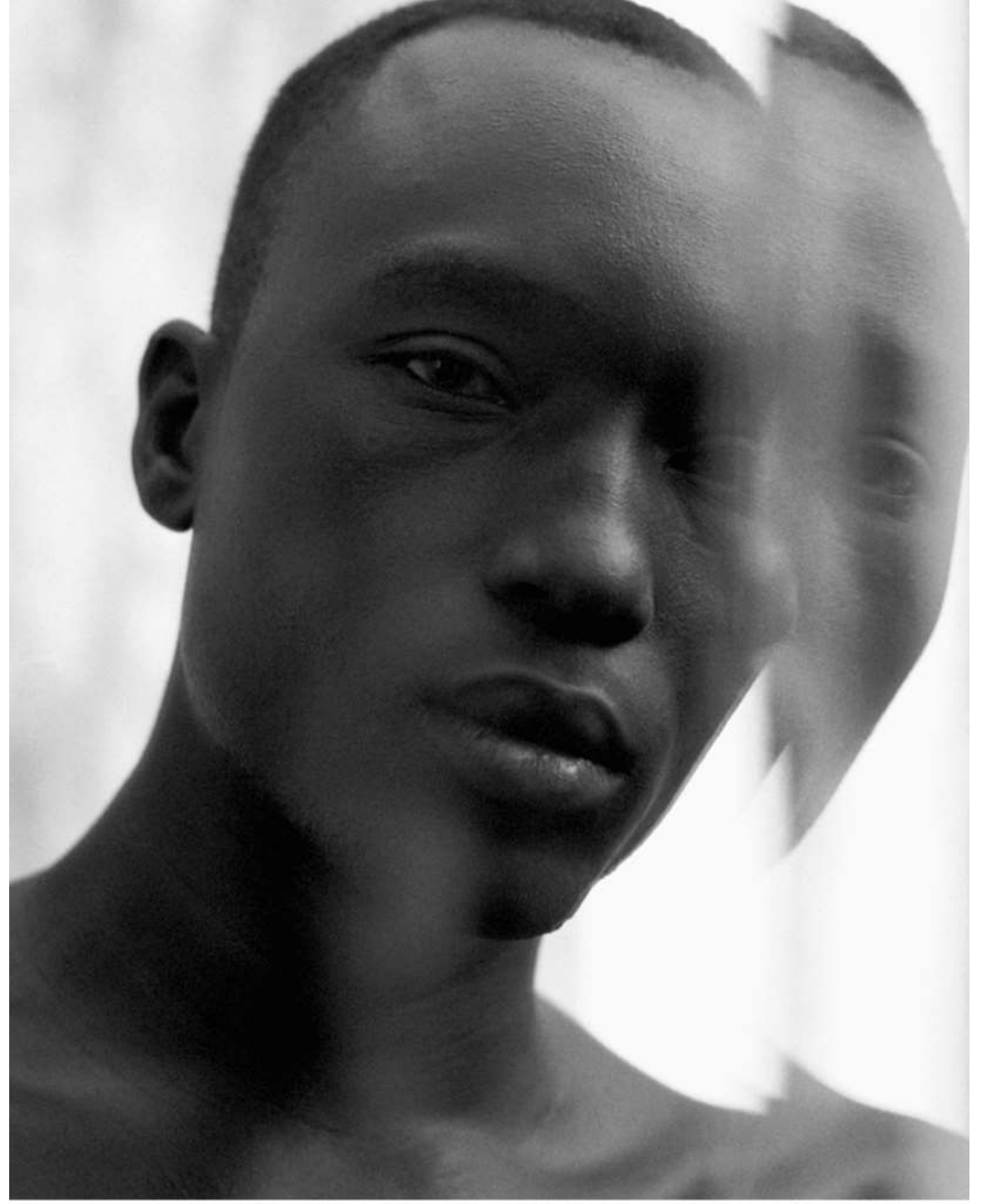




# Baud Postma

Baud Postma is a photographer currently living and working in London.





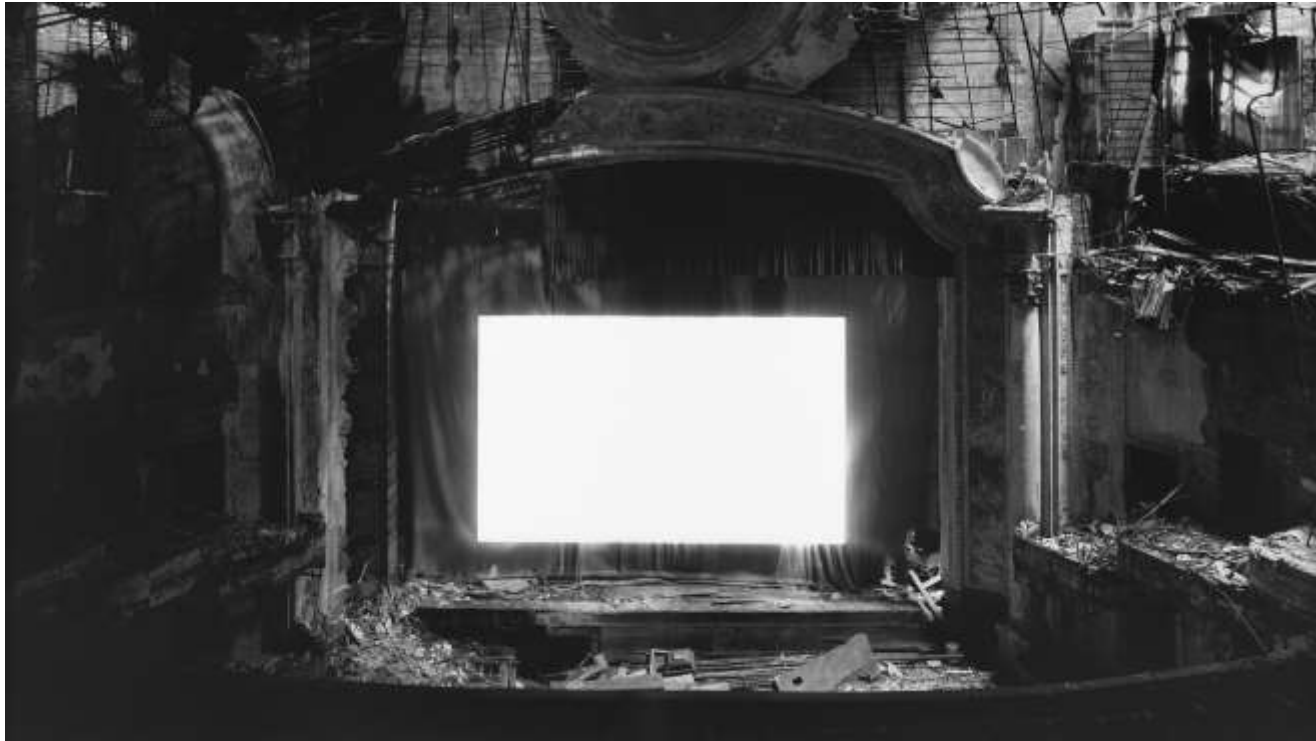
# Hiroshi Sugimoto

Hiroshi Sugimoto is a Japanese photographer and architect. He leads the Tokyo-based architectural firm New Material Research Laboratory.

<https://www.moma.org/artists/5721> (use this)

<https://www.mariangoodman.com/exhibitions/hiroshi-sugimoto-theory-of-colours-paris/>









# Robert Smithson

- Spiral Jetty
- <https://smarthistory.org/seeing-america-2/spiral-jetty-sa-periods/>
- Buried woodshed
- <https://www.kent.edu/magazine/shed>

# James Grashow

The Cardboard Bernini' (2012) examines the life and work of artist James Grashow as he spends four years building a giant cardboard fountain, with the intention of putting it outside to dissolve. Inspired by the baroque, Italian sculptor Bernini, and propelled by a crucial event documented in the film, Grashow is driven to experience the process of creation and loss by making an extraordinary artwork that will be destroyed in the end. This film follows Jimmy's journey, as he questions life's fragility and the artistic process. Directed by Olympia Stone, whose father, Allan Stone, was Grashow's art dealer for almost 50 years

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c50QwjgELAw>

# Andy Goldsworthy

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= opAMkK95gE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sngXz55b4bc> (good)

# Mary Hielmann

- Mary Hielmann
- <https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/mary-heilmann-inspiration-short/>

# Assignment Suggestions...

- Paint or photograph a still life that contains a well-worn meaningful object from your life.
- Tear up a painting or drawing and “mend” it with gold or metallic paint.
- Create an artwork that juxtaposes natural objects with man-made materials
- Use weathered objects in an artwork
- Use asymmetry in a design
- Find beauty in imperfection
- Create an ephemeral art piece (photograph it)