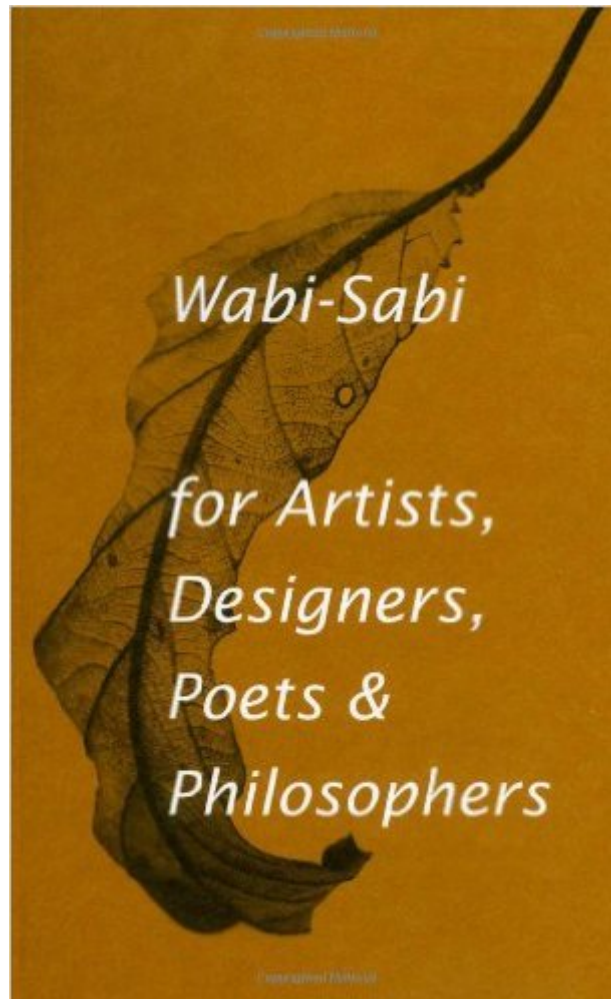


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Wabi-Sabi For Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers



Synopsis

An updated version of the seminal 1994 classic volume on the beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a graphic designer, I was very intrigued by the title of this book, and the philosophies contained inside, so I decided to give the book a shot. This is the type of book you blaze through in about 30 minutes, but will most likely want to keep for a lifetime as inspiration. Reason? Because there simply isn't another book of it's tone or mission. The essence of Wabi-Sabi is that true beauty, whether it comes from an object, architecture or visual art, doesn't reveal itself until the winds of time have had their say. A cracked pot, for example, has an essence that a perfectly round pot is lacking. Beauty is in the cracks, the worn spots, and the imperfect lines. As a graphic designer, Wabi-Sabi is the antithesis of what I pursue every day -- perfection in my typography, layout, tight invisible Swiss inspired gridlines, etc. Mathematical symmetry is an unshakeable mission for many in my profession, and the ancient philosophies of Wabi-Sabi rip a hole in the side of it. I enjoy owning the book as a reminder that nothing in life, or design, is perfect. The very essence of life, work, art and nature is free of right angles, and chaos reigns supreme.

I agree with all the good things said about this book; it is a deceptively short, simple book with potent content. However, I feel something should be mentioned. This is a book primarily about appreciating wabi-sabi (about finding it or seeing it out in the world), not so much about creating it.

Koren describes wabi-sabi almost as a result of karma, or at least as a process in which the artist/designer has little impact. You can perhaps record it, but there's very little direct discussion of how to create wabi-sabi objects yourself (other than mention of sweaters made with randomly placed holes). This certainly doesn't take away from the book or reduce its value to artists and designers (seeing wabi-sabi and appreciating it is key to understanding, which in turn helps you use the concepts in your own work). I just feel the book's title is a bit misleading. What I would like to see (because I feel it is lacking in this book) is ideas on how artists might cultivate mistakes and accidents. Or take advantage of time and wear-n-tear. Or how artists use becoming/decaying metaphors. Just in general I would like to see more on wabi-sabi as it applies to the creation of things, rather than the appreciation of wabi-sabi in things that already exist. So this is a great book, but I think there's another great book on this subject that needs to be made.

A magnificent introduction to an aesthetic sensibility I was always aware of, and appreciated, but didn't imagine had a name. Thanks to this small but finely-honed book I now understand the intellectual underpinnings of a profound way of looking at the world. Wabi-sabi--the name of this beauty/mindset--is the perfect antidote to my frenetic, digital life. I've given this book as a gift to friends and have received many heartfelt thanks.

This exquisite little volume is food for the soul. It should be required reading for our species. It is a subtle wake-up call...which we need to take to heart...we need to re-evaluate what we produce. We need to re-evaluate the legacy we leave. This book illustrates the respect we should have for nature. It illustrates the inspiration we should find in nature. We have become a society producing perishable goods, much of which has little or no merit. Mr. Koren opens our eyes to the merit of producing goods which earn dignity with age, use and wear. It is truly an aesthetic for our time.

I love this book! It reminds me of the scene in "Brideshead Revisited" when Charles Ryder looks at the Van Gogh prints and travel posters decorating his room, and says, "I detected a jejune air which had not irked me before ... only the golden daffodils seemed to be real." Be warned: after you read this book, everything in your rooms will "irk" you except some wildflowers in a jam jar, an unpainted wooden table and one black futon. And you'll go insane if forced to stay at a Holiday Inn! Just carry some acorns and chestnuts in the pocket of your old sweater, and you'll survive.

I have studied Japanese tea ceremony in Kyoto for 23 years and during that time read almost

everything published in English on the subject. This book is a real pearl, and covers in all its shortness the subject so well, that you hardly need any other information to transform your life into something more beautiful and meaningful. It is a must for people directly involved with tea and Japanese aesthetics. It is a clear spring of sweet water that will quench the thirst of everyone. It is a source of inspiration, that can be integrated into any culture and be actively expressed in your own life style. Read it and feel inspired to do something great and good, not only for yourself, but for all you know, for nature and our common future on this earth.

This is a wonderfully crafted book of basic definitions for those who have never heard the term Wabi-Sabi. The pictures not only strengthen the points the author makes but also illustrate what he can't put into words. Wabi-Sabi is an aesthetic that mostly lives in the ditches, basements, and out-of-the-way places of modern American society. This book gives the license and some philosophical tools to explore the simple life as a thing of beauty contrary to the glittering clutter often thrown at us in every aspect of our lives.

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