

Wabi Sabi Aesthetics in Design

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Abstract: Wabi-sabi, the origin of Japanese culture and design thinking, a very fashionable word, is a very famous and sacred aesthetic thinking concept, cultural lovers in all fields of it are fond of it, but it is mysterious. What is “amazing silence and creation?” With its own vague, ethereal mystery, it represents a beauty of imperfection, which literally translates from the Japanese to wabi, sabi. It can be explained this way: it is the simple beauty of simple silence bathed in the halo of time. It is an appreciation of the rules and respect of nature. The word “design” is the process of conveying an idea through reasonable planning, careful planning, and various sensory forms. How to integrate the aesthetics of wabi-sabi into modern design and develop it while preserving its own aesthetics. We don’t seem to have a standard answer. Different people have different meanings of wabi-sabi. In addition, we can see multiple expression results in different things, such as tea art, Hara Kenya’s graphic design and so on. This is a concept that can only be understood but cannot be explained in words, which is worth further understanding and study.

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1 On the Word Wabi-sabi

The word WABI SABI is a misunderstanding in the translation of modern literature, Wabi 侘 was created by Chiriyu, a famous tea person in the Warring States Period of Japan, which blend the aesthetic feeling of the idea and the pursuit of tea together, that is, the image, and the original meaning of the word "amazing sabi" was extracted from the text in the early stage. Driven by the haiku poet Basho Matsuo, there is a little beauty in it: a beauty full of age that emerges from the appearance of old objects; Even if the appearance is mottled, or faded dim, can not stop a shock of beauty.

Wabi, the word for ostentatious bravado and achievement in Chinese, is added to the Japanese and has a much different meaning than before. In Japan, wabi-abi is the nominal form of the verb ‘s, easier to understand from the point of view of the adjective’ o/wabishii ‘, meaning a bad state as opposed to a good state. Extended meanings include ‘rough looking’, ‘shabby looking’, ‘poor’, etc. In later years, influenced by Zen and other ideas, the concept began to be positively transformed and incorporated into the concept of Japanese aesthetics.

"Loneliness" is the noun form of the verb "さぶ". At first, it meant that it became worse and worse over time. It can also be compared with the Chinese word "loneness", which means a state of profound silence without human voices. This word earlier is not a special concept of beauty, "futile grass" and other ancient books recorded that the word has the meaning of the ancient books sent out a thick taste, which confirmed that at that time has had the appreciation of the ancient beauty consciousness. By the Muromachi era, the idea had been taken seriously in the world of haiku, incorporated into art forms such as Noh, and theorized.

Nippon Wabi-sabi, a book on the aesthetics of wabi-sabi written by Daisyakri, is a book that needs no commentary and to which all words are superfluous. The beauty of wabi-sabi itself, as well as the perception of it, is covered in detail. What is recorded here is just some inspirations and feelings in the process of reading. Unless you come to this deep and mysterious aesthetic world, you can’t really understand it thoroughly. Before getting to know the specific connotation of the aesthetic concept of wabi-sabi, I was first exposed to the Japanese tea ceremony, Chirikyu, Hanado, and the Zen and art of Suzuki Daisuki. It’s not a systematic study, but it’s guided by a strong interest in reading and reading a lot along the way. Without prior exposure to any specifically analytical aesthetic treatise on wabi-sabi, it remained only a vague superficial perception. Can feel and recognize beauty vaguely, but do not know why it is beautiful. So-called know it but do not know why. Japan wabi-sabi by Daisykri is like putting on a pair of glasses and when you come back to appreciate the wide variety of art forms that embody the concept of Japanese aesthetics, the vision becomes clear and enlightened. It seems to be able to directly reach the depth of art, to obtain the most beautiful experience. Found perfection in imperfection, precipitate together with time.

2 The Representation of Wabi-sabi Aesthetics in Design

When we look at contemporary Japanese design again, we will find that this aesthetic consciousness of wabi-sabi has always permeated the blood of Japanese designers and brands. Such as master of folk art and industrial design in Japan sori yanagi works, whether small to a spoon, or a piece of furniture, must not do too much modified and polished, and always with frosted or handled the product surface of the fog, in the pursuit of a raw, natural flavor, even is a kind of incomplete, not perfect artistic conception. For

another example, we are more familiar with “Muji” brand, no matter the clothing, utensils or stationery, the style and material never deliberately cater to the trend, but seem to be “unchanged” forever. These styles seem boring at first glance, but it is exactly the “no design” that the brand pursues. The simplest and least unusual styles are spared the fate of being “out of date” because they ignore trends; Whether it is natural wood, pulp, or transparent and translucent PVC material, no matter how long it is used, it seems to be permanent as new, and will not be as easy to produce defects and use marks as those gorgeous new materials. What Muji establishes is more like an order of life, a way of life of being nothing and treating white as black, which is what wabi-sabi is all about, isn’t it? The concept of emphasizing natural materials does not stop at the material itself, but emphasizes that there is no deliberate artificial interference, which is the real creation in harmony with the beauty of nature, which is also the unconditional simple trust of human beings to nature.

The aesthetics of wabi-sabi in Japanese design concentrates the essence of Japanese philosophy, culture and art, as well as the aesthetic consciousness from the senses to the heart, from the objects to the universe. This aesthetic consciousness, it is in a moving beauty and under the care of generations of craftsmanship sustained inheritance; And the acceptance and acceptance of wabi-sabi aesthetics may reflect the inner pursuit of contemporary people for rest and affection in this imperfect world, which can cross ancient and modern times and transcend national boundaries.

3 Case Study of Wabi-sabi Aesthetics

The world all sentient beings, vegetation, implements props, each has each “feeling”, feeling the “feeling” of all things in heaven and earth, is the origin of human beings, if can’t perceive, doomed to “ruthless”, also can’t calculate to live in this world. Quietness is an elegant body. Even if you are dressed in a thousand silks, you will not forget a layer of silence. If there is no soul to do, life is no fun, no matter how complicated. Wabi sabi is ubiquitous in Japanese culture. In Japan, every aspect of life and clothing is permeated with the idea and shadow of wabi-sabi. Wabi, not escape and evasion, but a process of moving from a quiet environment to a refined state of mind, a better sense of beauty and pleasure. Only with the heart perception, with “aesthetic eyes” and “silent heart” to look at all things, “decadent into magic”, the ugly into beauty. Extracting and sublimating the common daily from the bottom and vulgar, aestheticizing the most common and rustic things, and seeing the beauty from the “wind” of the secular world.

In Japanese design, Tadao Ando’s life is a legend. When I first heard the name of Tadao Ando, a famous Japanese architect, it was his “church trilogy” series: the church of the wind in Kobe, the church of the water in Hokkaido, and the church of the light in Osaka. Tadao Ando’s church is a great work of the combination of Eastern wabi-sabi beauty and Western divinity. The Church of Light is very unique among Ando’s works. With his abstract, solemn, quiet, pure and geometric space creation, he makes the human spirit find a dwelling place. The design of the Church of Light can be seen as extremely abstract and very simple. It does not have the iconic steeple like the traditional church, but its internal space is a space full of religious significance. The overall expression of a quiet beauty, giving people a feeling of the same atmosphere as the dry landscape courtyard in Japan. From this point of view, the nature that Tadao Ando thinks refers to the artificial nature, another way of saying is the architectural nature. The nature he seeks is presented by the simultaneous introduction of material and geometrically based architecture, which is the essence of wabi-sabi aesthetics.

4 Feel in Design Thinking

Wabi sabi, in every sense of the word, is a transcendent aesthetic concept. It is a kind of transcendent and philosophical aesthetic realm. It’s important to realize that it’s not a negative aesthetic concept. People need good aesthetic cultivation. Only in this way can we look at life, the world and life qualitatively differently and find special meaning in it. Matsuo Basho once put forward a theory of “high enlightenment to vulgarity”. It means to go beyond the mundane and return to the mundane. I particularly like this meaning. The Japanese haiku, which maximally reflects the aesthetics of wabi-sabi, contains philosophy, religion, and aesthetics in a few short sentences, yet reads very homely and moving. Because haiku is a perfect aestheticized distillation of everything we hear and see around us, turning life into an artistic treasure. Good aesthetics preserves the benefits to human beings, that is the case. From haiku to tea ceremony, from artistic concept to life consciousness, wabi-sabi nurtured a unique Oriental aesthetic view, which became the origin of thinking in many fields such as contemporary architecture, photography, graphic design, fashion design and so on. The best way to learn about wabi-sabi is to accept the concept and then experience it in life.

Facing the fierce competition in the market today, where should our local design go? In the strong impact of the commercial tide today, where will the culture go? In today’s world integration, where will our design go? I was very touched by the words of the original gran zai: perhaps the future is in front of us, but when we look back, we will find that the long history for us to store rich accumulation.

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