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I want to use my exhibition to highlight a key global issue that humanity faces, the increasing waste crisis. I intend to introduce a new way of perceiving, through the lens of the Wabi Sabi and Kintsugi philosophy.

When searching similar words to 'imperfect', words such as 'garbage' and 'below par' came up. It is to say that the word, 'imperfect', is seen to be a negative. However, in the philosophy of Wabi Sabi, imperfection is seen as beauty and a reminder that all things are impermanent. Wabi Sabi is a philosophy developed from Japanese tea ceremonies in the fifteenth-century. It is the "aesthetic that finds the beauty in the imperfect, impermanent and incomplete" (Juniper 2003). In most western culture, it is perfection that we stride for. Ultimately, this symmetry driven, clean and faultlessness mindset can cause a lot of problems in the aspect of wastefulness and increasing throwaway culture.

Instead of getting rid of something that we deem to be broken and therefore useless, we should take inspiration by Kintsugi. Kintsugi is a repair art form for pottery in Japan, it is a way of mending broken parts of a ceramic piece with lacquer or powdered gold, highlighting the areas that have been restored, giving it a "whole new level of aesthetic complexity" (Gopnik 2009) and treating breakages as part of the history of the object. Just as the Wabi Sabi philosophy, the Kintsugi philosophy embraces the flaws and imperfections, looking to it as something to admire rather than discard.

I aim to create an exhibition that displays four pieces of art that embodies the idea of Wabi Sabi and Kintsugi, using work from a number of different artists and designers. I will attempt to create a cohesive exhibition located in Museum of Cardiff, that will give the viewer inspiration of what could be achieved with the Wabi Sabi mindset.



Fig One : Museum of Cardiff

I have chosen the Museum of Cardiff as the venue to have my exhibition in. The building which opened in 1882, show cases its Victorian Architecture while having a modern twist. I think this is a great parallel to the concept of my exhibition.



Fig two : Inside Museum of Cardiff - Cardiff in Context gallery space

This is the gallery space that the exhibition will take place. I think that the added detailed on the pillars bring some vintage hints to the room, while still feeling being modern with the open floor space. I think that the modern block like stand will be useful as a back-drop, to keep each art piece in-front of it. It can also double as an information stand, to explain and give background information for each item.



Fig Three : Greenwich Hotel Tribeca design

Someone who embodies the Wabi Sabi art form is Interior designer Alex Vervoordt. He incapacitates “21 century abstract art made by time” (Vervoordt 2018) within his designs. Vervoordt recognises that there is such beauty in old and worn things, which is why he makes new with things that already exists. He has creates effortless luxurious look, that “embraces a sense of history” (Pierrus 2018). Wabi Sabi has a strong focus on nature, this is translated into Vervoordt colour pallet and materials used in his interior designs. In figure three, you can see that the use of a neutral palette creates a “serene and harmonious” (Pierrus 2018). In effect, I feel that this neutral and earth like colour pallet would complement my exhibition and would highlight the art pieces on show.



Fig four : Tea Bowls

Figure four of two tea bowls, were created by Rie Tsuruta, a ceramic artist from Sussex. These carefully crafted petite porcelain ceramic bowls were made developed and derived from nature, “by working hand in hand with nature there was a sublime synergy” (Juniper 2003 pg74). Tsuruta’s use of the natural elements links back to the Wabi Sabi philosophy, which is why it is important to include it as apart of my exhibition. I also thought it was key to find local and lesser known artist, giving them a platform to be able to show case their art work.



Fig Five : Tea bowl fixed in the Kintsugi method

The Kintsugi aesthetic has become very popular, with the gold highlights giving a visual value to the once broken item. By viewing this grey tea bowl, figure five, though it is aesthetically pleasing, it reflects the “journey” (Rodriguez 2018). I think the concept of this philosophy is so versatile and can be applied to so many different aspects of life. It has a deeper connection our day to day living. The reassurance that even if we fall and become covered in scars, we should not try to cover those scars. Instead we should proudly show them.

Kintsugi art is more than just a repair job, it is the story of the object, and the “scars are the centre of attention” (Sportoletti 2017). The item is brought back to life, while simultaneously giving it new value, meaning that item does not go to waste. This philosophy of repair and new life, can be applied too far more than just ceramics, for example textiles. This form of repair can be translated into the textiles industry in the form of patch work, just like in figure five.



Fig Six : Finished Gansey Repair

Tom van Deijnen, a self-taught textiles practitioner, who works with wool and repairs knitted objects, figure six being something that he repaired. By using the red contrasting wool the repair work stands out, just like the gold cracks would on the ceramics with Kintsugi. I think it is crucial for this jumper to be in my exhibition because it represents the capability of change. The textiles industry is one of the biggest in the world and new trends, such as fast fashion, has created a whole new level of wasteful and environmentally unethical behaviour. It is pivotal that unnecessary one-use clothing trend stops. Clothes can be made to last years, and with the push of a new trend, visible mending, old clothes can be considered as “opportunities” (Sekules 2015)



Fig Seven : Thrifted transformation

Figure Seven is a dress that has been thrifted by YouTuber April, who's username is @coolirpa. An on going series, April find items of clothing in charity stores, these items still have a lot of wear left and a lot more life to give. Using the materials of this item, she transforms a once plain dress, for example, into a more stylish and modern dress. Instagram and Youtube influencers, such as April, are fundamental component on the fight towards change. They are able to use their platform to encourage viewers to up-cycle and be thrifty instead of buying new all the time. I think having an item in my exhibition that is stylish can really encourage and inspire creativity viewers. It is also important to put the effort in to really get the message of just how much you can do with an item of clothing. By offering up as many ideas and creative outlets to allow creative minds to grow we have more chance in reducing waste. It is harder to inspire when they are unawares of the possibilities, which is why it is more effective to use as many platforms to get the message across. The message of up-cycle, visible mending and transformation needs to be louder than the unavoidable message of retail sales.

This showcase not only aims to be a visual experience but also a way to spread a deeper message. The set up of my exhibition will be simple and easy to follow, and will read from left to right, starting with figure four up to figure seven. Each item will either be placed on a clean white table or simply hung on a mannequin, with the blocks behind having all the information about each art piece. My intention is have a story like flow, starting from the concept. First by using Wabi Sabi philosophy to inform that beauty can and is found in old and worn things. As it steams from traditionally tea ceremony's, it seemed fitting to have tea bowls. Then, the concept of Kintsugi next, highlighting the scars of life. The beauty found in the art of Kintsugi will hopefully open the viewers eyes to the potential of other ways of repairing. Which takes them to the realisation that this philosophy can be adapted into everyday life, for example clothes. First, the clothes that they own, visible mending, allowing the life span of their clothes to double. Then finally insisted of going straight to new clothing stores, they will consider going to find clothes in a charity shop, with items that still has much to offer. This is when they will be able to transform this item of clothing into something new, while keeping waste low. My goal with this exhibition is to inspire the viewer to try and apply the philosophy of Wabi Sabi and the philosophy of Kintsugi, into their everyday life.

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Figures

Fig One : Museum of Cardiff - https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g186460-d2179679-Reviews-Museum_of_Cardiff-Cardiff_South_Wales_Wales.html#photos;aggregationId=&albumid=101&filter=7&ff=229087592 [Accessed 11th May 2020]

Fig Two : Museum of Cardiff- Cardiff in Context gallery space <https://cardiffmuseum.com/venue-hire/> [Accessed 11th May 2020]

Fig Three : Wabi-Sabi: The Luxury of imperfection <https://interiorstylehunter.com/wabi-sabi-the-luxury-of-imperfection/> [Accessed 11th May 2020]

Fig Four : Tea Bowls <https://www.rietsuruta.co.uk/gallery> [Accessed 11th May 2020]

Fig Five : Tea bowl fixed in the Kintsugi method <https://medium.com/@andreamantovani/kintsugi-and-the-art-of-repair-life-is-what-makes-us-b4af13a39921> [Accessed 11th May 2020]

Fig Six : Finished Gansey Repair <https://tomofholland.com> [Accessed 11th May 2020]

Fig Seven : Thrifted Transformation <https://www.instagram.com/p/BPiFWsejGfJ/> [Accessed 11th May 2020]

