

Kenya Hara

Traditional Aesthetics

Traditional Japanese aesthetics is considered to be imperfect, insufficient, incomplete, asymmetric, and irregular. There are two concepts of Japanese aesthetics, Wabi-Sabi. Wabi means simple and plain beauty whereas, Sabi means something that has aged well, rusty has acquired its own beauty. Kenya Hara gives us his thoughts on what Muji's theme is. He describes it as emptiness, because they create products where people buy their products and use it to their own. For example, if there is a Muji tea bowl that is placed in a tea room, it showcases the fact that Muji takes after traditional culture. The culture values simple, clean, empty, vacant aesthetic.



Inspirations

Kenya Hara's inspirations stem from Japanese traditional folk craft objects and traditions. He bases traditional Japanese aesthetics on four keywords: sensai (delicateness), chimitsu (meticulousness), teinei (thoroughness / attention to detail), and kanketsu (simplicity). Hara believes that design should function as a planning process where designers provide a little awakening that might change what people want from the city / area. He also believes that design must be a slow and quiet education that influences the quality of need.



BauHaus

In an interview, Kenya Hara discusses the industry reaching an end. He states, "we are going through a change, from having to create products to having to create value." Hara talks about having designers designing for value and the number of people working in factories has decreased for producing mass goods. In connection, Walter Gropius, the founder of the BauHaus has also stated something similar. Gropius believes that mechanized work is lifeless and the machine-economy will be unproductive. This will trap the designers in a box and there will be no growth for creativity.

Muji

Kenya Hara has spent the 15 years as Muji's art director and continues to be. Muji's simple aesthetic allows their products to be placed in contemporary Japanese designs that fits in to different life styles and homes. Kenya Hara discusses the main goal of Muji is to create an improvement of how people live. This goal is quite similar to the Bauhaus ideals. The Bauhaus designers wanted to create work that was meaningful, beautiful products for everyday health to make it more healthy and invigorating. In addition to Muji products, there is also food and hotels.

