

Koren's comparison between modernism and wabi-sabi, which is useful within the context of DIY/making. (GH)

Differences:

modernism

Primarily expressed in the public domain

Implies a logical, rational worldview

Absolute

wabi-sabi

Primarily expressed in the private domain

Implies an intuitive worldview

Relative

Looks for personal, idiosyncratic solutions

One of a-kind/variable

There is no progress

Present oriented

Believes in the fundamental uncontrollability of nature

Romanticizes nature

People adapting to nature

Organic organization of form (soft, vague shapes and edges)

Looks for universal, practical solutions

Mass produced/median

Progressively faith in progress

Future oriented

Believes in the control of nature

Romanticizes technology

People adapting to machines

Geometric organization of form (sharp, precise, definite shapes and edges)

To every thing there is a season

Perfect immateriality is an ideal

Function and utility are not so important

Generally dark and dim

Warm

Everlasting

is an ideal

perfect materiality

Function and utility are primary values

Generally light and bright

Cool

Is comfortable with ambiguity and contradiction

Solicits the expansion of sensory information

Corrosion and contamination make its expression richer

Accommodates to degradation and attrition

Ostensibly crude

Natural materials

The bowl as metaphor (free shape, open at top)

wabi-sabi

Is intolerant of ambiguity and contradiction

Solicits the reduction of sensory information

Purity makes its expression richer

Needs to be well-maintained

Ostensibly slick

Manmade materials

The box as metaphor (rectilinear, precise, contained)

modernism