

MAKE MEND: DARN.

Wabi-Sabi Workshop Series

Friday, September 10, 2021

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Watt Hall Courtyard

University of Southern California

RELATED EVENTS:

MAKE MEND: I'M DYE-ING TO MAKE THAT!

Monday, December 6, 2021, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
USC Fisher Museum of Art Courtyard

MAKE MEND: KINTSUGI HACK

Friday, April 15, 2022, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
USC Fisher Museum of Art Courtyard

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- This is the first of a series of wabi-sabi workshops presented by the USC Roski School of Art and Design.
- Participants are invited to bring items that need repair, embellishment, or altering. An *étui* (a sewing kit containing necessary materials and tools) will be provided.

WABI-SABI

Wabi-sabi is a concept in Japanese aesthetics that centers the beauty in imperfection, seeing flaws as part of beauty.

BORO

Boro is a type of Japanese textile made by mending and patching. The term derives from a word that means tattered, ragged, or repaired.

Boro textiles are usually made via continuous, repeated patchwork and/or stitch repair. A single boro garment or duvet cover might be the work of generations of patching and repair, with family lineages embedded in the layers upon layers of patches. Boro reflects the values of wabi-sabi (beauty in imperfection) and minimizing waste.

SASHIKO

Sashiko is a form of traditional Japanese stitching that dates back to the Edo period (1603–1867). It is often done with white thread on blue cloth. Originally used to mend or strengthen homemade clothes, including layering fabrics to create warmer garments, it is also decorative, featuring geometric patterns or nature-inspired motifs like waves or mountains. The word *sashiko* means “little stabs,” referring to the small running stitches that characterize this form of embroidery.

Sashiko inspired today’s trend of visible mending, in which clothes are repaired by hand and the stitches are deliberately visible and beautiful, making repair an opportunity for creative expression and a sign of sustainable fashion rather than something to be hidden.

SEWING IN CONTEXT

Sewing is an ancient art and craft that has been practiced for thousands of years, with different sewing and stitching techniques being deeply rooted in different cultures. The Industrial Revolution brought mechanization and mass production to what was once a handmade and often household-based craft, but hand-sewing still endures as both a regular and a reclaimed practice. In many cultures, sewing has been primarily considered “women’s work,” along with other domestic arts. Feminist scholars have traced the impacts and implications of this gendering, and feminist artists and activists have variously reclaimed and reconsidered the art and craft of sewing.

For hundreds of years (at least), women have gathered in sewing circles where they could discuss politics or charitable causes while sewing. There were abolitionist sewing circles in the pre-Civil War United States, and “Stitch ’n’ Bitch” groups during World War II and later revived in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

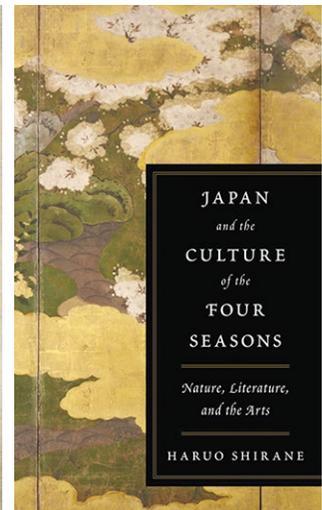
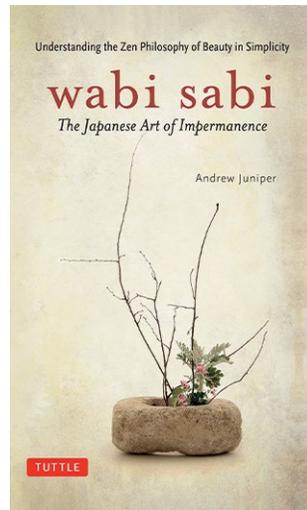
Hand-sewing today is done for a wide variety of reasons: as household necessity, work, creative art, top-quality tailoring, custom fashion, cultural tradition, sustainable fashion (recycling, mending, and making clothes from reclaimed materials instead of always buying new or throwing away), and, as this event proposes, a wellness practice.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- ⦿ What associations do you have with the concepts of mending and repair? Did this workshop shift your perception of these terms or practices in any way?
- ⦿ How can mending be a wellness practice?
- ⦿ What is the value of seeing the beauty in imperfection, or the imperfection in beauty?
- ⦿ To what else can you apply the concept of wabi-sabi?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- ⦿ Social Justice Sewing Academy
sjsacademy.org
- ⦿ Repair Café
repaircafe.org
- ⦿ Tom of Holland: The Visible Mending Programme
tomofholland.com
- ⦿ Christina Kim of the eco-conscious design house Dosa
dosainc.com
- ⦿ The Far Woods: designers, artists, and sisters Sonya and Nina Montenegro, who wrote a book called *Mending Life: A Handbook for Repairing Clothes and Hearts*
thefarwoods.com
- ⦿ Aja Barber, who works at the intersections of fashion and sustainability
ajabarber.com
- ⦿ Artist Andrea Zittel
zittel.org



DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

Rebecca Corbett of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

BOOKS

- ⦿ Rupert Cox, *The Zen Arts: An Anthropological Study of the Culture of Aesthetic Form in Japan* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003).
- ⦿ Andrew Juniper, *Wabi Sabi: The Japanese Art of Impermanence* (Boston: Tuttle, 2003).
- ⦿ Leonard Koren, *Wabi-sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets, & Philosophers* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1994).
- ⦿ Morgan Pitelka, *Japanese Tea Culture: Art, History, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2003).
- ⦿ Haruo Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2012).

ARTICLES

- ⦿ Carol Hayes, “Sashiko Needlework Reborn: From Functional Technology to Decorative Art,” *Japanese Studies* 39, no. 2 (2019): 263–80.
- ⦿ Moira Vincentelli, “Japanese Sashiko Textiles,” *The Journal of Modern Craft* 4, no. 1 (2011): 99–103.

DATABASE

[JapanKnowledge](https://japanknowledge.org)

JapanKnowledge is a powerful reference tool for Japanese language and culture. You can easily search its multiple dictionaries, encyclopedias, full-text journals, and books.