

# VISUAL ART THEME

2011-2012

## Timeless Art - Art for a Time: Ephemeral and Site-Based Art

**An inquiry into the beauty of the imperfect, the temporary, and the incomplete;**

**A dialogue between artist, materials, time, and space.**

# What is Ephemeral Art?

- **EPHEMERAL:** Things that are transitory, existing only briefly. Typically the term is used to describe objects found in nature, although it can describe a wide range of things.
- **EPHEMERAL ART:** Art works that are temporary, impermanent, and often experiential.
- **EXAMPLES:**
  - The Japanese aesthetic of Wabi-Sabi,
  - Installation art
  - Site-based and time-based art

# What is Wabi-Sabi?

- A Japanese mind set and aesthetic philosophy (connected to Zen Buddhism) that acknowledges three things: nothing is perfect, nothing lasts, and nothing is finished.
- This Aesthetic is found in objects connected to the Japanese Tea Ceremony, Ikebana Flower Arranging, as well as sculpture and design.
- Wabi-Sabi is also considered a frame of mind:
  - When one momentarily surrenders the ego in reverence for the object or scene, and acknowledges the relevance of time or location upon it.
  - It can be experienced any time or anywhere if one is mindful enough to see it.

## What is Installation Art?

- **Installation Art:** Describes an artistic genre of site-specific, three-dimensional works designed to transform a viewer's perception of a space.
  - **Site-Specific:** Artwork created to exist in a certain place. Typically, the artist takes the location into account while planning and creating the artwork.
- **Time-Based or 'Live' Art:** A term used to describe acts of performance undertaken by an artist or a group of artists, as a work of art.
  - It is an innovative and exploratory approach to contemporary performance practices. Temporality tends to be a key theme of this sort of work.

## Artist at the Center:

- Wabi-Sabi Ritual/Ceremonial Objects:
- Andy Goldsworthy: a British artist who collaborates with nature to make his creations. Besides England and Scotland, his work has been created at the North Pole, in Japan, the Australian Outback, in the U.S. and many others. Goldsworthy regards his creations as transient, or ephemeral. He photographs each piece once right after he makes it. His goal is to understand nature by directly participating in nature as intimately as he can. He generally works with whatever comes to hand: twigs, leaves, stones, snow and ice, reeds and thorns.
- Art 21 (Artists in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) Menu of artists and inter disciplinary curricular connections

## Other Artists of Note:

- Isamu Noguchi: Japanese-American sculptor, set designer, furniture designer and installation artist
- Banksy: British street artist; *Exit Through the Gift Shop*
- Art21
  - Doris Salcedo
  - Judy Pfaff
  - Pepon Osorio
  - Ann Hamilton
- Bradford Smith
- Brian Goggin

## Online Resources:

- Check out all the links on [Crystal's](#) teacher website!
- [Rivers and Tides](#) Andy Goldsworthy's art in nature
- [The Heidelberg Project](#) Tyree Guyton's transformation of a Detroit neighborhood
- [Art21](#) PBS Site for Artists