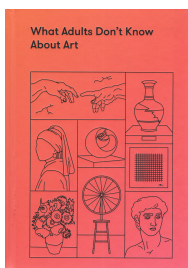


The School Of Life

What Adults Don't Know About Art

The School Of Life, 2021



• 53

One day, a very long time ago, in the 14th century, the ruler of Japan knocked over a bowl. It fell on the floor and broke into pieces. It was a simple bowl but he liked it very much: he used to drink his favourite tea from it every day. He was very upset.

Instead of just throwing the broken pieces away and getting a new bowl, one of his assistants came up with a good idea. They'd mend the bowl in a very special way, by using gold to join the pieces back together. It was very tricky to do but in the end they managed it. The bowl looked even more beautiful than before: It was a work of art.

The ruler was so pleased that they made up a special name for this way of mending things. They called it *kintsugi*. *Kin* means 'golden' in Japanese and *tsugi* means 'joinery', or putting things together. So *kintsugi* means 'mending with gold'.

Kintsugi represents an important idea: It suggests that things that are broken can be mended, and mended so nicely that they are even better than they were before. You can still see where it was broken, but now you don't mind.

It is not just bowls that can get broken. A friendship might get damaged – someone might say something not very nice and you feel let down and upset. Maybe you feel like throwing the broken friendship away. Or maybe sometimes you feel a bit broken yourself. Everything seems to be going wrong and you just want to give up. But the idea behind kintsugi tells us that as well as bowls, friendships and people can be mended and be better than before. Saying sorry or forgiving someone strengthens a friendship. It doesn't pretend that there hasn't been a problem. If you let someone help, you can solve your problems, and you will be stronger because you've learned to ask for help when you needed it.

• 61

We can use art as a tool to help our brains find ways of making things more exciting.

• 62

It's only very recently (in terms of the long story of history) that it has become normal for people to have cameras in their phones. Indeed, mobile phones themselves weren't invented very long ago at all! You are among the first people ever who find it normal to see photographs of everything all the time.

That's amazing. But it's also a bit of a problem. Because when you can take lots of photos of anything you want, whenever you want, you don't actually need to look at things very carefully.

• 144

(...) The aim of civilisation is that all the material, physical things we own or use should help our souls.