

Statement  
**Betz Bernhard**

In 1971, I attended and studied ceramics at the Kansas City Art Institute with the famous Potter, Ken Ferguson. Through this instruction, I was introduced to the concept of Zen culture in Japan. I fell in love with the celebration of life and nature as expressed in Japanese aesthetics and design.

As a child of the 60's, I related to the worship of nature and a certain minimalism as expressed in the rustic ceramic tea bowls I was learning to throw on a potter's wheel.

When I first discovered vintage kimonos many years later, I was seduced by the beauty of the fabrics. The dyes used in the silk, the way the silks were woven (Meisen kimonos are my favorite) and the beauty of the designs were unlike any fabric I had ever seen. The simple construction of the garment reminded me of my earlier love of Japanese ceramics. The kimono felt like a bridge to my younger self. I began collecting.

Initially, it was difficult to cut up these beautiful creations but I knew I wanted to use the fabric into a new form that belonged to me.

The modern history of Kimono fascinated me. Kimono is the intersection of art, craft and the need to keep warm on a cold night. Traditionally they are family heirlooms, cherished and lovingly passed down through generations. Their basic silhouette and structure flatters all body shapes and sizes. They are the most elegant of uniforms in their beauty and simplicity. They allow the wearer to be both a part of a group and to stand out as her own person.

The use of kimonos combined with the concept of Wabi Sabi - the beauty of imperfection and the idea of Boroboro - that act of mending and reusing something tattered and worn plays an important role in my creative process.

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