

NAFA Alumni Solo Spotlight Series

Healing Through Modern Kintsugi

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1. Thanks for accepting this interview, share with us where has your creativity taken you after you graduated from NAFA?

It is my pleasure and honour to be interviewed for this series!

After completing my BA(Hons) in Graphic Communication, I worked at an advertising agency, joined UBER as a designer and led a creative team at a start-up tech company at 25. My latest stint was designing for Facebook's Vice President (Asia Pacific), Dan Neary.

Currently I'm the founder of Gold & Behold, co-founder and food/prop stylist at WOMIT Collective, and founder of Mellow Muse, a branding & design studio.

2. What prompted you to start your brand, Gold & Behold?

I founded Gold & Behold in 2017, having discovered crafting as an effective creative outlet to heal from my personal experience coping with depression.

Previously we explored using concrete, resin and Jesmonite as crafting mediums, and we are currently the first and only company in Singapore combining traditional Japanese Kintsugi with mixed mediums, offering unique crafting workshops, lifestyle accessories and homewares.

Gold & Behold is also a catalyst to raise awareness for causes that I believe in. We advocate mental wellness through our workshops and have raised funds for the Breast Cancer Foundation and Metropolitan YMCA, to name a few.

GOLD & BEHOLD

3. What is Gold & Behold's Modern Kintsugi workshop about?

Our workshop 'The Healing Art of Modern Kintsugi' pays homage to the healing and meditative nature of the Kintsugi philosophy and craft technique.

Traditionally, Kintsugi is the Japanese art of putting broken pottery pieces back together with gold — a metaphor for embracing our flaws and imperfections.

During this workshop, participants will learn to slow down and face personal imperfections, rebuilding our broken pieces and coming out stronger at the end of the self-healing process both literally and figuratively.



4. How does Kintsugi help in the self-healing process?

At Gold & Behold, participants receive flawed pieces for them to 'break' during the start of the workshop. This is part of our upcycling efforts to give a new lease of life to products that would otherwise be discarded due to their slight manufacturing defects.

We understand that traditionally, Kintsugi ("golden joinery" in Japanese) is a technique used to fix ceramics and pottery that were unintentionally broken. However, we believe in crafting an experiential workshop that provides self-discovery and reflection. The process of breaking an object is a symbolic step to overcoming our internal imperfections, trauma and struggles, making it an essential part of the workshop.

The unpredictability of the sizes, shapes and cracks of the broken pieces serves as an apt metaphor to the uncertainty of life's troubles. The process of Kintsugi teaches us to face our broken pieces courageously and create something stronger and more beautiful at the end of the process.

We also hand mix an array of gold powders -- something you will not find anywhere else. Every part of the workshop and our pieces are designed and executed with great thought and considerations.



5. Share on a memorable challenge you have experienced as an entrepreneur and how did you overcome that?

I have faced plenty of challenges as I am running brand alone. One recent challenge occurred when I started receiving questions regarding our Modern Kintsugi workshop process.

Some of the comments included: "Do you break the pieces on purpose? If you do, is it still Kintsugi?" or "So... you break perfectly fine pieces for the sake of Kintsugi?" etc.

Initially, I felt misunderstood since I have always been respectful to different cultures. To clear these concerns, I spent three days writing a FAQ section to educate consumers about my creative vision and perspective of the Kintsugi philosophy.

It is important that my work is not misunderstood as disrespectful to the original meaning of Kintsugi, but a means to upcycle defective pottery, giving them a new lease of life through the meditative workshops we provide.



Do you have an interesting alumni story to share?
Send us your stories & photos to
alumni@nafa.edu.sg
*We will feature them on our Facebook/
Instagram/Linkedin pages!*

6. What are some ways you've given back to the local arts scene or your alma mater?

I am honoured to be invited as a Creative Portfolio Reviewer each year during the annual NAFA Career Week. I always look forward to the time of the year as I enjoy sharing my industry knowledge and experience with graduating students.


As a small business owner, I also got to know many lovely makers, crafters and artisans like myself. We will share tips, insights, findings and resources to help each other. I also actively feature fellow makers & their works on Gold & Behold's Instagram. I believe in collaboration over competition.

7. As part of Teacher's Day, which lecturer would you like to give thanks to this September?

During my Diploma and Degree education in NAFA, I have benefited from the generous sharing of insights and knowledge from countless lecturers. It is hard to pinpoint just one lecturer as they have all impacted me in different ways.

I want to thank Mr Russell Lee, Ms Winnie Tan, Ms Tan Ai Khim, Mr Eric Tan, Ms Tan Yee Noh and Ms Oscar Ng to name a few, for imparting their knowledge and care to me.





"吃得苦中苦，方为人上人"

My Mum shared this proverb with me when I was going through a tough time, this means one cannot achieve glory without experiencing trials and tribulations.

Winnie Wong
NAFA Alumna

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