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| **Mingei (民芸)** |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Developed in Japan in the mid-1920s, ‘Mingei’ denotes a concept that encompasses objects, aesthetics, and philosophy. Developed by three individuals — religious philosopher and aesthete Yanagi Muneyoshi (Sōetsu 柳宗悦, 1889-1961), and potters Hamada Shōji (浜田庄司, 1894-1978) and Kawai Kanjirō (河井寛次郎, 1890-1966) — Mingei recognises the beauty in humble folk crafted objects sold at markets. The three founding members conceived the term *minshū-teki kōgei* (craft with characteristics of people), eventually shortening it to Mingei. Typical Mingei objects were handcrafted wares from pre-modern eras produced in large quantities for everyday use. Yanagi claimed that their beauty — the simplicity, robustness, and honesty of the material — was ‘born, not made.’ As such, one could recognise the beauty of said objects through ‘direct perception’ or ‘seeing before knowing.’ A wide range of Japanese and non-Japanese ideas informed Mingei theory, including those of John Ruskin, William Morris, William Blake, Walt Whitman, Émile Mâle, and the works of British potter Bernard Leach (1887-1979). While Mingei began as a sense of appreciation, it developed into an artistic movement through research and propagation in the magazine *Kōgei* (*Craft* [1931-1951]). |
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| Further reading:  (Mingeikan)  (Brandt)  (Kikuchi)  (Nakami)  (Yanagi) |