

Rooted in Tea:

A quest for groundedness

What is meant by Groundedness?

Groundedness is a feeling of emotional rootedness when a person has **strong connections** with their **physical, social** and **historical environments**. It provides **emotional resilience** in times of difficult transitions.

Groundedness is **a state of being where people feel safe and strong**. It is akin to the feeling of **being at home**, that is built up over time.

How is Mindfulness related?

Mindfulness and groundedness both **afford people emotional stability**. **Mindfulness** is focused **inwards**, and roots people to the present by enhancing connection to self. **Groundedness** is focused **outwards** on establishing and maintaining connections to people, place and past. Being grounded in the present by being mindful, helps us cherish our existing connections.

To resolve this conflict, **the main aim was to resolve this tension through a ritual** that fosters **groundedness** in people **by being mindfully playful**.

The user group

Young Urban Professionals, around 30-40 year old who live in metropolitan cities. They have busy lives and often find themselves stuck in between responsibilities and routines. Although routines provide stability, they do not provide the space and freedom of playing and exploring. I wanted to incorporate a moment of play into a routine activity through design.

Therefore to foster groundedness, we need at least **three things**:

- 1) Creating a **small special moment** that is an **everyday** occurrence.
- 2) Should be **multi-sensory** and **immerse senses** often underutilized.
- 3) It has to be **mindful, engaging**, and stimulate a low-energy **playfulness**.

Interaction qualities

- **Slow:** Cannot be rushed through.
- **Deliberate:** Being careful and mindful to actions.
- **Calming:** Bringing down the energy levels.
- **Fascinating:** That captures the user's attention.
- **Playful:** Invites exploration and discovery.

Moodboard

- *Wabi* is about recognizing beauty in humble simplicity. It invites us to open our heart and detach from the vanity of materialism so we can experience spiritual richness instead.
- *Sabi* is concerned with the passage of time, the way all things grow, age, and decay, and how it manifests itself beautifully in objects. It suggests that beauty is hidden beneath the surface of what we actually see, even in what we initially perceive as broken.



Final Design

The rooted tea trove

An **unconventional tea box**, with each box containing different ingredients for making tea.

The form of the boxes **visually** invites the users to explore them, and utilize their sense of **smell** to identify the ingredients. By first shaking and figuring out ingredients through the **sound**, and then opening the boxes up, smelling the ingredients and finally **steeping** it to make their own tea, successfully triggers all five senses.

Playfulness is inspired by the box forms, and creating their own tea blend. Due to the apparent fragility of the boxes, the tea ritual is **slowed down and deliberate**.

As a **daily practice** it is both grounding and mindful, and ties in with the Japanese Wabi-Sabi aesthetic.



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