

DESIGN SAMURAI  KASHIWA SATO



PHOTO:
Sato in his Samurai studio office, located in the Azabu district of Tokyo. Its simple, functional layout symbolizes his design philosophy.

A

Art director Kashiwa Sato's designs are as simple and powerful as a razor-sharp Japanese sword — no wonder he named his studio "Samurai."

Sato's achievements in the design field encompass a wide range of projects including beverage development, mobile phone design, work with fashion labels, and recently even art direction for universities and kindergartens.

"If it's a new mobile phone, for example, I provide total direction at every step from product design to content and promotion for the launch. For a kindergarten, I take care of everything from construction to uniforms, logos and websites. That way we can achieve a really powerful impact," he said.

BELOW: Uniqlo's Soho store in New York. *Katakana* logos on the construction enclosure sparked New Yorkers' interest even before the doors opened.

PHOTO: GREGORY GOODE



PHOTO: MIKIYA TAKIMOTO

ABOVE: Fuji Kindergarten in Tokyo's Tachikawa City. The building and grounds were designed as a huge play space.

Sato built his international reputation as art director for the 2006 opening of Uniqlo's New York store, spearheading the casual clothing retailer's expansion into the global market. The launch was a hit: design elements such as a logo featuring Japanese *katakana* characters and a fresh store layout got people talking. Some 300 customers lined up outside before the store's doors even opened.

"I used the *katakana* script as a symbol of pop culture," explains Sato. "I think the New York opening was such a success because rather than localizing the design to match the American environment, I expressed all the things that seem most real to me right now from a totally Tokyo perspective."

Sato's lean, essential style communicates across boundaries of age, gender and nationality.

@ ON THE INTERNET

<http://kashiwamoto.com>