

Ten years in the making, the Sea of Time – TOHOKU Art Museum (tentative name) will be completed in 2027 in Tomioka, Fukushima. Permanent home of Tatsuo Miyajima’s installation artwork is a collaboration with architect Tsuyoshi Tane, graphic designer Rikako Nagashima, and others.



View from the planned site (Photo by Yuki Iwanami)

The Sea of Time – TOHOKU Project Executive Committee will construct a new museum in Tomioka, Fukushima to permanently house Tatsuo Miyajima’s installation artwork *Sea of Time – TOHOKU*.

Sea of Time – TOHOKU is a project by contemporary artist Tatsuo Miyajima to remember the souls lost in the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 and pass down memories of the disaster for future generations. This art project aims to forge a future for the region in collaboration with people who live in and feel connected to Tohoku. Since beginning in 2015, the project has engaged nearly 3,000 people in its production.

Sea of Time – TOHOKU Official Site | <https://seaoftime.org/>

Tatsuo Miyajima draws on core concepts of “Keep Changing,” “Connect with Everything,” and “Continue Forever,” and uses LED numeral counters symbolizing the eternity of life in works that grapple with the topic of life and death. The production of this artwork has already engaged some 3,000 people in the project and its workshops.

Participants in project workshops are asked to set the speed at which an LED numeral counts from 9 to 1. For this installation, 3,000 of these LEDs reflecting different people's feelings are to be placed in a large water basin, creating a time and place where people can quietly appreciate the space while thinking about their loved ones and their lives.



A project workshop



One of the LED counters used

Miyajima calls the Sea of Time – TOHOKU project “my way as an artist to come to terms with the feeling of powerlessness in the face of the natural menace of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake.” The number of participants, the size of the work, and the motivation behind the work are all significantly different from Sea of Time '98, which has been on view at Benesse Art Site Naoshima since 1998. *Sea of Time – TOHOKU* will become Miyajima's largest-ever project, and has been intended for permanent installation in the Tohoku region since it was first conceived (Note: Naoshima's *Sea of Time* '98 employs 125 LED counters).

With the site now chosen, the project team will welcome architect Tsuyoshi Tane and graphic designer Rikako Nagashima as the art museum takes the next steps toward construction. Tane proposes the concept of “Archaeology of the Future” as a means of creating architecture from the memory of places. Nagashima, a designer who has interacted with Miyajima over many years, will become a mediator of concepts and ideas, translating them into visual information. Her design will make the museum experience more profound and memorable for visitors.

Comments from Tsuyoshi Tane and Rikako Nagashima

Tsuyoshi Tane:

“In May 2011, I witnessed the unprecedented devastation caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake. Over the years, I visited the affected areas numerous times, carrying with me a sense of helplessness over what I couldn't do. During my first visit to Tomioka, I saw elementary school children running around energetically in the schoolyard, and I was struck by the need to think carefully about the future we are creating in which they will live. I want this art museum to be a place for the future created together with the local community in Tomioka.”

Rikako Nagashima:

“When confronted by problems full of contradictions, I believe no amount of thinking is likely to lead to an answer. But honesty about the lack of answers and the struggle can function like the faint glow of a small warning light in the face of problems that persist since the day the earthquake struck, even as they constantly change and are slowly being forgotten as the days go by.”

About the planned site in Tomioka, Fukushima

A place of tranquility and serenity, where you can feel the mountains and waves, located between Fukushima Daiichi and Daini Nuclear Power Plants.

Tomioka is a small town located in Fukushima Prefecture with a resident population 2,565 (Number of registered residents 11,338 as of December 2024), known for its rice, sake rice, and onions unique to the coastal region of Fukushima. Since ancient times, the area's abundant seas supported trade with inland areas and the Edo shogunate, and Tomioka has been a popular place to enjoy cherry blossoms since trees were planted in the Meiji era. In the Yonomori district, traditions including the cherry blossom festival and fire festival are still practiced today.

Tomioka is located between the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi and Daini nuclear power plants, and is surrounded by mountains on three sides. After the 2011 earthquake, the residential areas that once occupied the land between Tomioka Station and the sea were damaged in the tsunami, and later cleared as part of the decontamination of radioactive materials. Today, the area contains the fields of a winery that sees wine as a key to local development, and features demonstration projects using smart agriculture technology as part of the Innovation Coast Framework. Migrants have gradually increased, an art center has opened on the main street, and new forward-thinking initiatives are taking root across the town.

Miyajima wanted a site with a view of the sea for the permanent installation of *Sea of Time – Tohoku*, and found the planned site thanks to a chance connection with a Tomioka official during a scouting trip along the Pacific coast of Tohoku. Seemingly guided to the spot, Miyajima spent time in town, interacted with many local people, and decided to purchase the land after growing attached to the site.

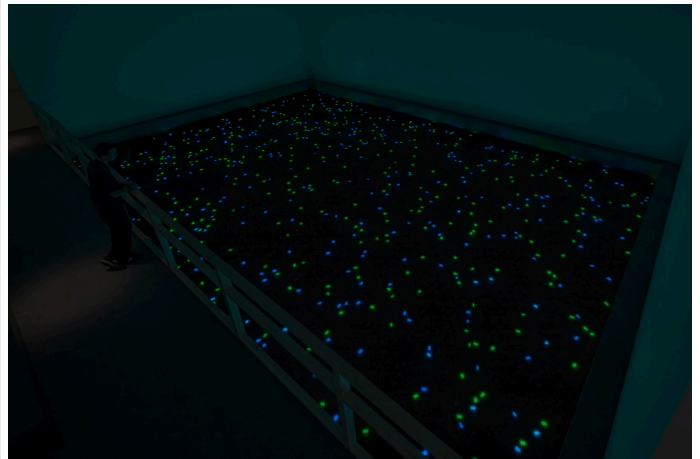
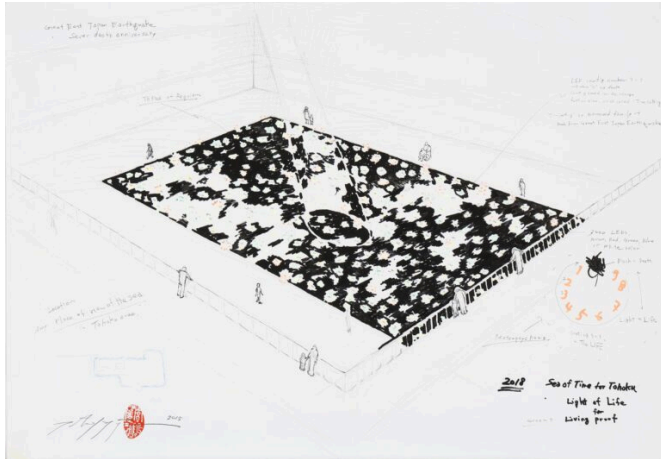
The total area of the project site is 36,744 m² (approx. five soccer fields, including portions to be acquired). The large piece of land has a beautifully uneven soundscape, where the sound of waves gradually grows louder as one moves from the entrance to the ocean side. In the course of dialogue with numerous Tohoku residents who participated in workshops, no one expresses negative feelings about the sea, and locals' love for the sea is readily apparent despite the enormous toll taken by the tsunami. Anticipate the creation of a place set amid beautiful nature where visitors can think about others while looking at the sea of Tohoku and the quiet ripples of light across *Sea of Time – Tohoku*.



View from the planned construction site (Photos by Yuki Iwanami)

About the Artwork

A 22.5 x 40 meter water basin will glisten with the light of 3,000 LED counters set according to the feelings of 3,000 people. The scene may evoke gentle waves on the Tohoku sea.

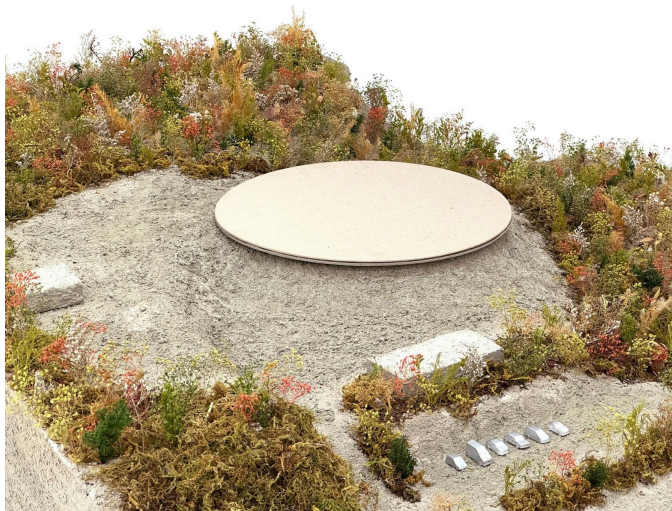


Left: Tatsuo Miyajima | 《Sea of Time - TOHOKU》 concept drawing | 2015

Right: Tatsuo Miyajima | 《Sea of Time - TOHOKU》 [Portion] | 2020

About the Architecture

The planned construction site is currently a vacant lot, offering a view of the sea. As a museum dedicated to the permanent installation of *Sea of Time - TOHOKU*, it aims to become a place where nature is restored and people can gather.



Left: Sea of Time – TOHOKU Art Museum (tentative name) model with roof

Right: Sea of Time – TOHOKU Art Museum (tentative name) model unroofed

Name: Sea of Time – TOHOKU Art Museum (tentative name)

Location: Tomioka-machi, Futaba-gun, Fukushima

Site area: 36,744m² (planned)

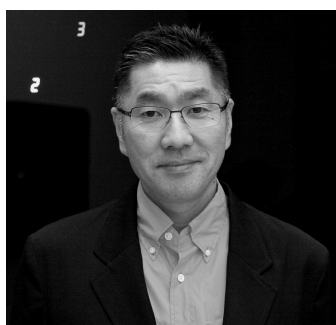
Design: ATTA - Atelier Tsuyoshi Tane Architects

Completion: 2027 (planned)

About the Project Team

Giving shape to local memory and the feelings of individuals

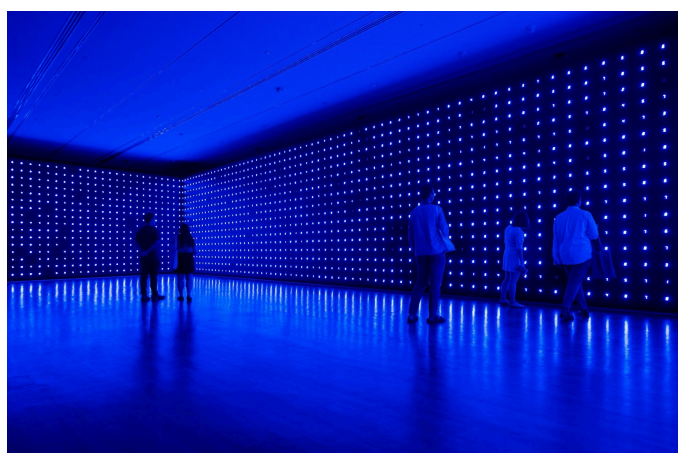
The Sea of Time – TOHOKU Art Museum (tentative name) has assembled a project team that includes architect Tsuyoshi Tane, who creates architecture from the memory of places, and graphic designer Rikako Nagashima, who crafts delicate expressions through creative observation. These two highly talented creatives will build upon the base of Tatsuo Miyajima's work to create a place that nurtures visitors' empathy for others and vigor for life, as well as a place that passes down the experience and memory of the disaster and serves as a gateway for visitors to Fukushima today. The team also includes members of the Sea of Time – TOHOKU Art Museum Support Group, which was formed by local residents to support the Sea of Time – TOHOKU project, and veteran art project director Tae Yoshihara.



Tatsuo Miyajima

Born in 1957. Miyajima was invited to the Venice Biennale in 1988, where his work using digital numerals garnered international attention. In subsequent years, he has held numerous exhibitions in Japan and abroad, showing his work in over 250 locations in 30 countries. Miyajima stayed in New York on a grant from the Asian Cultural Council in 1990, and in Paris on a grant from the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain in 1993. Major works include Mega Death (1999 / 2016), Counter Void (2003, collection of TV Asahi), and Sea of Time '98 (1998). He has also pursued the Revive Time: Kaki Tree Project (1995-), which encourages children around the world to raise the second generation of kaki trees exposed to the atomic bomb. Miyajima has received an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts from University of the Arts London in 1998, served as Vice President of Tohoku University of Art & Design from 2006-2016 and Vice President of Kyoto University of Art & Design from 2012-2016, and was awarded the Art Encouragement Prize from the Japanese Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in 2020.

[Photo Lisson Gallery Milano]



Left: Mega Death | 1999



Right: Time Waterfall | 2016 | photo: MCH Messe Schweiz (Basel) AG



Tsuyoshi Tane

Architect, born in Tokyo in 1979. Founder of the Paris-based practice ATTA - Atelier Tsuyoshi Tane Architects. Tane is currently engaged in multiple projects in Europe, Japan, and around the world based on the concept of "Archaeology of the Future."

Major works include the Estonian National Museum, Hirosaki Brick Warehouse Museum, Arsani Collection Foundation and Museum, Vitra Garden House, and the new main building of the Imperial Hotel Tokyo (scheduled for completion in 2036).

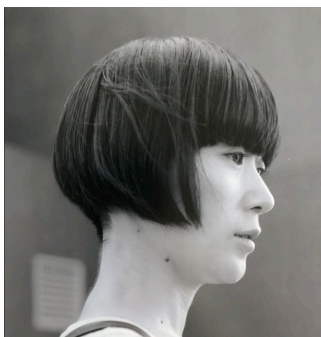
Major awards include the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France, the Newcomer's Prize of the French Academy of Architecture, the Grand Prix of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia, and the 67th Art Encouragement Prize for New Designers from the Japanese Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. He is the author of TSUYOSHI TANE Archaeology of the Future (TOTO Publishing).

[Photo ©Yoshiaki Tsutsui]



Left: Estonian National Museum | 2016 | Photo: Takuji Shimmura / image courtesy of DGT.

Right: Hirosaki Brick Warehouse Museum | 2020 | Photo: Daici Ano



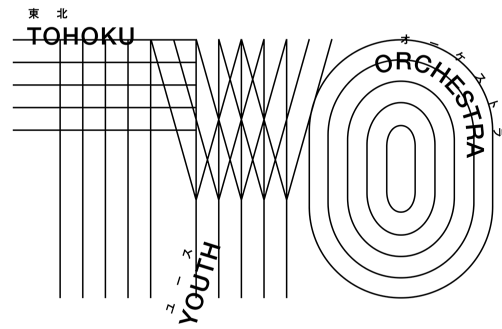
Rikako Nagashima

Graphic designer, born in 1980. Nagashima does visual identity design, signage planning, book design, and spatial composition, all while keeping graphic design at the core of their work. They act as a mediator of concepts and ideas, translating them into the visual information of colors and shapes.

Previous work includes Sapporo International Art Festival: City and Nature (2014), Dojima River Biennale (2019), Tohoku Youth Orchestra (2016-), Anish Kapoor's outline of collapse (2017), David Lynch: From the Fringes of the Mind (2019), the new visual identity plan for the Pola Museum of Art, (2020; the Japanese Pavilion "Trajectories of Elements" at the Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition (2021); Ryuichi Sakamoto: Playing the Piano 12122020 (2021), and Kvadrat: Irreversible Scale (2024). They are also the author of Far Before Color and Form (Murahata Publishing/2024).

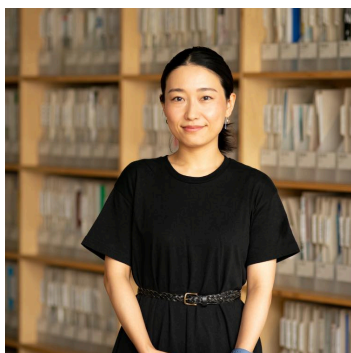


Left: The 17th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia | 2021 | photo: Jan Vranovský
 Right: TOHOKU YOUTH ORCHESTRA | 2016-



Sea of Time – TOHOKU Art Museum Support Group

This group was established to support Miyajima’s vision for the project, with the goal of realizing the construction of the museum and revitalizing the coastal region of Fukushima. Founding members are Kazuyoshi Endo (President, YONOMORI BAUM), Shubun Endo (Representative Director, Tomioka Wine), Takeshi Owada (Representative Director, Tomioka Plus), Dai Fujita (Representative Director, Torifuji-Honten Co., Ltd.), and Yoichiro Naka (President, Tohoku Enterprise Co. Ltd.).



Tae Yoshihara

Art Manager / Art Director.

Born in Hyogo Prefecture. After graduating from Kyoto University of Arts, Yoshihara received a master’s degree from the Graduate School of Creative Cities at Osaka City University. She worked as an art project manager for NPO BEPPU PROJECT, and later as a program officer of Arts Council Tokyo, where she was involved in intermediary support projects for arts and culture. She became independent in April 2022. Besides serving as project director for Tatsuo Miyajima’s Sea of Time – TOHOKU, Yoshihara is a part-time lecturer at Joshibi University of Art and Design and project manager of Metote Lab.

Contact

General Inquiries

“Sea of Time – TOHOKU” Project Executive Committee (Tatsuo Miyajima Studio)

TEL : +81-297-21-7650 FAX : +81-297-20-6543

MAIL : contact@seaoftime.org

Press Inquiries

iroiro Inc. (Ichikawa, Kumano)

MAIL : press@iroiroiroiro.jp