

MUSEUM UNDER THE OPEN SKY CULTURAL SETO ISLAND, JAPAN

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In south-western Japan are located more than a thousand islands in the area of quiet **Seto Inland Sea**. Is it a paradise on earth?



Les îles de Seto

Tokyo

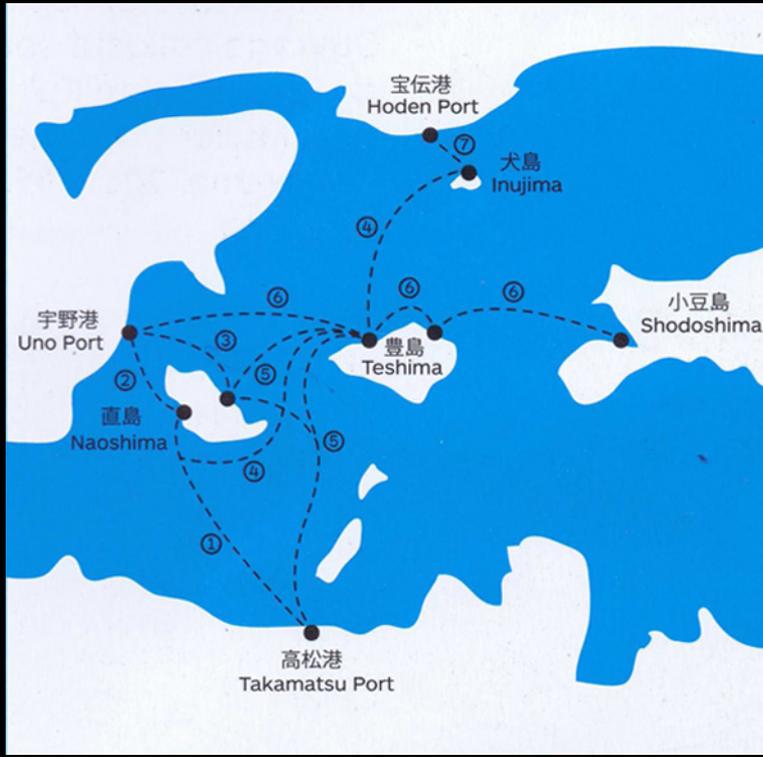
Although the beauty of the island greenery floating in the blue sea gives us this idea, **Soichiro Fukutake** needed twenty years of imagination and endurance in order to acquire new life for the archipelago previously devastated by industry.

Soichiro Fukutake continued after the death of his father in the presidency of the administrative board of the Fukutake Foundation.

He returned to the island of his childhood. His father Tetsuhiko Fukutake had success and luck as an editor of the school manual. He organized through the Foundation summer camps on the island.

Soichiro emphasize educational and recreational activities for students dedicated to the art and for the elderly.

When he launched a cultural project Benesse at the beginning of 1990, Soichiro Fukutake knew the natural environment where he settled down as well as history which affected this environment: **Naoshima** and **Inujima** are two islands of the archipelago, where were built refineries which polluted the environment with sulfuric acid and also affected the neighbour island of **Teshima**.



In the environment of this archipelago, abandoned by active population which migrated to large cities, Soichiro formulated his dream:

To return smile to elderly residents.

How?

Newly colonize these "empty" islands,
abandoned by young people, with artworks.

**TO THE QUESTION HOW HE PRESENTED HIS
CULTURAL PROJECT TO THE INHABITANTS OF
THE ISLAND SOICHIRO FUKUTAKE SAID:**

SETO Inland Sea has been a UNESCO natural heritage as a national park since 1934, much earlier than Mount FUJI. That did not stop on the two islands of NAOSHIMA and INUJIMA to build a copper processing factory. From this period the two islands and the neighbouring island of Teshima are affected by pollution of sulfuric acid.

I wanted to fight against this environmental aggression by contemporary art.

I was convinced of the power of renewal of these sites, their new birth thanks to the artists and their works, and in this way to convince people who have not been accustomed to art yet.

Our goal was not to build hotels and to create a tourist spot. We wish that this place will be welcomed by lovers of art and architecture.

Firstly the island of Naoshima, later Inujima and Teshima became large museums under the open sky.

Twelve islands connected to this cultural laboratory joined in 2013, and also The Setouchi Triennale (also known as the Setouchi International Art Festival) as a contemporary art festival is held every three years on a dozen islands in the Seto Inland Sea.

NAOSHIMA

Naoshima, the little island in Japan's Inland Sea, is home not only to Japanese fishermen, but to art as well. The investor Soichiro Fukutake commissioned a private gallery to be built here to house his family's collection of contemporary art .

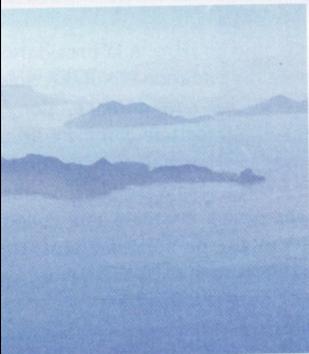


In the second half of the 1980s, the small island of Naoshima, which lies 8 miles north of Takamatsu in the Seto Inland Sea, became the focus of a new regeneration project to create an „ island of nature filled with art“.

The architect Tadao Ando was commissioned to make a series of buildings over the following 20 years. His first was the Benesse House Museum in 1992, followed by the Benesse House Oval five years later. This entire project is still ongoing – an experiment in organic architecture something unplanned and unexpected.



Most tourists enter Naoshima through **Miyanoura Port** on the island's west coast. The ferry terminal has been designed by architectural firm SANAA.



戸内海の島々
s îles de Seto



宮浦
Miyanoura



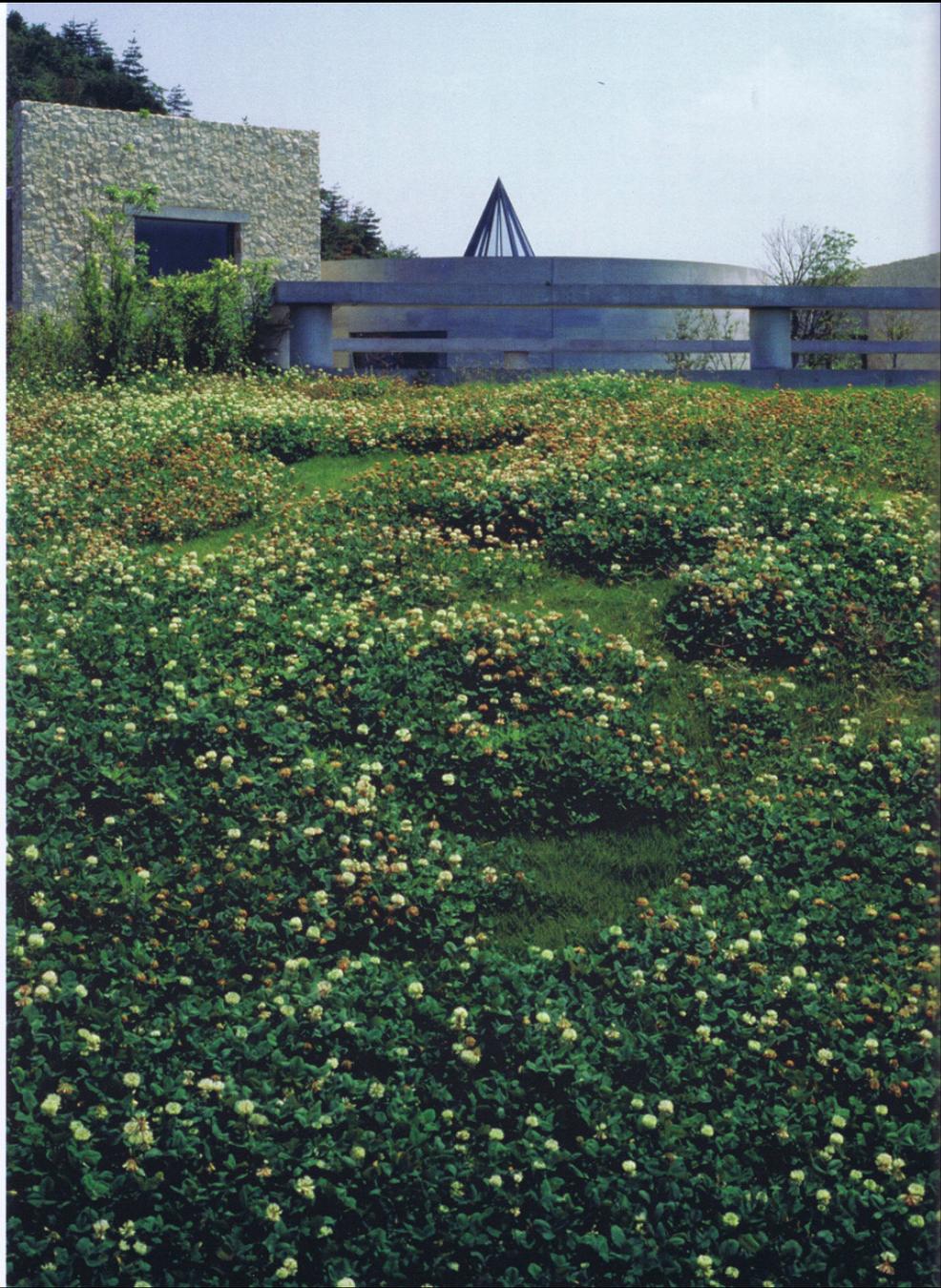
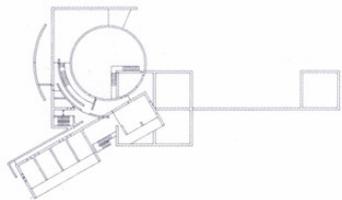
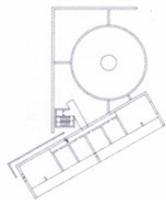
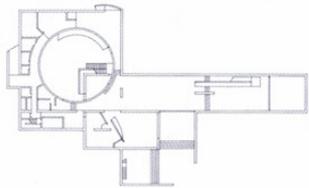
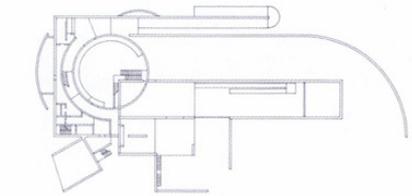
宮浦港
Port de Miyanoura





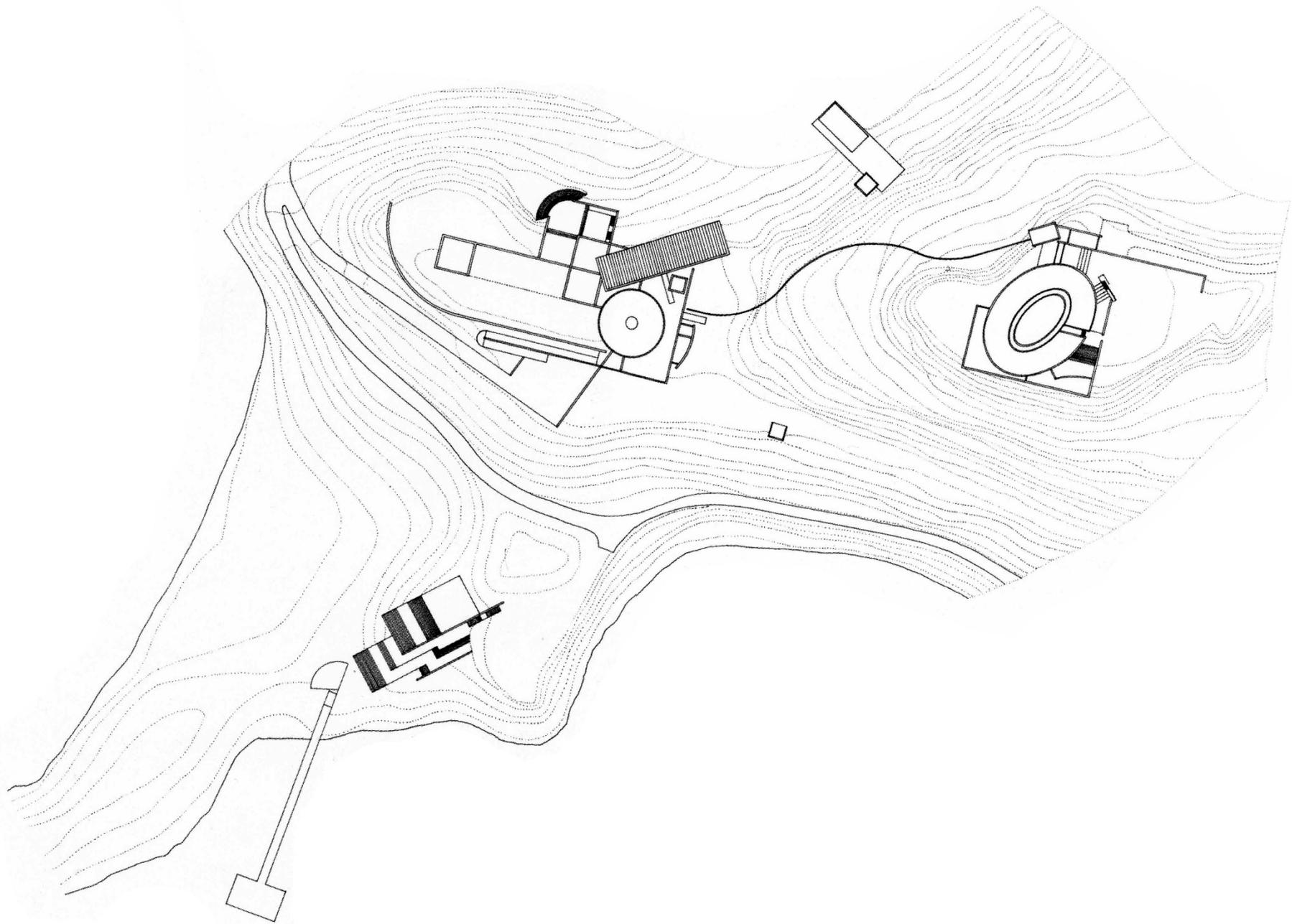
BENESSE HOUSE MUSEUM

The museum is reached from the sea by boat. On arriving at a pier, visitors make their way up a wide stepped plaza from which the rough stone wall of the museum and the roof cone can just be seen above a wildflower plateau. The plaza is designed not only as a dramatic entrance but also as a space for outdoor performances.



Since the museum is located within a national park. **Ando decided to build half of the volume underground to impose on the environment as little as possible.** This underground theme is common in much of his work and is repeated in other buildings across the island, which were built much later.

So the museum sits on the hilltop blending in with nature. Interlocking simple geometric shapes – a circle and two rectangles – are placed at angles to each other to offer visitors varying views over the surrounding seascape. These house the art galleries, hotel rooms and restaurant.





1996 THE SECRET OF THE SKY by artist Kan Yasuda

At the end of the main gallery of the museum BENESSE, two large stones patiently await the curious visitor. There is no instruction manual necessary in front of these two sculptures made of fine marble. Instinctively lie down on a rock in order to see the square of sky at the end of the high walls.

It seems that the artist who directed our gaze to the sky tells us that beauty is there to offer contemplation, meditation.

BENESSE HOUSE OVAL



„Oval” by the Japanese architect Tadao Ando, opened in 1995.

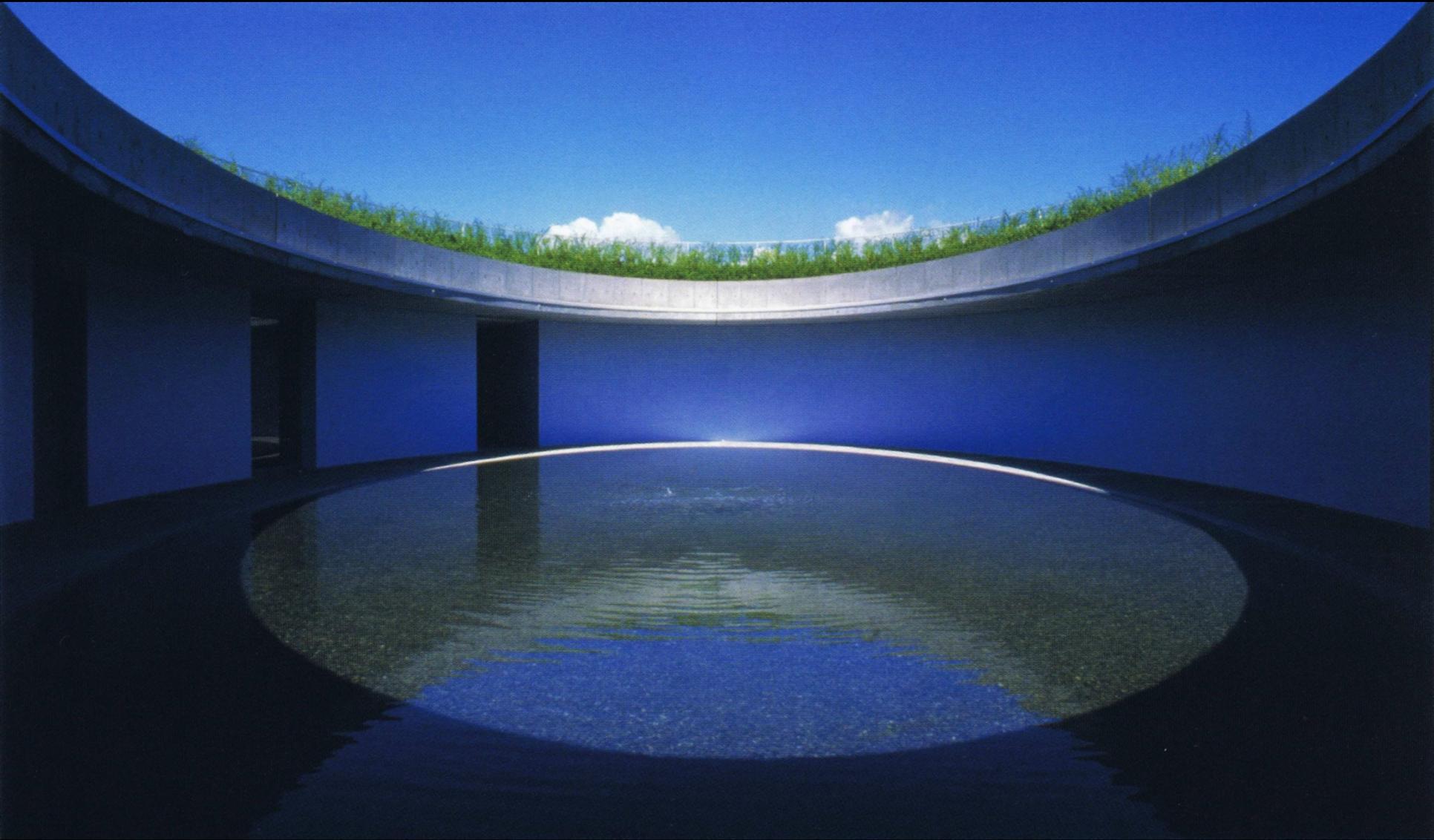
The second phase was to build an annex, the Benesse House Oval, further up the slope. Consisting of 10 guest rooms, gallery, library, shop, and cafeteria.

It can be reached either by cable car or a footpath. Again much of the building is buried into the cliffs making only part of it visible above ground.

The building is composed of a square in the middle of which is an ellipse at an offset axis. Within the ellipse is the inner pool, conceived as a contemplative water sculpture.

Water is the predominant theme with a cascade near the entrance and an oval pond filling the center of the building.

A patio surrounds the pool and is used as an outdoor gallery and entrance to guest rooms.



Water and light are key to Ando's work. The oval house is like an inverted island, with the sea surrounded by land, the blue sky reflected in this waters.

As the architect has said, „ The use of water in my architecture is an attempt to bear a spiritual dimension which is directly related to Japanese thought and tradition”.

CHICHU ART MUSEUM

In 2004, at the very south of the island of Naoshima was opened a museum slipped under the surface, designed by architect Tadao Ando. Architecture of coarse and precise lines is admired by many visitors.



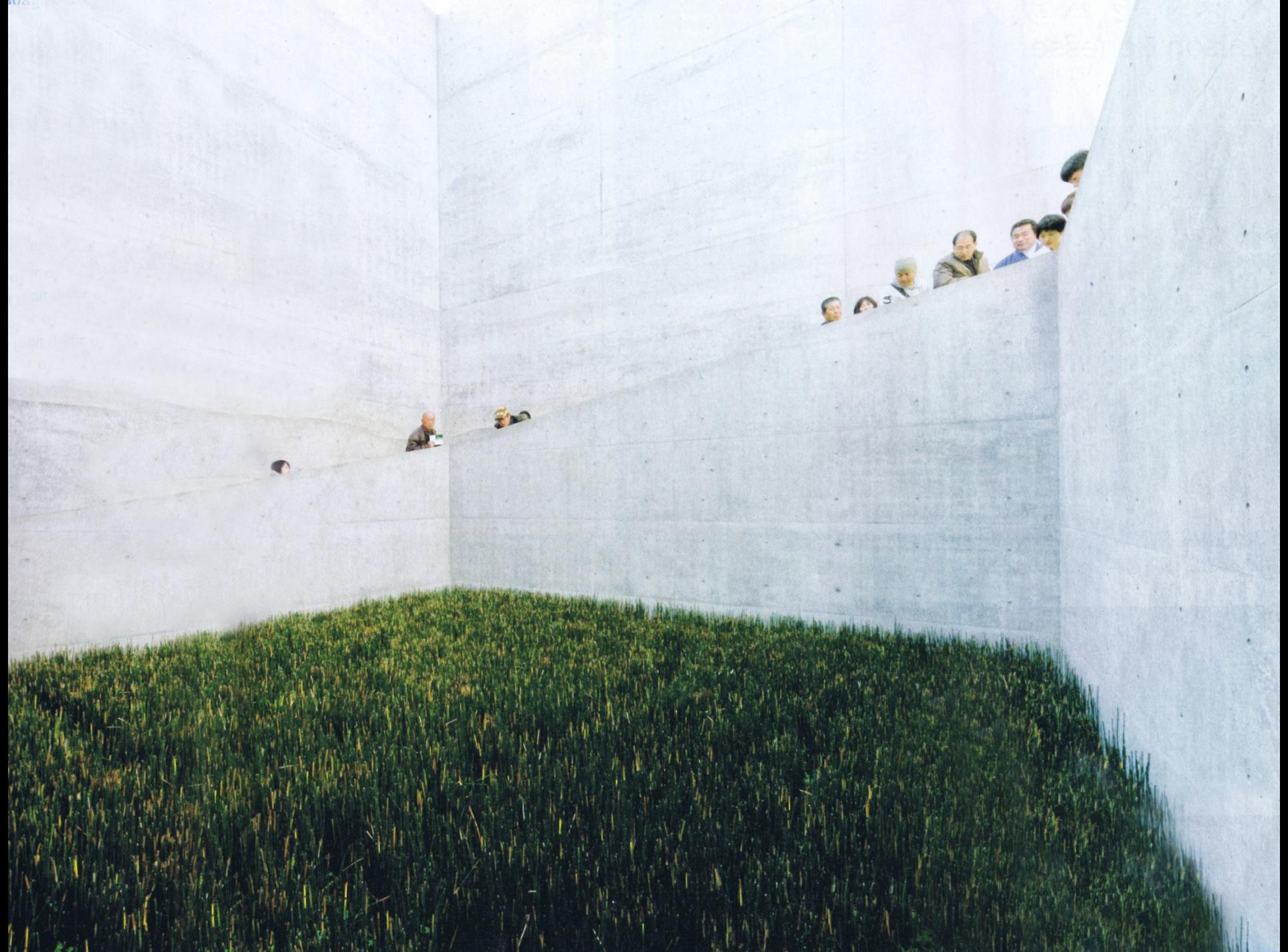
“Chichu” means “in the earth”. And that’s exactly where you will find the CHICHU ART MUSEUM, likely the most important contemporary art museum in Japan. Incorporated into a mountain ridge with a breathtaking view of the Seto inland Sea, it embodies the dream of investor and art collector Soichiro Fukutake .

The museum was built to provide a suitable framework for the works of Claude Monet, Walter de Maria and James Turrell. A masterpiece by architect Tadao Ando.

TADAO ANDO

Born in Osaka, 1941. Founded Tadao Ando Architect and Associates 1969. Architect and Professor Emeritus, University of Tokyo. Recipient of many Japanese and international awards, including the Gold Medal of UIA (International Union of Architects, 2005)

Ando's architecture is characterized by its minimalism - concrete, wood and light interact with the raw beauty of untouched nature.



CLAUDE MONET

Five paintings from the Water Lilies series produced by the great Impressionist painter Claude Monet in his last years can be enjoyed in the natural light of the museum. The size of the room, its design, and the materials used were selected to integrated Monet's works with the surrounding space.

WALTER DE MARIA

Born in 1935 Albany, California. Studied history and obtained a master's degree in art at the University of California, Berkeley.



An art space containing a sphere 2.2 meters in diameter and 27 gilded wooden geometric forms was created under the direction of Walter de Maria, an artist who conceives an entire space as an artwork. The viewer experiences this space exclusively in the natural light from the ceiling, which produces dramatic change in the room's illumination, depending on the hour.

JAMES TURRELL

James Turrell presents light in itself as art. The museum has selected three works representative series created by Turrell from the beginning of his career to the present, enabling visitors to experience the changes in his work through out the years .

FREEDOM OF CHOICE ENCOURAGED BY
PROPOSAL:

Artists VISIT Naoshima, choose their own space and create their work.

The museum BENESSE along the coast or in the forest, visitors will discover themselves in “woven” art, architecture and nature.

VILLAGE HON



2006 The Falls by artist Hiroshi Senju

This impressive waterfall resonates with the past of the house in which it is implemented.

The color scheme is based on the pigment coming from the sea (corals, shells) and recalls the production of salt, which was the livelihood of Ishibashi family, former owner of the place.



1998 SEA OF TIME '98 DE L'ARTISTE TATSUO MIYAJIMA
Plus de deux cents ans d'âge et pas une ride, Kado, la première maison d'art du projet culturel Benesse marque le début d'une riche collaboration entre art, habitants et maisons traditionnelles. Si Tatsuo Miyajima avait l'habitude d'ajuster lui-même sa constellation de chiffres lumineux, pour cette fois, il a laissé les 125 habitants du village régler les compteurs du temps. Au Japon, ces autochtones racontent le projet aux spectateurs étrangers, avec cette fierté d'en être à l'origine.

1998 Sea of time '98 by artist Tatsuo Miyajima

The house has more than two hundred years without wrinkle.

Kadoya is the first house of the cultural arts project BENESSE. It marks the beginning of a rich collaboration between artists, residents and traditional houses. Although the artist Tatsuo Miyajima was used to adjust the time light numbers, he left 125 villagers to manage the computer timer. Today, these natives proudly tell the attentive audience that they took part of its origin.



2006 Dreaming Tongue by artist Shinro Ohtake

The houses art slipped gently into the womb of village HON on the shore of the sea. Buildings that gradually became ruins are gradually refurbished by work of the artist. The local community was invited to participate in the creation of these new places and they happily explain it to visitors.

Here in the HAISHU house in front of the statue of Liberty, the original inhabitants tell how this clinical dental surgery created a chaotic collage of the recovered Japanese subjects. Japanese Madeleine de Proust, title of the work refers to the process of calling to mind a dream from the tastes and aromas of a morsel in one's mouth.

INUJIMA ART PROJECT

In 1909, when the refinery on the island INUJIMA established, the population grew from 3,000 to 5,000, however the fall of metal prices ended the golden age of only ten years after the start of operation.

Not more than 50 people lives in the village nowadays.



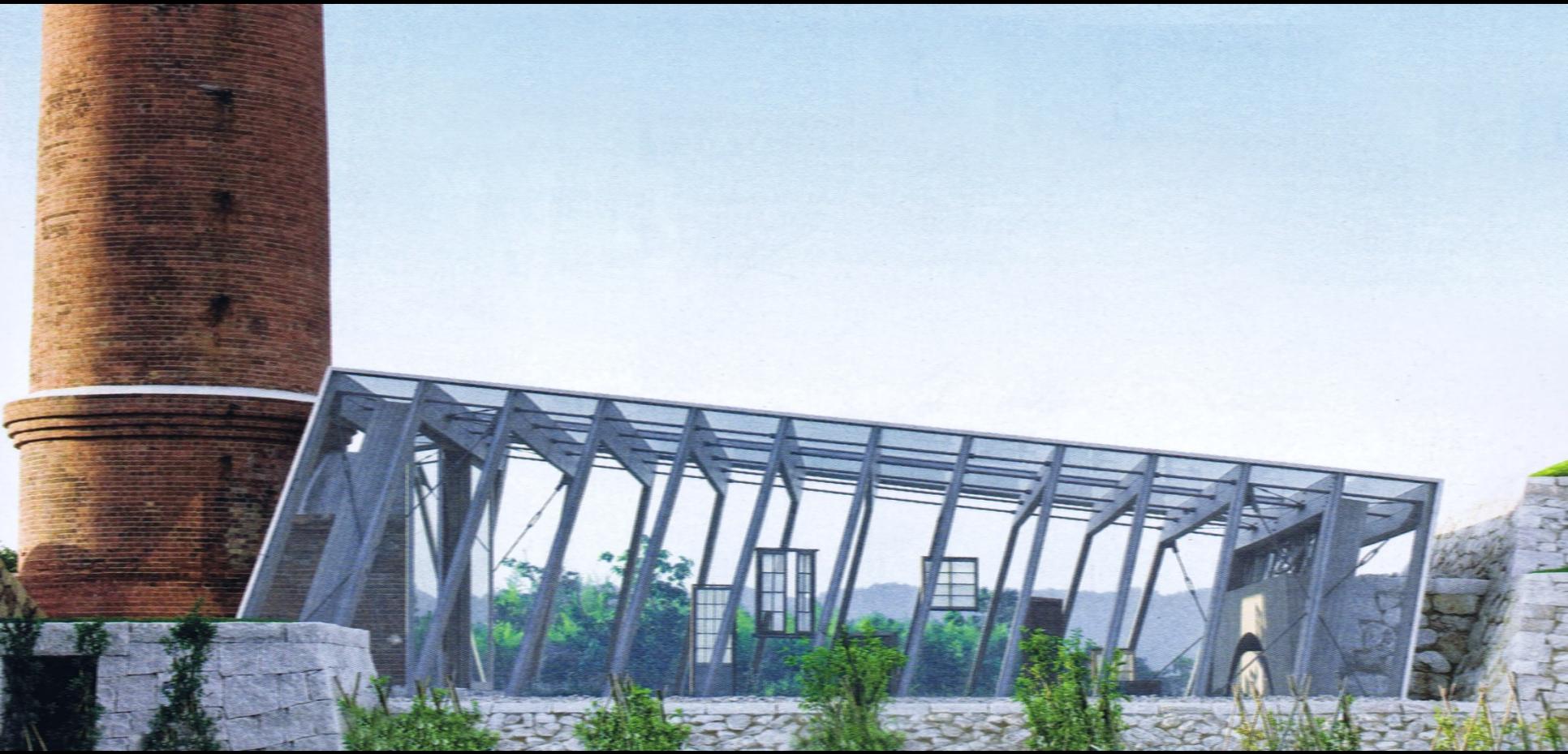
2008 INUJIMA Art project - SEIRENSHO Art Museum by architect Hiroshi Sambuichi

In 1995 the artist Yukinori Yanagi turned his idea of rehabilitation refinery on the use of natural energy, but it was necessary to wait until 2005, when the architect Hiroshi Sambuichi introduced the concept in the implementation phase.

Replacement of human actions by nature was the central idea of the project.

Inujima Seirenscho Art Museum is a museum that preserves and reuses the remains of a copper refinery on the island. Based on the concept of using the existing to create the yet-to-be, the project brings together architecture by Hiroshi Sambuichi, which makes use of the existing smokestacks and bricks from the refinery and uses solar, geothermal, and other natural energies to reduce the burden on the environment.

The building also employs a sophisticated water purification system that makes use of the power of plants located on the garden on the roof. The project truly embraces the concept of a recycling-based society as a model for a new type of regional revitalization through industrial heritage, architecture, art, and the environment.





Nourished by the history of the place, artist Yukinori Yanagi there hung remains from the last Tokyo house of writer Yukio Mishima, Japanese writer who ended his life by hara-kiri in 1970.



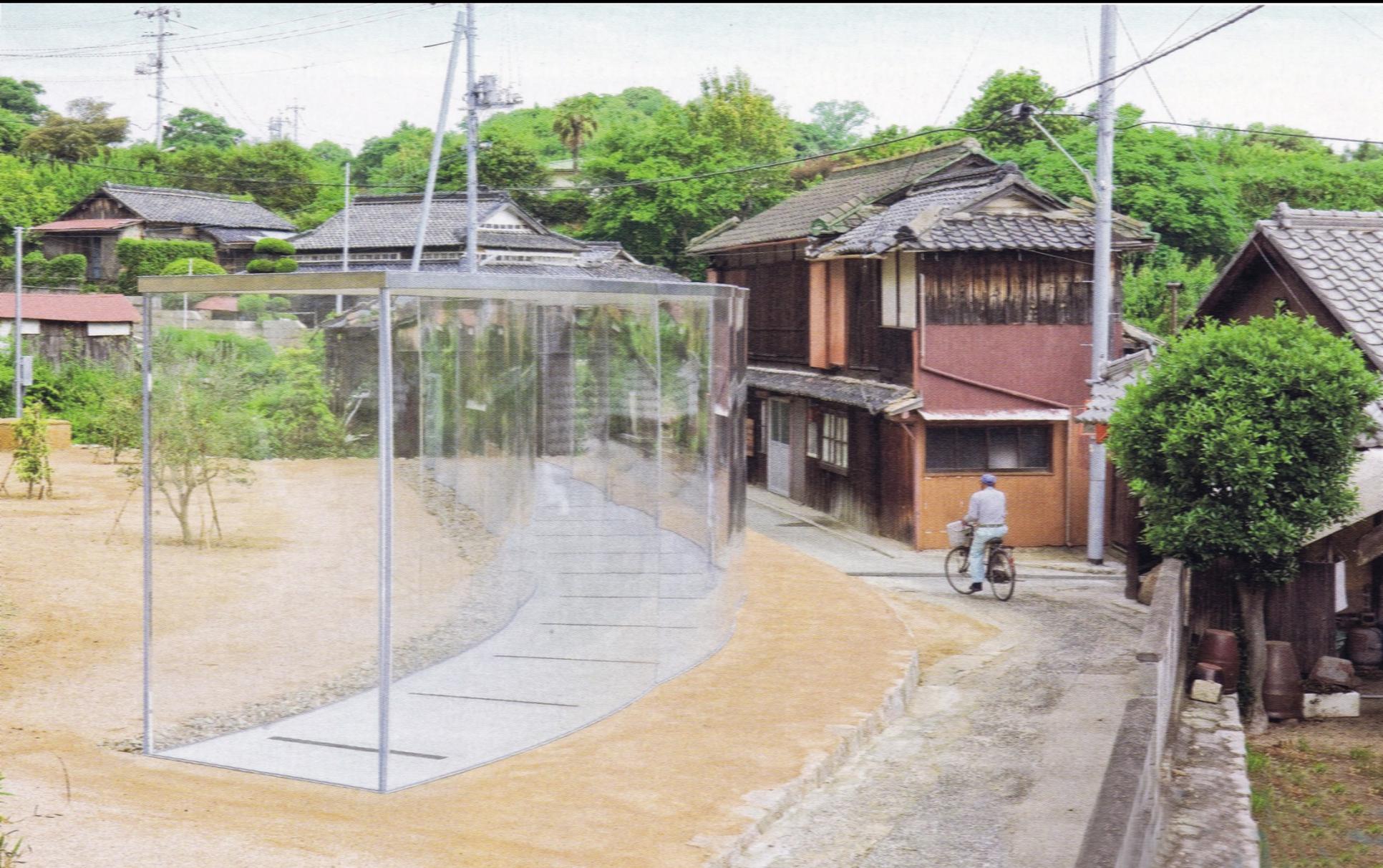
2008 Icarus tower by artist Yukinori Yanagi



Art by Yukinori Yanagi uses Yukio Mishima and traces of personalities, ranging between tradition and avant-garde - stairs, doors, windows, and urinal, sink – symbols warnings over aspects of Japan's modernization, as a motif

HOUSES OF ART

The architect Kazuyo Sejima and artistic director Yuko Hasega were commissioned Art House Project for the village INUJIMA. They favored the intervention of small touches. Passing through visitor is looking for little cultural sites scattered in the village: Houses arts, galleries, gardens are so forgivable situated, for better input into the daily life of villagers. Construction site continues, and two other buildings were opened at the Setouchi Triennale 2013.



2010 S Art House

Serpentine with transparent walls and slightly curved reveals a somewhat surreal village. If the tourist will discover through this filter houses from another time, then the people on their side benefit performance from amazed people in this special house S.



2010 NAKANOTANI Gazebo

At the end of the village, not far from the cemetery the architect Kazuyo Sejima built shed with aluminum dome as a point on visual way.

The sophisticated form of convex shape gives us the impression that the sky is flying over our heads.

TESHIMA ART MUSEUM

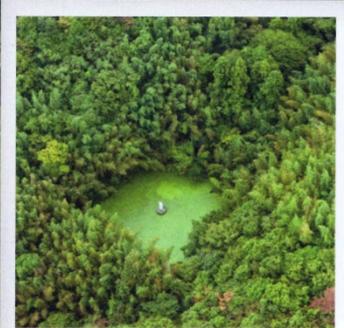
The museum, which is currently a work of art, is a space that is unlike any other.

The architect Ruy Nishizawa created a 60 meter space without support.

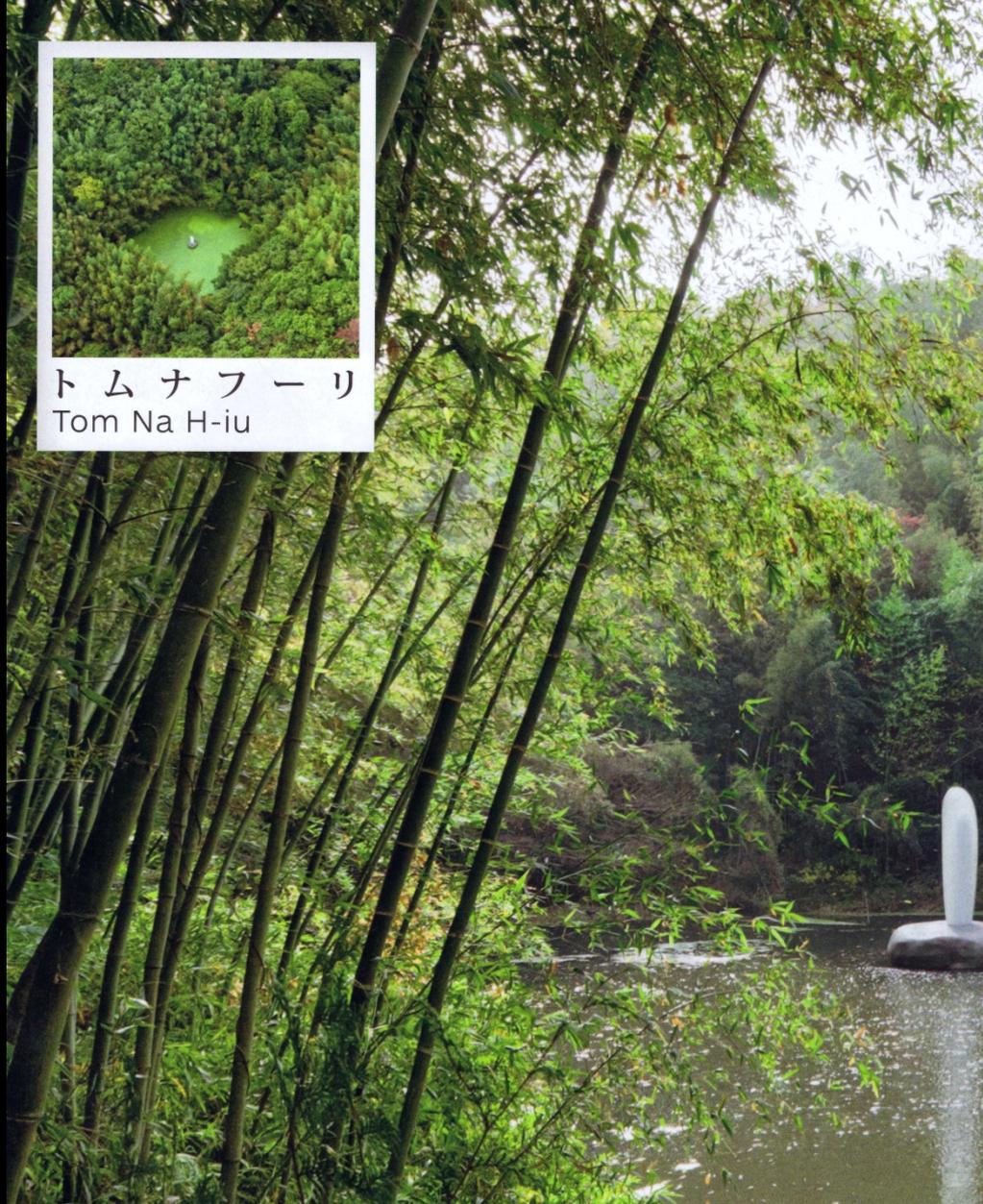
A drop of concrete fell into an intense green of nature, opaque dome of small height is generously punctured with holes through which invades the light, rain, wind and a few brave butterflies.



2010 Teshima Art Museum by architect Ruy Nishizawa



トムナフーリ
Tom Na H-iu



2010 TOM-Na H-iu by artist Mariko MORI

Behind this exotic name is a mysterious piece like the meaning of the title “the place where souls waited to pass to their next life” in an ancient Celtic lore.

As a modern idea of this myth, the artist Mariko Mori put her Menhir of opal glass in the middle of a pond lined with bamboo. It is a symbol of life and death

This transient stone is associated with the data captured by Super-Kamioka Neutrino Detection Experiment, observatory located since 1995 in a Mozumi mine, Gifu Prefecture in central Japan. This detector provides activities of elementary particles of matter. These small neutrons are generated by the death of super – nova.

This transparent work is networked to the observatory and it emits a light when a neutrino is detected.

An old Japanese legend tells that in time of famine, people in their seventies were abandoned in the mountains to die.

Foundation BENESSE blends the old with the young people and freshness of contemporary art, rather than leave them aging closed on the island. Bet for small, but successful heavenly corner is livelier than ever.

As evidence seasonal Triennale are organized in nature. Three seasons - spring, summer, autumn - reveal the rich program of new projects. Smiles of autochthons do not stop to enchant the people chasing after contemplation.

From the interview with Soichiro Fukutake by Kaoru Urata

Since the launch of the idea to the first projects ten-year period of observation have passed.

The first project emerged in 1998 on the island of Naoshima. It was the work of artist Tatsuo Miyajima called Kadoya. The aim consisted of new equipment for an old abandoned house in the traditional village Hon and in integration of contemporary work of artist Tatsuo.

It was an opportunity to connect with the villagers. Then we bought a few houses that invested artists James Turrell, Rei Naito and Hiroshi Senju.

When the work was realized, artist left the house but it was accessible. Residents of the village became a visitor's guide. It was fun to see old people explaining contemporary art to young visitors.

WHAT IS YOUR PLACE OF ART IN SOCIETY?

White boxes, neutral space that usually symbolize the place of exposure do not seem to me as adaptable environment of artistic works.

Despite the negative historical context that caused the old contamination of places I wanted to install creations in the natural environment surrounding SETO Inland Sea.

In 1991 I bought *Nymphéas* by Claude Monet with the intent to create an environment dedicated to this work.

I talked about it with artists Walter de Maria and James Turrell and they immediately expressed interest. With the invitation of architect Tadao Ando in 2004 we created the CHICHU ART MUSEUM.

When I saw so many tears of excited spectators who visited this place, I think that the works are installed where it has to be, without need to have a contract or explanation.

WHAT DISCOVER YOUR CULTURAL PROJECT IN RELATION TO CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY?

In the city itself, because I've been resident of the city, life requires money for development, while rural people exist along with the nature and can practice food exchange for improving daily life. I wish this cultural project BENESSE rely on this wealth of society. This means to initiate a way of life, where old people can find a smile.

We all get older and because of the depopulation of rural inhabitants in Japan, the islanders are often left among elderly people, like abandoned from the rest of the world.

It has been a long time that many people in our society are abandoned and sad.

Despite geographic isolation, those who now live on Naoshima, have a happy look in a society of contemporary art.

DO YOU HAVE A MESSAGE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS?

We are Japanese, but first of all we are inhabitants of the planet. Unfortunately only few Japanese are aware of that. All residents of rural areas sell their resources to the city for money.

In SETO archipelago, our activities are not subsidized by the state. We organized rice yield project in order to make the island independent.

SETO Inland Sea is rich in fish and rice is grown in cooperation with residents.

I wish the island of Teshima becomes an island of art and Japan one collective unit which collects local originality and wealth. It's time again to find regional pride. Japanese culture associated with respect for nature must show an example.

Cultural project BENESSE represents a model that can be adapted to abandoned - however still large -wealth and to other areas of our archipelago.

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