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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**JAPAN SOCIETY REOPENS MARCH 2021, PRESENTS  
*WHEN PRACTICE BECOMES FORM: CARPENTRY TOOLS FROM JAPAN***

**March 11 – July 11, 2021**



Assembly of a bracket complex. Courtesy of Takenaka Carpentry Tools Museum

**New York, February 11, 2021**—As its first exhibition upon reopening to the public, Japan Society is pleased to present *When Practice Becomes Form: Carpentry Tools from Japan*. Opening on the tenth anniversary of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, the exhibition celebrates the resilient spirit of Japanese architecture and craftsmanship through woodworking tools, architectural patterns, and models. The site-specific exhibition design, conceived by the esteemed architect Sou Fujimoto in collaboration with Brooklyn-based Popular Architecture, introduces major themes from the exhibition and is in dialogue with the gallery’s spaces, highlighting an enduring connection between traditional Japanese wooden construction and modern architecture.

Featuring a variety of hand tools and wooden models reflecting joinery techniques that have been used for hundreds of years to build Japan’s wooden architectural masterpieces (from temples and shrines to bridges), the exhibition unpacks the intangible qualities of craftsmanship, such as consummate experience, expertise, and the honed skills of master carpenters in Japanese architecture. A diverse array of tools—planes, chisels, saws—have played an important role in the development of architecture in Japan, and this philosophy extends to Japan’s cultural heritage today. Integral to the processes of master carpenters (*tōryō*) is their extensive knowledge of the local environment and of wood as a material. Using natural resources and learning from their predecessors’ practices, they construct buildings using a refined methodology. Their philosophy of sustainability—for example, joinery can be restored or repaired as needed by future craftspeople—has been handed down over generations.

Themes emerging from the exhibition have been introduced by the internationally acclaimed architect Sou Fujimoto. His firm, Sou Fujimoto Architects, is based in Tokyo and Paris, and has been selected as site design producer for the 2025 World Exposition in Osaka, Japan. Fujimoto has designed the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion in London (2013) among other internationally recognized projects. For this exhibition, Fujimoto has worked with Popular Architecture, as local partner to explore the coexistence of nature and architecture.

“Japan Society has been a home of cultural exchange, and a meeting place of past and present. In this exhibition, traditional Japanese craftsmanship is revealed in a new light by the design of contemporary architect Sou Fujimoto, and it becomes a precious educational opportunity to learn from this history,” says Yuki Kamiya, Japan Society Gallery Director.



Selection of broadaxes and felling/lumberjack's axes, c. 20<sup>th</sup> century, and measuring tools. Courtesy of Takenaka Carpentry Tools Museum

Japan Society's current headquarters, designed by the architect Junzo Yoshimura (1908–1997)—an important figure in 20<sup>th</sup> century Japanese architecture—opened to the public in 1971, becoming New York City's first permanent structure designed by a Japanese citizen. It will commemorate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021. Since its opening, the building has continued to serve as the central platform for the interexchange of ideas, knowledge, and innovation between the U.S. and Japan within a global context. In 2011, the building was given landmark status by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

*When Practice Becomes Form: Carpentry Tools from Japan* explores the impact of techniques, tools, and forms from traditional practices in Japanese carpentry. Paying homage to Japan Society's building, where the arts and cultures of Japan and the United States intersect, this exhibition delves into the artistry and craftsmanship of architectural practice. Complementing the exhibition is a series of related public programs, including lectures, hands-on workshops, and virtual gallery tours. A digital publication, illustrated and designed by New York-based Nathan Antolik, is available as a free supplement to the exhibition.

*This exhibition is organized by Japan Society in collaboration with Takenaka Carpentry Tools Museum. The exhibition design is by Sou Fujimoto, in collaboration with Popular Architecture as local architect.*

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### TAKENAKA CORPORATION'S FREE ADMISSION MONTH

To celebrate the reopening of Japan Society, we are designating March as TAKENAKA CORPORATION'S Free Admission Month. Visitors can reserve complimentary advance timed tickets online, dispensed a first come, first served basis. (Sponsored by TAKENAKA CORPORATION.)

### PUBLIC PROGRAMS

*Program details are subject to change. Please visit [japansociety.org/gallery](http://japansociety.org/gallery) for ticketing information and programming updates.*

### Carpentry Tools Demonstration, Online

April 2021  
May 2021

*Free*

Join a trained carpenter in this two-part series of live, online demonstrations highlighting how to use traditional Japanese carpentry tools. In partnership with Kezurou-kai USA, each event will focus on a different tool and techniques. This is a free event with advanced registration required.

### **Carpentry Tools Workshop, Online**

*April 2021*

\$50/\$40 Japan Society members, seniors & students, event registration includes free admission to the on-site gallery

Join a trained carpenter in this two-hour workshop as they demonstrate traditional techniques in Japanese carpentry and share strategies for tool usage. In partnership with Kezurou-kai USA. Advanced registration is required.

### **Family Workshop, Online**

*June 6, 2021 at 11 AM*

\$30/\$24 Japan Society members; event registration includes free admission to the on-site gallery exhibition for one family (up to 2 adults).

This educational workshop invites guests to create their own architectural space inspired by the exhibition, using materials found in the home. For families and caretakers with children aged 5–11. Advanced registration required (maximum number of families 20).

### **Lecture: Sou Fujimoto, Online**

*June 24, 2021*

\$12/\$10 students & seniors, essential workers | FREE for Japan Society members, event registration includes free admission to the on-site gallery

This keynote lecture by the exhibition's architect Sou Fujimoto discusses his work and connections between contemporary architectural practice and traditional craftsmanship. *This event may occur on-site; please check future announcements on our website.*

### **Virtual Gallery Tours, Online**

*Upon request from April 1*

Flat rate (up to 40 people): \$150 adults/\$100 seniors & university students

Take an immersive, multimedia tour of the exhibition led by a Japan Society docent.

*Two weeks advance request recommended.*

### **K-12 School Gallery Tours, Online**

*Upon request from April 1*

K-12 school groups can schedule [virtual gallery tours](#) for an interactive art experience led by trained museum educators, who incorporate close-looking, personal connections, inquiry, and related activities for K-12 students. *Two weeks advance request recommended.*

## **BIOGRAPHIES**



### **About Sou Fujimoto**

Born in Hokkaido in 1971, Sou Fujimoto graduated from the Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering at Tokyo University and established Sou Fujimoto Architects in 2000. He has won several international competitions, including his recent 1<sup>st</sup> prize for the 2014 International Competition for the Second Folly of Montpellier, France ("L'Arbre Blanc"). In 2019, he was selected as the master architect for the Tsuda University Kodaira Campus Master Plan development. Among his notable projects are the annual summer pavilion for

the Serpentine Gallery in London (2013)—the youngest architect to receive the commission; House NA in Tokyo (2012); Musashino Art University Museum & Library (2010); and House N (2008). In 2012, he was part of the Japanese team that won a Golden Lion award for Best National Participation at the Venice Architecture Biennale for their design of alternative housing concepts for homes destroyed by the 2011 tsunami. Most recently, he was selected as site producer for the 2025 World Exposition in Osaka, Japan.

#### **About Popular Architecture**

Brooklyn-based Popular Architecture combines simplicity with innovation across multiple scales ranging from master plans to buildings, interiors, and products. The firm is directed by Casey Mack, RA, LEED AP. After completing his M.Arch at Columbia, Mack worked with the Office for Metropolitan Architecture in Hong Kong and New York. He has taught urban design at the New York Institute of Technology and Passivhaus housing at Parsons School of Constructed Environments. Currently, with the support of the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, he is writing the book *Digesting Metabolism: Artificial Land in Japan 1954-2202* (Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2021).

#### **About Junzo Yoshimura**

Born in Tokyo, Junzo Yoshimura (1908–1997) trained in the Architecture Department of the Tokyo Arts College (now Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku). In 1931, he joined the Tokyo practice of the Czech-American architect Antonin Raymond (1888-1976). He designed approximately 237 houses, as well as many structures for Japanese cultural institutions, such as the Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts (1966-1971), the Nara Prefectural Museum (1972), and the Hall of Chamber Music, Yatsugatake (1988) in Nagano. For much of his career, Yoshimura taught architecture at his alma mater and in 1995 was recognized by Japan's prime minister as a "Person of Cultural Merit." Other important projects by Yoshimura include a traditional Japanese House in the garden of the Museum of Modern Art (1954) which has since been relocated to Philadelphia, PA where it remains as the historic site Shofuso Japanese House and Garden. In 1955 he collaborated with Kunio Maekawa and Junzo Sakakura to design the International House of Japan in Tokyo and in 1977 he designed the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Tokyo.

#### **About Japan Society Gallery**

Since 1971, Japan Society Gallery continues to be the premier institution in the United States for the display and interpretation of Japanese art and culture in a global context. Through groundbreaking exhibitions and related programs, the Gallery cultivates a broader understanding and appreciation of Japan's contributions to global artistic heritage; explores the artistic interconnections Japan shares with its Asian neighbors, the U.S., Latin America, and Europe; and celebrates the diversity of Japanese visual expression from prehistoric times to the present day.

#### **About Japan Society**

Founded in 1907, Japan Society in New York City presents sophisticated, topical, and accessible experiences of Japanese art and culture, and facilitates the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and innovation between the U.S. and Japan. Annual events encompass world-class exhibitions, dynamic classical and cutting-edge contemporary performing arts, film premieres and retrospectives, workshops and demonstrations, tastings, family activities, language classes, and a range of high-profile talks and expert panels that present open, critical dialogue on issues of vital importance to the U.S., Japan, and East Asia.

#### **CONNECT WITH US!**

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**#JSCarpentry**

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

Japan Society is located at 333 East 47th Street between First and Second Avenues (accessible by the 4/5/6 and 7 subway lines at Grand Central or the E and M subway lines at 53rd St. and Lexington Ave.).

#### **NEW HOURS:**

Beginning Thursday, March 11, 2021, Japan Society will offer a safe and welcoming environment for visitors with new health and safety protocols in line with CDC, New York State, and New York City guidelines. Viewing is available every Thursday through Sunday with advance timed-entry ticket reservations online. In celebration of the gallery's reopening, all visitors will receive free admission during the month of March, courtesy of TAKENAKA CORPORATION. March reservations are open to Japan Society members exclusively now and will be made available to the general public on February 25.

Thursday-Sunday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Special hours for vulnerable populations and members:  
Thursday and Friday, from 11 am to 12 pm

**ADMISSION:**

\$12/\$10 students & seniors, essential workers | FREE for Japan Society members and children under 16. *FREE admission for all visitors during the month of March, courtesy of the TAKENAKA CORPORATION.*

*When Practice Becomes Form: Carpentry Tools from Japan* is supported by Takenaka Carpentry Tools Museum, Japan.



Additional funds are generously provided by TAKENAKA CORPORATION, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.



Exhibitions and Arts & Culture Lecture Programs at Japan Society are made possible, in part, by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Endowment Fund, the Mary Griggs Burke Endowment Fund established by the Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation, Masako H. Shinn, Raphael and Jane Bernstein, Friends of the Gallery, and an anonymous donor. Support for Arts & Culture Lecture Programs is provided, in part, by the Sandy Heck Lecture Fund.

Transportation assistance is provided by Japan Airlines, the exclusive Japanese airline sponsor of Gallery.

