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Japan Society & Portland Japanese Garden Present

*Architecture as Environment: A Conversation with Kengo Kuma and Toshiko Mori*

Fourth Live Webinar of the *Living Traditions Series*, A Five-Part Program Designed to Examine Iconic Facets of Japanese Culture, from Ancient Roots to Modern Day

Wednesday, December 15, 7–8:15 pm EST (4–5:15 pm PST)



Left: Yusuvara Wooden Bridge Museum ©Takumi Ota; Right: Photo: Paul Warchol

**New York, NY (November 22, 2021)**—Explore the contemporary relationships between the built and natural environments with **Kengo Kuma**, one of the most astute architects of our time, and critically acclaimed scholar and practitioner **Toshiko Mori**. The Japanese architectural scene is known globally as one of the most robust, dynamic, and expressive platforms in the world for practitioners and enthusiasts alike, offering vast diversity and ingenuity grounded in centuries-

old craftsmanship and a unique symbiosis with nature. This webinar addresses seismic shifts in our sense of community and relationship to nature as the Japanese architectural landscape transforms to embrace the synergy created through a trans-disciplinary approach to environment. *This is the fourth event in our five-part Living Traditions webinar series.*

### **Agenda**

7–8:15 pm EST (4–5:15 pm PST) Discussion and Q&A

**Program Details:** This is a free event, with advance registration required. The program will be live streamed through YouTube, and registrants will receive the viewing link by email on the day before the event. Participants can submit questions through YouTube during the live stream. Register [here](#).

### **Participant Bios:**

**Kengo Kuma (Speaker)** was born in 1954. Before establishing Kengo Kuma & Associates in 1990, he received his Master’s Degree in Architecture from the University of Tokyo, where he is currently a University Professor and a Professor Emeritus. Having been inspired by Kenzo Tange’s Yoyogi National Gymnasium, built for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, Kengo Kuma decided to pursue architecture at a young age, and later entered the Architecture program at the University of Tokyo, where he studied under Hiroshi Hara and Yoshichika Uchida. During his Graduate studies, he made a research trip across the Sahara, exploring various villages and settlements, observing a unique power and beauty. After his time as a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University in New York, he established his office in Tokyo. Since then, Kengo Kuma & Associates has designed architectural works in over twenty countries and received prestigious awards, including the Architectural Institute of Japan Award, the Spirit of Nature Wood Architecture Award (Finland), and the International Stone Architecture Award (Italy), among others. Kengo Kuma & Associates aims to design architecture which naturally merges with its cultural and environmental surroundings, proposing gentle, human scaled buildings. The office is constantly in search of new materials to replace concrete and steel and seeks a new approach for architecture in a post-industrial society.

**Toshiko Mori (Speaker)**, Fellow of the American Institute of Architects is the founding principal of Toshiko Mori Architect PLLC, and the Robert P. Hubbard Professor in the Practice of Architecture at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. She was inducted to the Academy of Arts and Letters in 2020 and has been a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences since 2016.

Mori’s recent awards and honors include the Isamu Noguchi Award in 2021; the Louis Auchincloss Prize from the Museum of the City of New York in 2020; the ACSA Tau Sigma Delta National Honor Society Gold Medal in 2016; and Architectural Record’s Women in Design Leader Award in 2019. This year, her project “Fass School and Teachers’ Residence” won the 2021 AIA Architecture Award. Last year, she published two new monographs, one with a+u magazine for their February 2020 issue and another with ArchiTangle Berlin titled *Toshiko Mori Architect: Observations*.

**Botond Bognar (Interviewer)** was born and educated in Budapest, Hungary. Professor Bognar is currently Edgar A. Tafel Endowed Chair in Architecture at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign where he has been teaching graduate design and lecture / seminar courses for 40 years. He received his BSc (1968) and M.Arch (1972) degrees at the Budapest University of Technology, and MA in Architecture and Urban Planning (1981) at the University of California

Los Angeles. As a Japanese Mombusho Scholar he conducted research at the Tokyo Institute of Technology (1973-1975). As a licensed architect he worked in both Hungary and Japan where he lived for several years.

Today, Professor Bogner is an internationally renowned scholar of the history and theories of Japanese architecture with a long list of publications, over twenty books and monographs, many chapters, and innumerable essays and articles in professional journals. He is now finalizing his latest book, *Modern Architectures in History-JAPAN*, invited by his London publisher. He has been keynote-speaker and panelist at numerous international conferences and lectured all around the world including the University of Tokyo, the Royal Academy of Arts London, the Architecture Center of Vienna, and at leading universities in Europe, Asia, Australia, and the United States.

Professor Bogner is recipient of numerous awards and grants, two Graham Foundation Fellowships, William and Flora Hewlett Fellowship, Social Science Research Council Fellowship; Visiting Endowed Chair at Tokyo University; Japan Foundation Fellowship, Tokyo; two Excellence in Teaching Awards; Visiting Professor at University of Oulu, Finland and the Macintosh School of Architecture, Glasgow. In 1986 he was named 'University Scholar' and in 2000 appointed Associate in the Center for Advanced Study at the University of Illinois. In 2005 he received the Cultural Appreciation Prize from the Architectural Institute of Japan (AIJ) and in 2018 the Honorary 'Gold Diploma' from the Budapest University of Technology.

**Ken Tadashi Oshima (moderator)** is Professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Washington, where he teaches in the areas of trans-national architectural history, theory, and design. He has also been a visiting professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and UCLA. He earned an A.B. degree, *magna cum laude*, in East Asian Studies and Visual & Environmental Studies from Harvard College, M. Arch. degree from U. C. Berkeley and Ph.D. in architectural history and theory from Columbia University. From 2003-5, he was a Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Fellow at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures in London.

Dr. Oshima's publications include *Kiyonori Kikutake: Between Land and Sea* (Lars Müller/Harvard GSD, 2015), *Architecturalized Asia* (University of Hawaii Press/Hong Kong University Press, 2013), *GLOBAL ENDS: towards the beginning* (Toto, 2012), *International Architecture in Interwar Japan: Constructing Kokusai Kenchiku* (University of Washington Press, 2009) and *Arata Isozaki* (Phaidon, 2009). He was co-curator of "Frank Lloyd Wright at 150: Unpacking the Archive" (Museum of Modern Art, NY, 2017) and "Crafting a Modern World: The Architecture and Design of Antonin and Noemi Raymond" (Kamakura Museum of Modern Art, 2006-7) and curated "GLOBAL ENDS: towards the beginning" (Gallery MA, 2011), "Tectonic Visions Between Land and Sea: Works of Kiyonori Kikutake" (Harvard GSD, 2012), "SANAA: Beyond Borders" (Henry Art Gallery 2007-8). He served as President of the Society of Architectural Historians from 2016-18 and was an editor and contributor to *Architecture + Urbanism* for more than ten years, co-authoring the two-volume special issue, *Visions of the Real: Modern Houses in the 20th Century* (2000). His articles on the international context of architecture and urbanism in Japan have been published in *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, *Architectural Review*, *Architectural Theory Review*, *Kenchiku Bunka*, *Japan Architect*, *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, and the *AA Files*.

### **About the *Living Traditions* Series**

Many of today's most popular and newest trends are rooted in ancient Japanese tradition going back centuries, if not millennia. Through five distinct, single-topic webinars, the *Living Traditions*

series unravels the historical journeys of some of the most iconic facets of Japanese culture through conversations between thought-provoking experts and cultural stewards on how they maintain deep-rooted traditions in the present day. [Architecture as Environment: A Conversation with Kengo Kuma and Toshiko Mori](#) is the fourth event of the five-part *Living Traditions* series. Additional webinar topics will be announced and held throughout the fall season and early 2022.

### **About Japan Society**

Japan Society is the premier organization connecting Japanese arts, culture, business, and society with audiences in New York and around the world. At Japan Society, we are inspired by the Japanese concept of *kizuna* (絆)—forging deep connections to bind people together. We are committed to telling the story of Japan while strengthening connections within New York City and building new bridges beyond. In over 100 years of work, we've inspired generations by establishing ourselves as pioneers in supporting international exchanges in arts and culture, business and policy, as well as education between Japan and the U.S. We strive to convene important conversations on topics that bind our two countries together, champion the next generation of innovative creators, promote mutual understanding, and serve as a trusted guide for people everywhere who seek to appreciate the rich complexities and abundance of Japan more fully. From our New York headquarters, a landmark building designed by architect Junzo Yoshimura that opened to the public in 1971, we look forward to the years ahead, which will be defined by our digital and ideational impact through the *kizuna* that we build. Our future can only be enhanced by learning from our peers and engaging with our audiences, both near and afar.

This year, Japan Society is celebrating our heritage through the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our landmark building with the launch of a new distinct modern logo and visual identity. The “JS” monogram is created via overlapping, interconnected lines, and shapes, reinforcing the idea of *kizuna* and that Japan Society acts as a platform that connects across, cultures, people, and time.

### **Connect With Us!**

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#). For further information, please visit [www.japansociety.org](http://www.japansociety.org).

### **About Portland Japanese Garden**

[Portland Japanese Garden](#) is a nonprofit organization originally founded in 1963 as a place for cross-cultural understanding following World War II. A hallmark in the City of Portland, the Garden was founded on the ideals of peace and mutual understanding between peoples and cultures. Portland Japanese Garden is considered the most authentic Japanese garden outside of Japan and offers programming that seeks to use Japanese gardens, arts, and culture as a lens for engaging diverse people and helping them transcend their differences to embrace commonalities. The Garden is a place for convening and collaborating across the community and globe, attracting nearly half a million visitors each year. Follow the Garden on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

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*Living Traditions* webinar series is co-presented with Portland Japanese Garden and supported by the Government of Japan. Talks+ Programs at Japan Society are generously sponsored by MUFG (Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group) and ORIX Corporation USA. Additional support is provided by an anonymous donor, the Sandy Heck Lecture Fund, and Helen and Kenneth A. Cowin.

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