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Japan Society Presents

Concrete Paradise: Okinawan Brutalist Architecture

In this Free Webinar, Panelists Explore the Distinctive Architectural Language of Okinawan Brutalism Today

Wednesday, March 30, 7 pm EST



Photography by [@brutal_zen](#) / ©Paul Tulett 2022

New York, NY (3/6/22)—Brutalist architecture on Japan's Okinawa Prefecture was born of necessity, as seasonal typhoons are commonplace and concrete buildings can better withstand severe weather than those made of wood and other natural materials. Today, 90 percent of new buildings on Okinawa are made of concrete, reflecting in architecture the post-Occupation

Americanization of Japan. This live webinar explores the little-known Brutalist architecture on Okinawa as part of special programming that commemorates the 50th anniversary year of Okinawa's return to Japanese sovereignty from the U.S. in 1972. Speakers also address the problems of concrete as a building material, considering sustainable strategies such as re-use and longevity while also questioning its continued prevalence in building and associated environmental costs.

Admission: This is a free event with advance registration required. *Pay What You Wish* options are also available to support our innovative programs. 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.

Please register [here](#), Box Office at 212-715-1258 or email boxoffice@japansociety.org. Registrants will receive a link to access the live webinar one day before the event.

Participant Bios

Paul Tulett (speaker) is an Okinawa-based photographer focused on brutalist architecture in Japan. His interest in brutalism grew during postgraduate studies in Urban Planning and Environment. Through his Instagram account ([@brutal_zen](#)), he aims to promote interest in this previously maligned and misunderstood style. By presenting the finessed Japanese expression of what originated in the UK, Paul hopes that preservation and heritage efforts can be bolstered internationally. His current interests include the origins and ongoing development of concrete use in Okinawa and sustainability issues surrounding this material.

Michael Kubo (speaker), Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator for Architectural History and Theory, Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design, University of Houston. Michael Kubo's recent co-authored publications on the history of 20th-century architecture and urbanism include *Imagining the Modern: Architecture and Urbanism of the Pittsburgh Renaissance* (2019), *Heroic: Concrete Architecture and the New Boston* (2015), *OfficeUS Atlas* (2015) and the forthcoming *Futures of the Architectural Exhibition* (2022).

Tiffany Lambert (moderator) is a curator, educator, and writer, and currently serves as Curator at Japan Society. She has held prior curatorial positions at Columbia University's Arthur Ross Gallery, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, and the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York as well as teaching positions at the Rhode Island School of Design and Pratt Institute. Her writing has been published internationally, including in *The Architectural Review*, *Artsy*, *Cultured*, *Domus*, *Metropolis*, *PIN-UP*, *Surface*, *TANK* and *The New York Times*. Her forthcoming book from Phaidon Press examines the artistic philosophy of Japanese designer Sori Yanagi.

This program, presented as part of the *U.S.-Japan Dialogue: Leveraging S&T toward Sustainability and Resiliency* program, is made possible by a generous grant from the Toshiba International Foundation and is co-organized by the [Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Foundation \(OIST Foundation\)](#). Additional support is generously provided by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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.

About Talks+ Program

The Talks + Program examines vital issues and themes in modern Japanese art, culture and design. Programming is designed to inform and to provide a gateway through which Americans can appreciate the powerful global influence of Japan's culture and its many trend-defining artisans. Programs bring together experts and practitioners for provocative discussions on diverse topics including aesthetics, consumer culture and cuisine.

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 50th 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.