



Yuko Nagayama

Born in 1975. Graduated from Showa Women's University in 1998. After working at Jun Aoki & Associates, Nagayama established Yuko Nagayama & Associates in 2002. Her representative works include: "Japan Pavilion for Dubai Expo", "Louis Vuitton Kyoto Daimaru", "a hill on a house", "ANTEPRIMA", "Kayaba Coffee", "SISII", "Kiya Ryokan", "Teshima Yokoo House", "SEIBU SHIBUYA A・B bldg. 5th floor", and "Central Garden - Goddess of The Forest". She has received awards including: L'Oréal Encouragement Award, JCD Design Award, AR Award 2006 for "a hill on a house", ARCHITECTURAL RECORD Design Vanguard 2012, JIA Young Architect Award 2014 for "Teshima Yokoo House", Yamanashi Cultural Prize of Architecture 2017, JCD Design Award 2017 Silver Award, Tokyo Architecture Award 2018 Excellent Award for "Central Garden - Goddess of The Forest", and Design Award for Light and Lighting 2021 Grand Prize for "Tamagawa Takashimaya S.C. Grand Patio". Currently she is working on a high-rise building in Kabukicho, Shinjuku (2022), and Tokyo Torch in Tokiwabashi.
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What is architecture rooted in the community?

Architect Yuko Nagayama and
 OBAYASHI CORPORATION Architectural Design & Engineering Division

Kazunori Tsukuda / Masako Ishizuka / Sho Date / Hiroto Ota
 moderator: Makiko Umeno

In recent years, the circumstances surrounding us have changed dramatically. While the COVID-19 crisis, in particular, spurred the expansion of virtual communication that is free from physical boundaries, it also reminded us of the importance of "real" interactions with others and society at large. As the virtual dimension expands and as long as architecture maintains its physicality, forming strong relationships with physical communities will become increasingly crucial in realizing architectural projects. Now, we must think of ways that architects can collaborate with communities to encourage the creative utilization of buildings for community-based activities. Our Architectural Design & Engineering Division staff held a talk session on this issue inviting the architect, Yuko Nagayama, in June 2021. By looking at each other's past projects, we explored the relationship between architecture and community, and what shapes architecture that is deeply rooted in community.

Yuko Nagayama - TESHIMA YOKOO HOUSE / JINS PARK



Open Up and Embrace Community

Makiko Umeno: Our relationship with Ms. Nagayama goes back to the Dubai Expo project. Obayashi participated in constructing the Japan pavilion designed by her. Let's look at her work in which the involvement of local communities was significant.

Yuko Nagayama: This is Teshima Yokoo House located near the Teshima Island harbor. We turned a dilapidated house into a museum dedicated to Tadanori Yokoo. The red glass screens reflect his conceptual exploration of various boundaries. The garden and the tower contain his installation work. We worked with local people from the early stages of renovation. The locals created the riverbed mosaic for the installation and threw a party at the museum opening. They became so familiar with the project that they now guide visitors. We became aware of the importance of developing a good relationship with the community.

Another notable project is the designing of JINS PARK. Usually, JIN's eyeglass shops are located in convenient places near train stations, but this was on a roadside in a suburb. We were mindful about how to attract people and keep them coming back frequently. The layout was the key. To render the facility as a park, we put the parking in the back, and the building and garden in front. Inside, you can shop at a bakery run by JINS or stroll and sit like being in a park. It is designed to reveal everything as you enter, guiding your eyes to the sky. The private spaces are located behind the staircase. Living up to its name, the facility is a place to explore and relax.



Kazunori Tsukuda - TAISHO UNIVERSITY BUILDING #8



Space Where People Find Comfort

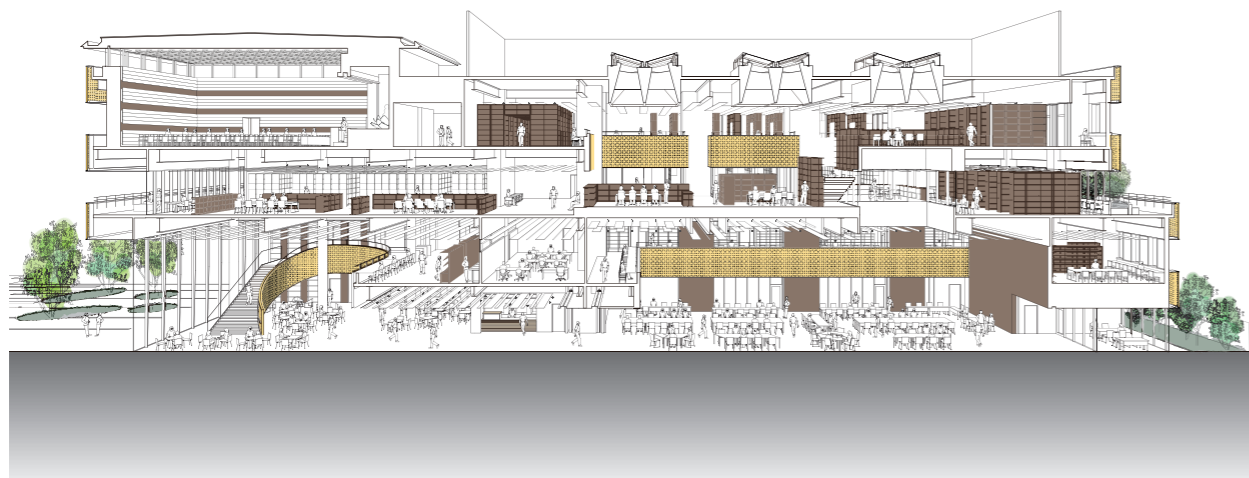
Kazunori Tsukuda: Taisho University's Building #8 houses a Learning Commons, library, and prayer hall (see p.04). For the past decade, the university has continued to open up its campus to the local community. This facility needed to represent its philosophy while providing students a space to learn and gather. "The valley of knowledge and gathering" was our concept, and we designed various types of interconnected environments. Looking at the JINS PARK and Tokiwabashi projects, I can see your interest in providing users multiple options for occupying space. We designed Building #8 with the same intent. In designing such a space, what did you pay attention to?

Y.Nagayama: When people choose a place to stay or rest, they decide a scale that suits their needs. It's essential to figure out an appropriate scale for every specific situation. We determined the

suitable scale for the project by repeatedly examining the sizes and placement of furniture and user circulation, using life-size models. I believe the scale of a space has a lot to do with comfort.

K.Tsukuda: JINS PARK offers well-balanced options for users to determine where to be within the facility.

Y.Nagayama: So many elements affect the representation of a space. We examined how people recognized a certain spot as a place to stay and relax. The staircase in JINS PARK is fan-shaped because we wanted it to be a place to sit. We paid attention to what leads people to sit down there. For example, seemingly tiny details like a table to put a cup on can signal someone to sit down and others would follow.



Masako Ishizuka - Headquarters KCON Co., Ltd.



Plaza for Local People

Masako Ishizuka: I worked on remodeling the Kcon headquarters located on the historic site of Yodo Castle, where a wall of the second citadel was excavated during rebuilding work (see p.24). This background shaped our concept, an office tied to community and society by the archeological site. The plaza in the middle of the site is open to the locals to use for events. The rooftop public park in JINS PARK is similar. How did you determine the layout plan and level of openness to the community?

Y.Nagayama: We designed a family-friendly space where parents can relax while watching their kids play. I often contemplate on challenges of designing openness, especially to a local community. If a project fails to attract the locals after the construction, then the project is pointless. We often conduct interviews with a target user base to find out how they would use the space. Architects' fresh

ideas and clients' commitment to those ideas are both crucial. We engage with potential users from the early stages for feedback. We even host the first event together. We want the space to grow on them so that they voluntarily generate new usage.

M.Ishizuka: Was it your idea to include a bakery in JINS PARK?

Y.Nagayama: I proposed ideas for "mothers and kids" when JINS asked for a family-friendly program. JINS took on the bakery operation instead of bringing in a tenant shop. Something else besides eyeglasses was needed to attract more people. A foodservice business isn't easy, but they were committed. I'm hopeful for the facility's future.



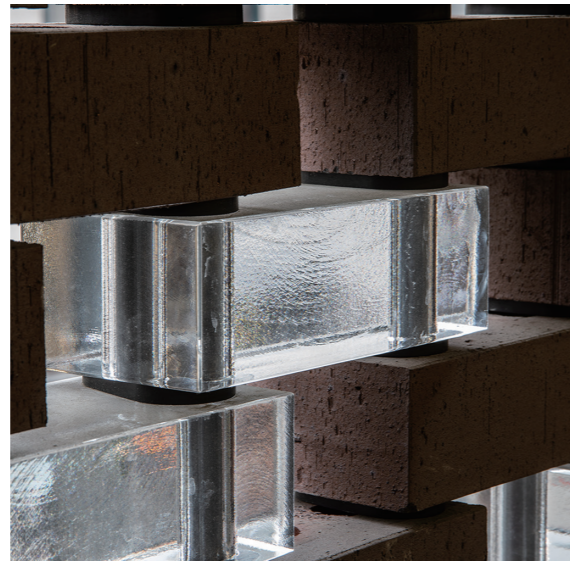
Sho Date - DAIKO Lighting Core Sapporo



Using Locally Sourced Materials

Sho Date: I worked on the remodeling of the Daiko showroom in Sapporo (see p.26). It's not totally open to the public, but we wanted to create a facade that appeals to the locals. We built a honeycomb brickwork wall with glass bricks and the locally made Ebetsu bricks to control the natural light, allowing no light in the showroom but letting it in on the office floor. Would you elaborate on your material choice, copper shingles, for the JINS PARK roof?

Y.Nagayama: We chose colors that blended well with nature. The copper matched with the reddish-brown color of Mt. Akagi in the distance. We combined 5-6 different tones of oxidized copper plates to mimic nature's tonal irregularity. It's similar to the uneven surface color of baked brick. The diagonal lines resulting from folded plates emphasize the continuity of the copper envelope. Those lines stand out when lit at night, adding three-dimensionality to the exterior surface.



Hiroto Ota - Nara Prefectural Convention Center



Embracing Local Culture

Hiroto Ota: Nara Prefectural Convention Center (see p.14) is a hub of international conferences and a large-scale multi-use complex with commercial facilities, hotel and broadcast station. For this project, I focused on embodying the essence of Nara by using local materials such as cedar, cypress bark and hemp fabric in historical motifs of Tenpyo culture and employing ancient construction techniques for exterior and columns alluding to Shosoin, to construct the entire facilities in collaboration with local artists. You seem to take a similar approach to local history and culture and reflect it in your work, even on small products. How do you incorporate these regional characteristics into architecture?

Y.Nagayama: It's up to an architect's sensibility to determine what they glean from contextual research, which shapes the uniqueness of a building. A story that the architect chooses to convey through architecture must be presented effectively but not literally or straightforwardly. The exciting aspect of architectural practice is exploring the best ways to "cook" these local ingredients and turning them into something attractive.

H.Ota: I agree. It is a lot of fun for me to design architecture for a site with strong local characteristics, and it is essential to retain that excitement until the end of a project. "The way you choose the ingredients makes a building unique" could be another topic to be further pursued.





Taking Root in the Area

M.Umeno: Did anything particular from these projects speak to you, Ms. Nagayama?

Y.Nagayama: The use of materials stood out to me. For example, the perforated facade of the Taisho University building fills the interior with light. I can relate to the challenges presented in Nara—exploring how to use locally sourced materials is a process I enjoy when working in the provinces. I often think about how different methods of "cooking" local ingredients affect architecture. The same goes for the brick used for the Sapporo project. The Kcon project embodies a unique story. Encouraging clients to engage in community-based activities voluntarily requires forming a bond with them. Although

taking root in the area is an important goal, there's only so much we can do, and we need our clients to understand that. Involving them as teammates is the key. The process to obtain the locals' acceptance in Teshima was not straightforward but was an essential part of creating work rooted in the area.

M.Umeno: Your comment, "a story must be presented effectively, not literally," resonated with me. It really is important to form a team with clients and communicate project intentions to local people without imposing our rationale.

