



## FIRST TANGE KENZO SURVEY IN TOKYO PRESENTED AT NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE

*July 14, 2021, New York, NY* – This month marks the opening of the first major exhibition in Tokyo dedicated to Pritzker Prize-winning architect Tange Kenzo (1913–2005), whose designs combining traditional Japanese and modernist forms has had a profound influence on architecture in Japan and abroad. Presented by the National Archives of Modern Architecture (NAMA), Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan, *TANGE KENZO 1938-1970: From Pre-war period to Olympic Games and World Expo* follows the first half of Tange’s career, bringing together archival materials that trace the origins of such iconic projects as Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, Kagawa Prefectural Government Building, and Yoyogi National Gymnasium, as well as never-before-seen studies for his private residence. On view July 21 through October 10, the exhibition commemorates Tange’s leading role in realizing the 1964 Tokyo Olympics as the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games return to the city in 2021.

To ensure a safe environment for all, visitors to *TANGE KENZO 1938-1970* are requested to follow guidelines for preventing the spread of Covid-19. Information on NAMA’s health and safety procedures are available online [here](#). For those unable to travel for the exhibition, NAMA has launched a dedicated website to enable a broader audience to engage with Tange’s body of work by visiting [tange2021.go.jp/en/](https://tange2021.go.jp/en/)

With support from American Express, World Monuments Fund (WMF) collaborated with NAMA and Chiba University (CU) on the exhibition as part of WMF’s campaign advocating protections for Tange’s Kagawa Prefectural Gymnasium in Takamatsu. In 2018, the gymnasium became the first modern Japanese building included on the World Monuments Watch, a biannual program spotlighting 25 sites under threat with the potential for social impact. A beloved landmark, the Kagawa Prefectural Gymnasium hosted local sports events for 50 years until a leak in the building’s roof led the facility to close in 2014.

Like the original construction of the gymnasium, its rehabilitation poses a significant technical challenge requiring further interventions to improve the building’s earthquake resistance. Since 2018, WMF has worked with local advocates, including Japan’s architecture community, to call for the preservation of the building and a new vision for its future use. This initiative builds on WMF’s advocacy and conservation efforts over the past 15 years focused on modern sites around the globe threatened by neglect, deterioration, among other challenges.

“We are honored to be part of this international collaboration between private and public sectors to raise awareness of Tange Kenzo’s contributions to modern architecture,” said Bénédicte de Montlaur, President and CEO of WMF. “This exhibition urges further consideration of the groundbreaking nature of his work, underscoring the pressing need to safeguard architectural marvels of our recent history, not just buildings of our distant past.”

## **NAMA: Research and Presentation**

For three years, from 2014 to 2016, NAMA conducted a survey to locate architectural documentary resources relating to Tange's career. Featuring the findings of this research endeavor, the exhibition retraces the first half of Tange's life to advance public understanding of modern and contemporary architecture in Japan. Its presentation is timed to large-scale events in the architecture and design fields, including the 16th Annual International Docomomo Conference and the Architectural Institute of Japan Annual Convention, taking place concurrently with the 2021 Olympics and Paralympics in Tokyo. Ranging from Tange's early designs as an architecture student to the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the 1970 Osaka Expo, *TANGE KENZO 1938-1970* unites 180 drawings, sketches, models, structural calculations, photographs, videos, lecture notes, notebooks, letters, and publications organized around the following themes:

- **War and Peace** explores how Tange approached memorializing those who died in the Second World War. This section introduces his internationally acclaimed design for Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park dedicated to victims of the world's first nuclear attack.
- **Modernity and Tradition** examines the unique fusion of modernist design and traditional Japanese architecture in Tange's work, owing to interactions with leading figures of the modern movement including Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius.
- **Postwar Democracy and Government Building Architecture** reflects on how Tange designed government buildings with the aim of encouraging citizens to congregate in empty city centers and feel a sense of involvement in policymaking. Tange's approach to connecting architecture with the surrounding urban context is explored in projects including the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Office, Imabari City Hall, and Kagawa Prefectural Government Office.
- **Challenge to Massive Space** details the process in which Tange realized various shell structures in partnership with structural engineer Tsuboi Yoshikatsu. Together they explored the possibilities of economical steel frame construction in bold designs as seen in the Kagawa Prefectural Gymnasium and other large-scale projects.
- **Designs in Information Society and Osaka Expo** focuses on Tange's vision for a new urban cityscape as the Japanese economy entered the high-growth period. Tange responded with *Tokyo Plan 1960*, which proposed replacing the concentric urban model centered on Tokyo Station with a linear urban model.
- **Integration of the Five Keywords** introduces Yoyogi National Gymnasium, acclaimed as Tange's magnum opus. The gymnasium was constructed to host the swimming and basketball competitions for the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo. It will serve as the handball and wheelchair rugby venues for the Olympics and Paralympics in 2021.

## **Exhibit Organization**

*TANGE KENZO 1938-1970: From Pre-war period to Olympic Games and World Expo* is organized by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan, in cooperation with Tange Associates, Uchida Michiko, Tokyo Metropolitan Parks Association, Japan Arts Council, World Monuments Fund (WMF), American

Express, DOCOMOMO Japan, and The Museum of Art, Kochi. The exhibition is guest curated by Toyokawa Saikaku, Associate Professor at Chiba University.

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### **About National Archives of Modern Architecture**

Japanese modern architecture occupies an important position in the arts and culture world, but for a long time there were no proper systems in place for passing on its academic, historic, and artistic value for future generations. National Archives of Modern Architecture (NAMA) thus aims to prevent materials pertaining to Japanese modern architecture (e.g. drawings, models, etc.) from being damaged, scattered, or lost overseas by conducting nationwide surveys to locate these materials, coordinating with institutions (e.g. universities) in possession of related materials, and acquiring and storing materials in urgent need of protection. Additionally, NAMA strives to further public understanding of modern architecture and architectural materials through making collection materials available for public viewing, organizing exhibitions, and conducting outreach activities.

### **About World Monuments Fund**

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to safeguarding the world's significant cultural places to enrich lives and build mutual understanding. For more than 55 years, working at more than 700 sites in 112 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to the preservation of important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through the World Monuments Watch—a biennial, nomination-based program—WMF uses cultural heritage conservation to empower communities and improve human well-being. In partnership with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF seeks to inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York City, the organization has offices and affiliates worldwide. [wmf.org](http://wmf.org)

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