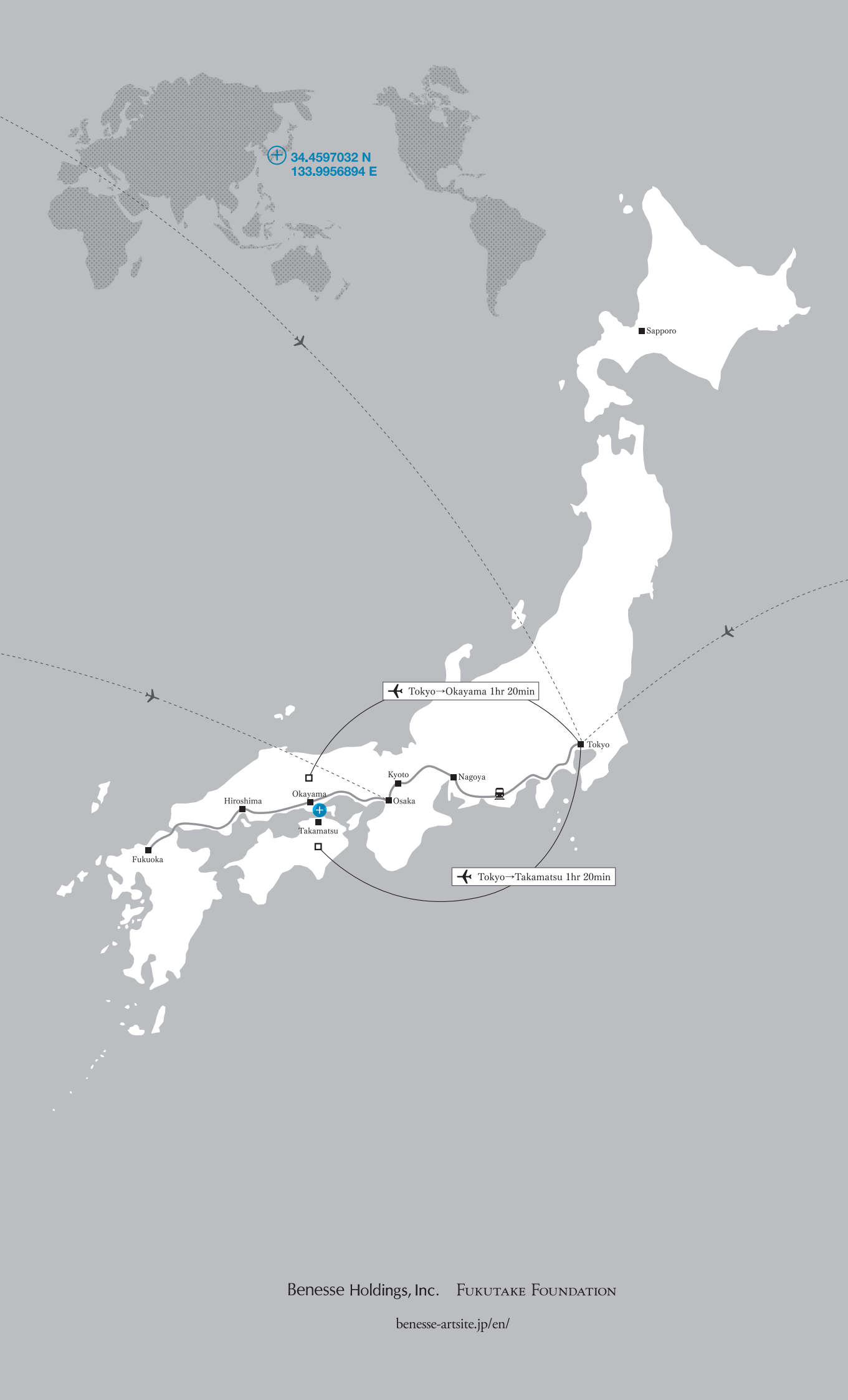


Benesse Art Site Naoshima

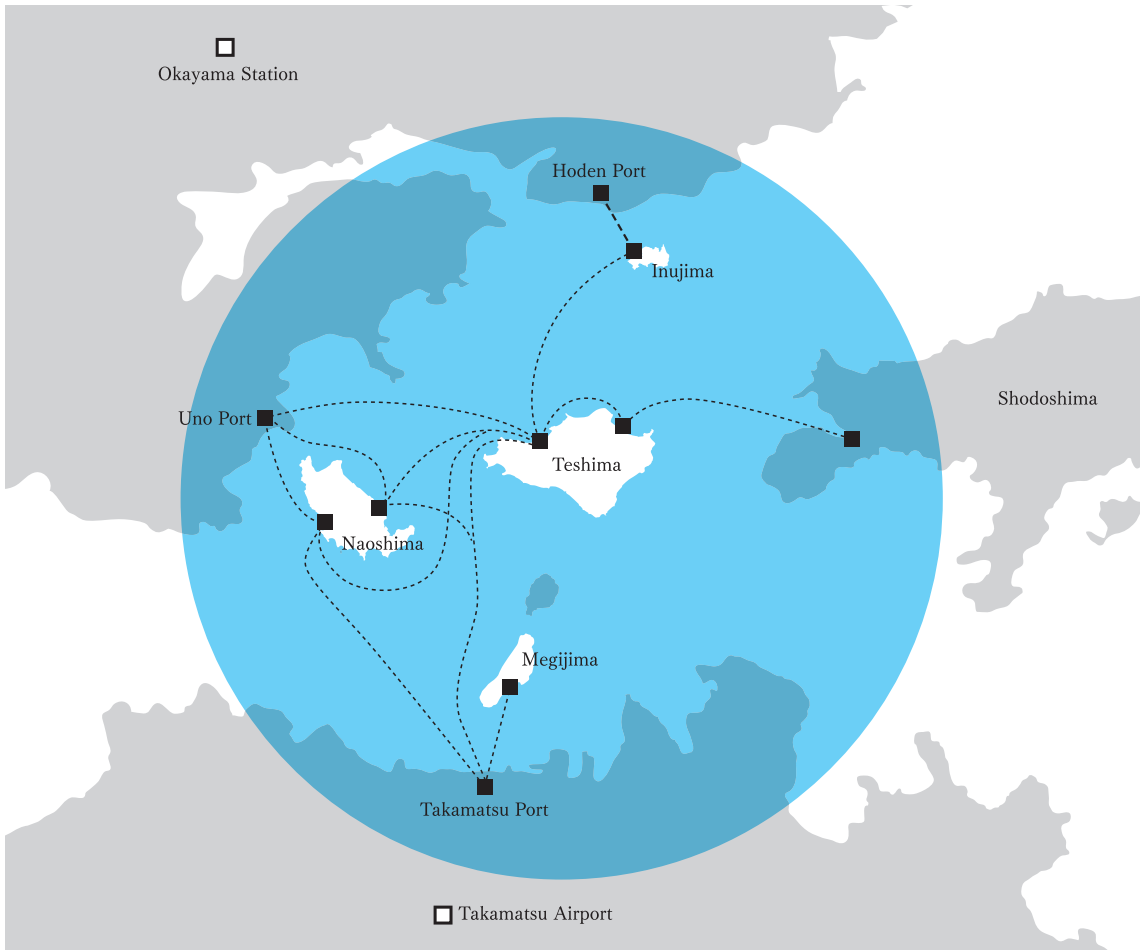
Art, Architecture and Nature in the Seto Inland Sea



Benesse Holdings, Inc. FUKUTAKE FOUNDATION

benesse-artsite.jp/en/





Naoshima

Naoshima lies 13 kilometers north of Takamatsu in Kagawa Prefecture, and 3 kilometers south of Tamano in Okayama Prefecture. The Town of Naoshima, which belongs to Kagawa Prefecture, consists of the main island of Naoshima and the small islands around it. Composed of granite and weathered soil, the island is hilly and surrounded by a crooked coastline frilled with white sand beaches and green pine trees, displaying a natural beauty characteristic of the inland sea. It is said that the name “Naoshima” (*Nao*: “candid”, “honest”; *Shima*: “island”) was given to the island in the 12th century by Emperor Sutoku, who appreciated the straightforwardness of the islanders when he stopped on the island on the way to his exile in Sanuki (present-day Kagawa) after losing in the Hogen Rebellion. In the 17th century, Naoshima became part of the Tokugawa shogunate and prospered as a hub port for maritime transport in the inland sea, and as a salt manufacturing center.

There are three villages on Naoshima: Miyanoura, home to the ferry terminal, Honmura, originally built as a castle town in the Sengoku Period (16th century), and Tsumu’ura, with its old fishing port. In the northern part of the island, Mitsubishi Materials Corporation’s Naoshima Refinery has been producing copper since the 1910s, forming an industrial area together with the related businesses located nearby. The central area of the island is the school district, home to Naoshima’s Elementary and Junior High Schools. The beautiful nature of the island is preserved in the south of Naoshima, which forms part of the Setonaikai National Park. The main industries on Naoshima are Mitsubishi Materials and its related businesses, and the sea-farming of yellowtail, seaweed and other products.



Benesse Art Site Naoshima

“Benesse Art Site Naoshima” is the collective name for all art-related activities conducted since 1987 by Benesse Holdings, Inc. and Fukutake Foundation on the islands of Naoshima and Teshima in Kagawa Prefecture and on Inujima island in Okayama Prefecture. Our fundamental aim is to create significant spaces by bringing contemporary art and architecture in resonance with the pristine nature of the Seto Inland Sea, a landscape with a rich cultural and historical fabric.

Through contacts with art and nature, sceneries and inhabitants of the Seto Inland Sea region, we seek to inspire visitors to reflect on the meaning of Benesse’s motto – Well-Being.

In all our ongoing activities, we are committed to foster a relationship of mutual growth between art and the region, aiming to make a positive contribution to the local communities.

Benesse
Art Site
Naoshima

Benesse House Museum / Valley Gallery

Benesse House Museum, designed by Tadao Ando to coexist with nature, art, and architecture, opened in 1992. The museum features permanent site-specific installations and has a new addition, Valley Gallery, which opened in 2022 as part of the museum. The gallery’s architecture and artworks reflect the surrounding nature and promote a renewed awareness of the richness of nature, symbiosis, and the fundamental spirit of prayer and rebirth.



Photo: Tadasu Yamamoto

Hiroshi Sugimoto Gallery: Time Corridors

Hiroshi Sugimoto Gallery was conceived to connect Naoshima and Enoura, which can be said to be the starting point of Sugimoto’s creative activities since Sugimoto’s longtime efforts in Naoshima led to the creation of his ultimate work as an artist, “Enoura Observatory” in Odawara.



Hiroshi Sugimoto Gallery: Time Corridors Lounge, 2022
Photo: Masatomo MORIYAMA



Photo: Seiichi Osawa

Chichu Art Museum

A museum built mostly underground to avoid affecting the beautiful natural scenery of the Seto Inland Sea. Artworks by Claude Monet, James Turrell and Walter De Maria are on permanent display in this building designed by Tadao Ando. Despite being primarily subterranean, the museum lets in an abundance of natural light that changes the appearance of the artworks and the ambience of the space with the passage of time, throughout the day and all along the four seasons of the year.



Photo: Tadasu Yamamoto

Lee Ufan Museum

Lee Ufan Museum unites works by the internationally acclaimed artist Lee Ufan with the architecture of Tadao Ando. Located in a valley surrounded by hills and the sea, the first museum dedicated to Lee Ufan exhibits paintings and sculptures created by the artist from the 1970s to the present. The works are displayed both on an outside terrace area and in the interior space of the museum which is built half underground. This tranquil space where nature, architecture and art come in resonance with each other invites to peaceful and quiet contemplation.

Art House Project

Art House Project commissions artists to remodel empty houses on the island and transform each space into a work of art. The project began in 1998 with Tatsuo Miyajima's *Kadoya*, and currently includes seven venues: *Kadoya*, *Minamidera*, *Kinza*, *Go'o Shrine*, *Ishibashi*, *Gokaisho*, and *Haisha*. Unique spaces are created amidst a residential neighborhood, interweaving local history and culture with contemporary art.



Art House Project "Go'o Shrine" Hiroshi Sugimoto "Appropriate Proportion" Photo: Hiroshi Sugimoto

ANDO MUSEUM

Devoted to Tadao Ando, this museum has brought a century-old private house to life. Through the interplay of contrasting elements (wood and concrete, light and darkness), it captures in miniature the essence of Ando's architecture. The photographs, sketches and models on display present the architect's work as well as the history of Naoshima. The building and its interior can be regarded as works of art in themselves.

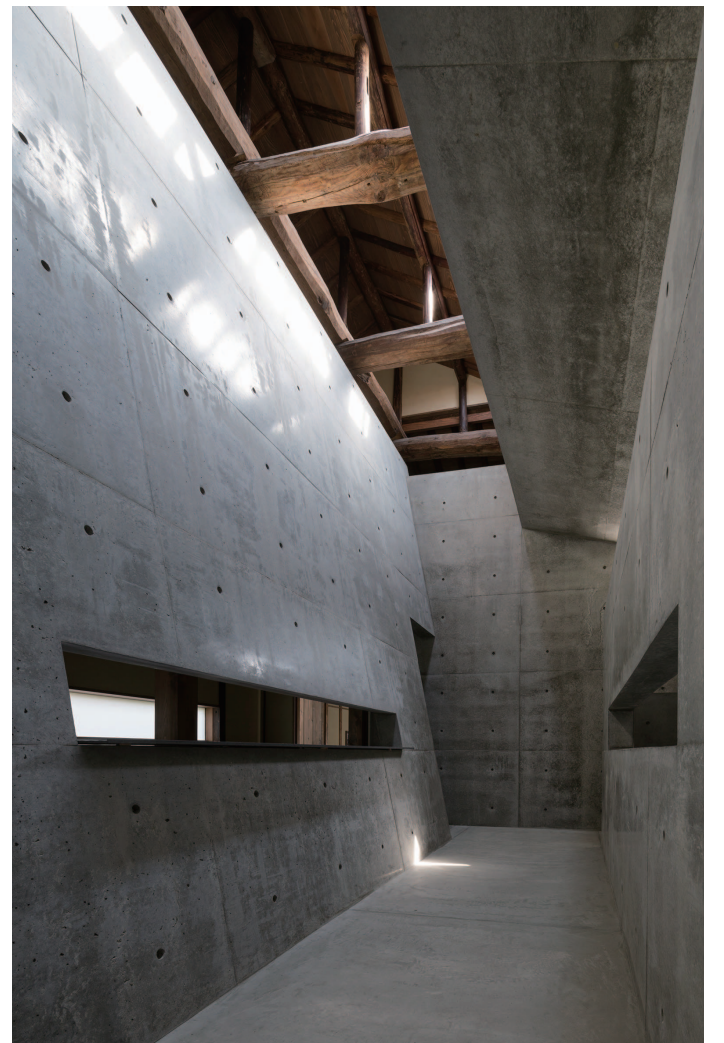


Photo: Yoshihiro Asada



Photo: Yoshikazu Inoue

Naoshima Bath “I ♥ 湯”

A public bath created by artist Shinro Ohtake using found materials such as boat parts, a mysterious elephant statue, and Indonesian tiles. The theme of “Never being boring” is expressed throughout the facility from its exterior to the interior space, including the bathtub, toilets and wall murals. The bath aims to provide vital energy to local residents and to serve as a place loved by all where communication is fostered between the islanders and visitors.



Photo: Tadasu Yamamoto

Setouchi “Setouchi” Archive / Miyanoura Gallery 6

Setouchi “Setouchi” Archive is a project that started in September 2019, based at Miyanoura Gallery 6. This project by artist Motoyuki Shitamichi explores, collects, and exhibits the landscape, climate, folklore, and history of the Seto Inland Sea region. The artist will work with people who live and work in the area, as well as with specialists in various fields, to present a new perspective on the islands.



Photo: Shinkenichiku-sha

The Naoshima Plan “The Water”

The structure was interpreted by the architect Hiroshi Sambuichi, that the townscapes of Honmura, Naoshima were built to pass on “moving materials” like “wind” and “water” as if they were batons in a relay race. Having found not only in the beauty of the “moving materials” itself, but also in the community where it is carefully handed over to neighboring houses, Sambuichi emerged the beauty of the two through the renovation of the old house. He manifested the characteristic of Honmura housings of adjacent rooms aligned south-north, and installed the pool filled with rich well water. If you put your feet into the pool from the windblown pier, you can see and feel the “moving materials” of Naoshima.

Teshima

The island of Teshima, which belongs to Tonosho Town, Shozu County in Kagawa Prefecture, is located in the eastern part of the Seto Inland Sea, between Naoshima and Shodoshima and about 30 minutes by boat from Takamatsu. Graced by a primeval forest of chinquapin and sawtooth oak trees growing on the slopes of Mount Dan-yama in the center of the island and fine spring water in the Karato area, agriculture, fishery, and dairy farming have long been prospering on the island, providing for a bountiful food supply, as the name Teshima (literally “rich island”) suggests. The stone industry also used to flourish on the island, but all such primary industries have been declining due to changes in the occupational structure and to the decrease and aging of the labor force. The population of the island, which used to be around 2,700 inhabitants, decreased to about 900 inhabitants currently. The illegal dumping of industrial waste on Teshima, which began in the 1970s, was one of the worst such occurrences in Japan, but since an arbitration settlement was reached in 2000, the waste has been properly processed at a dedicated treatment plant on Naoshima. Waste extraction was completed in 2017, and work to restore the site to its original condition is currently under way.

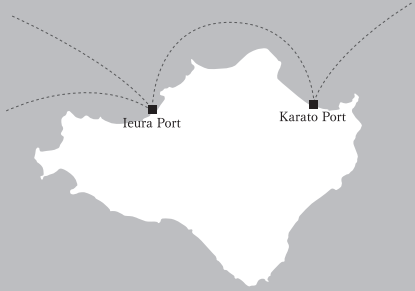


Photo: Noboru Morikawa

Teshima Art Museum

Teshima Art Museum is a collaborative creation by artist Rei Naito and architect Ryue Nishizawa . The museum, which resembles a water droplet at the moment of landing, is located in the corner of a rice terrace that was restored in collaboration with local residents. The building consists of a concrete shell-structure, devoid of pillars, which lets in wind, sounds and light from outside through the two openings in its ceiling. In *Matrix*, the artwork exhibited in the museum’s interior space, water continuously springs out from the ground in a day-long motion. Art, architecture and nature come together and become one here.



Photo: Tadasu Yamamoto

Teshima Yokoo House

A private house located in the Ieura district of Teshima was transformed into this museum dedicated to artist Tadanori Yokoo, in collaboration with architect Yuko Nagayama. Three spaces in the existing structure, the Main House, Warehouse and Outhouse, serve to exhibit 11 two-dimensional works, while installations are deployed throughout the site, in the stone garden, pond and cylindrical tower. This small museum serves a philosophical purpose, evoking thoughts on life and death simultaneously.



Photo: Kuge Yasuhide

Les Archives du Cœur

A small museum by artist Christian Boltanski nestled at the end of a pine forest facing the Seto Inland Sea, an archive of human memories housing the heartbeats of people from around the world. Les Archives du Cœur consists of three rooms: The Heart Room in which a lightbulb flashes synchronously to the sound of a random pulsing heartbeat; the Listening Room in which the heartbeats collected around the world can be browsed and listened to; and the Recording Room where visitors can add their own heartbeat to the archive.



Photo: Tadasu Yamamoto

La forêt des murmures

Installed in a forest halfway up Mt. Dan-yama, 400 wind chimes tinkle in the breeze in this work by artist Christian Boltanski. On strips of transparent material hanging from each bell are the names of loved ones written by past visitors. The sound of the wind chimes summons up the mystery of the soul, paying homage to the memory of those individuals, expressing both the vitality and transience of human life. Visitors are invited to leave behind the name of a beloved one. At a later date, this name will be engraved on a strip in the visitor's own handwriting, and will start swinging in the breeze, becoming part of the artwork.

Benesse Art Site Naoshima – Other works



Shinro Ohtake, Needle factory

Photo: Shintaro Miyawaki



Teshima 8 million Lab

Photo: OMOTE Nobutada



Mariko Mori, Tom Na H-iu

Photo: Osamu Nakamura

Our exhibits include: the *Needle factory*, Shinro Ohtake's "collage" based on a knitting needle factory that was left untouched after closure and wooden molds of ships that were never used to build them; the *Teshima 8 Million Lab* built in the southwestern area of Kou on Teshima Island, near the sea; and the "Tom Na H-iu," a glass monument inspired by the legend of soul reincarnation in ancient Celts.

Inujima

Inujima is the only populated island belonging to the city of Okayama. It is located in the Setonaikai National Park, 2.5km south and 10 minutes by boat from Hoden Port in southeastern Okayama. A large dog-shaped stone enshrined on a neighboring island gave its name to the surrounding group of islands (Inujima literally meaning “Dog Island”).

Inujima used to be renowned for its granite, used in various places throughout Japan such as the castles of Edo (present-day Tokyo), Osaka and Okayama, and later on to build the foundations of Osaka Port. After the erection of the Inujima copper refinery in the early 20th century, the population quickly increased to reach 5,000 inhabitants at its peak. But after a dramatic drop in copper prices, the refinery was closed and with the decline of the stone industry, the population dwindled to less than 50 inhabitants currently. Equipped with a swimming beach and a municipal recreation facility, the nature of the island can nowadays be enjoyed throughout the year.



Photo: Yoshikazu Inoue

Inujima “Art House Project”

This project by art director Yuko Hasegawa and architect Kazuyo Sejima aims to revitalize the village on Inujima. The galleries and rest area scattered around the village are constructed from a diverse range of materials, including roofing tiles and other components from existing old houses, as well as transparent acrylic glass and aluminum that reflects the landscape, so that observers can become one with the works and the scenery of the island. Each houses a special exhibition by a single artist, smoothly integrating art spaces into daily life. Currently, the works of five artists are displayed in five galleries and elsewhere around the village.



Photo: Daici Ano

Inujima Seirenscho Art Museum

This museum designed by architect Hiroshi Sambuichi in collaboration with artist Yukinori Yanagi, was built by breathing new life in the ruins of the Inujima *Seirenscho* (“refinery”), a listed Industrial Modernization Heritage site, and by harnessing the natural energy found locally in order to minimize the building’s impact on the natural environment. Once a prospering force contributing to the modernization of Japan, today only the vestiges of the Inujima copper refinery remain. Through the display of motifs based around Yukio Mishima, a symbol of the contradictions of modernizing Japan, Yanagi’s work serves as a space to engage in individual reflections about the future of Japan, rather than focusing on a single ideology.



Photo: Yoshikazu Inoue

Inujima Life Garden

Roughly 4,500 square meters of land were used to create this botanical garden reflecting the natural environment and culture of Inujima, with a long-abandoned glass greenhouse as its centerpiece. This is not a conventional botanical garden, professionally groomed for people to visit and observe plant life, but rather a place where island residents and visitors can join in the process of reviving the land, and enjoy self-reliance in areas ranging from food to energy while experiencing the joy of living within the cycles of nature. At Inujima Life Garden, island residents and visitors can relax and learn from one another, thinking together about possible future lifestyles.

Benesse Art Site Naoshima – Other works in the Seto Inland Sea

Opened on the occasion of the Setouchi Triennale 2013, *MECON* was created by Shinro Ohtake in the inner courtyard of the defunct elementary school on Megijima island; located in the former elementary school in the Fukuda district on Shodoshima island, FUKUTAKE HOUSE presents special exhibitions centered on Asian art.



MECON (Megijima)

Photo: Tetsuya Ito



FUKUTAKE HOUSE (Shodoshima)

Photo: Yoshikazu Inoue

Benesse Art Site at Naoshima and the Setouchi Triennale

The Setouchi Triennale has been held every three years since 2010, around the theme, “Restoration of the Sea”. In 2010, the Triennale took place across 7 islands and 2 port cities in the Seto Inland Sea. From 2013 the number of island locations increased to 12. The event is organized by the Setouchi Triennale Executive Committee, which is primarily piloted by Kagawa Prefecture. Various groups, including city, town and village governments, provide affiliated assistance. Fukutake Foundation, which jointly runs Benesse Art Site Naoshima, is a participating entity to the Triennale. Benesse Art Site Naoshima’s president, Mr. Soichiro Fukutake, furthermore serves as the Triennale’s general producer. The event began against the backdrop of a shrinking, aging population in the Seto Inland Sea, leading to a decrease in regional activity. Young employees of the Kagawa Prefectural Government proposed an art festival to rejuvenate the region. Similarly, Benesse Art Site Naoshima, which has long been using contemporary art and architecture to work towards regional revitalization while respecting the local identity, had been looking to broaden their work to other islands. These common goals led to a public/private collaboration on the Triennale.

The Seto Inland Sea and I – Why I Brought Art to Naoshima

Soichiro Fukutake Honorary Chairman of Fukutake Foundation
Honorary Adviser, Benesse Holdings, Inc.

From Tokyo to the Seto Inland Sea

I spent most of my younger years in Tokyo, but returned to Okayama, where our company headquarter is located, when I turned 40 because of my father’s sudden demise. This is when I started visiting Naoshima regularly to continue my father’s venture of building a campsite for children on the island.

During my involvement in the project, I had the opportunity to deepen my ties with the island’s residents. Pursuing further my interest for cruises around the islands of the Seto Inland Sea, I developed a renewed appreciation for the history, culture and daily lives of the island residents while taking in the exquisite beauty of the Seto Inland Sea.

Today, many of the islands in the Seto Inland Sea are scarcely populated and perceived as remote places. On the other hand, they have also shielded Japan’s traditional spirit, way of life and virgin landscapes from rampaging modernization. You can observe these aspects here in the atmosphere of traditional wooden houses, in people’s behavior, and in the ties that still exist between neighbors. In a sense, the island residents lead a self-sufficient lifestyle intimately connected with nature.

The islands of the Seto Inland Sea supported Japan’s modernization effort and the post-war period of high economic growth, but they were also forced to bear more than their fair share of the negative burden of industrialization, despite being designated as Japan’s first national park. Refineries emitting sulfur dioxide were built on Naoshima and Inujima, and industrial waste was unlawfully dumped on Teshima. These actions took a heavy toll on the local residents and on their natural environment. Oshima was furthermore cut off from society for many years after being designated as a treatment center for sheltering leprosy patients.

Use What Exists to Create What Is to Be

Becoming deeply involved with the islands in the Seto Inland Sea, I found that my perspective on daily life

and society developed while in Tokyo had taken a 180-degree turn. I started to see “modernization” and “urbanization” as one and the same. Large cities like Tokyo felt somewhat like monstrous places where people are cut off from nature and feverishly pursue only their own desires. Urban society offers endless stimulation and excitement, tension and pleasure, while engulfing people in a whirlwind of competition. Today, cities are far from spiritually fulfilling places. Instead, urban dwellers show no interest for others around them and indiscriminate murdering and child neglect are taking place. From a very young age, children are brainwashed and are thrown into an economy-driven competitive society, with no space to interact with nature.

Nobody would think of such circumstances as forming the basis of a good society. It takes tremendous courage, however, to escape from life in the big city, which can seem like a bottomless pit. Even today, many young people from rural areas are drawn to cities by their irresistible pull. In the Seto Inland Sea region, young people have continuously set out for the cities, leaving only seniors behind on many islands. This has led to a continuing decline in the population of the islands. Considering the current state of large cities and the daily lives of people in the Seto Inland Sea region, I started having strong doubts about the premises of Japan’s modernization, namely that civilization advances through a process of creative destruction. Such a civilization expands by continuously creating new things at the expense of what already exists. I believe that we must switch to a civilization that achieves sustainable growth by “using what exists to create what is to be.” Unless we do so, we will be unable to refine and hand our culture down to future generations, and whatever we build will eventually be destroyed by our offspring.

People Find Happiness in Good Communities

Considering the contradictions revealed by the problems faced by large cities in modern society and the

current state of the islands of the Seto Inland Sea region, I became firmly convinced that the region could be transformed by establishing attractive contemporary art museums bearing a critical message towards modern society on the very islands where Japan’s primeval landscape still survives. I acted based on my convictions. I found that young people started to visit Naoshima in large numbers to see contemporary art. During their visits, they sometimes noticed that rural areas have qualities that cities do not. I was astonished and delighted to see that local residents—especially the elderly, became increasingly vibrant and healthy as they interact with visitors. I also began to reflect on why people living in the cities are not truly happy at heart.

In cities, people work hard to obtain greater happiness than others in the name of “self-actualization.” However, they cannot become truly happy with this approach. Human beings, by their very nature, cannot attain true happiness unless they live in a happy community. People living in cities are constantly frustrated and anxious because they are chasing only their own personal happiness and competing for this purpose.

According to a theory proposed by Abraham Maslow, a famous American psychologist, human needs can be categorized into a hierarchy of five different levels, with the need for self-actualization at the top. Modernization in the U.S. was directed at creating a society that maximizes individual happiness—driven, perhaps, by a pursuit of “self-actualization.” But such a pursuit, employing financial capitalism where “cash is king” and the principle of “free competition,” ultimately produced a society marred by inequality. Some people now suggest that what Maslow really meant was that there are actually six levels of human needs, not five, with “self-transcendence” at the top. Self-transcendent individuals identify with something greater than the purely individual self, often engaging in service to others.

Where then can we find a happy community? Today, many people around the world believe that such a utopia does not exist in this life, but in heaven or paradise after they die. Can this, in fact, really be true? We do not

know. After all, nobody has ever returned from afterlife to tell us that heaven is indeed wonderful.

Naoshima: An Island of Smiling Seniors

I have seen the seniors of Naoshima become increasingly vibrant and healthy by developing an appreciation for contemporary art and interacting with young people visiting their island. As a result, I now define a happy community as one that is filled with smiling seniors who are masters of life. No matter what kind of life they may have led, seniors are masters of life. They should become happier as they grow older.

If these masters of life are cheerful, even if their physical strength and memory may be slightly weakened, it means that young people can hope for their own futures to be bright—despite the existential anxieties they may have. This is similar to the phenomenon of mother-child interaction, where a baby smiles when her mother smiles. The smiles of seniors also make younger people smile.

For these reasons, I believe that Naoshima today is the happiest community on earth. The island is now visited by numerous people both from Japan and abroad. I would like visitors to the islands to meet the local residents. I would like to expand this experience of a utopian community in the here and now to other islands in the Setouchi region. Of course, I do not want to create communities that are just replicas of Naoshima, but to build communities that make the most of each island’s unique culture and individual features together with the island residents and volunteers.

I know of no medium better suited to this purpose than fine contemporary art. I believe that contemporary art has the power to awaken people and transform regions. In this view, and with the cooperation of Mr. Fram Kitagawa, the director of the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale, which I also support, we have launched the Setouchi Triennale.

Proposing a New Perspective on Civilization From the Seto Inland Sea

I have strongly criticized today’s large cities by stating that “modernization and urbanization are one and the same.” I have no intention, however, of completely disavowing modernization and urbanization. It is true that cities give people a feeling of freedom and are attractive spaces in their own right. I have high hopes that Japan will develop more cities that respect each region’s unique history and culture, rather than simply imitating Tokyo.

I want to connect these sorts of cities with unique, nature-rich islands through the medium of contemporary art which bears a message for modern society. In doing so, it is my wish to foster mutual interaction between urban and rural areas, the elderly and the young, men and women, and residents and visitors. By discovering each other’s qualities, I believe that both sides can develop a sound mutual understanding and acceptance.

I believe that this process will have a positive impact on people living in cities and will help revive regions with declining populations. I hope that this will help to shape a society with well-balanced values that can make the most of the diverse, rich cultural tapestry of regional areas. I would like to propose a new perspective on civilization for the 21st century — one of “using what exists to create what is to be” — from the Seto Inland Sea to the rest of the world.

Public Interest Capitalism

I am neither a philanthropist nor a critic. I am a regional entrepreneur. I know that corporations are the main engine behind the creation of almost all wealth in society. However, the ambitions of Benesse Holdings, Inc., are diametrically opposed to the financial capitalism that has taken the global economy to the brink of collapse in the past.

What this means is that money is not the sole purpose of economic activity. I often express this notion

by saying: “The economy should be a servant to culture.” People cannot attain spiritual fulfillment through economic activity alone. I believe that if economic prosperity is made the only objective, then people will ultimately become unhappy. I believe that the economy exists to create good communities where people can find happiness — a society filled with smiling, happy seniors. To make this goal a reality, I am proposing a new management concept called public interest capitalism. Under this concept, corporations will establish foundations with the clear goal of promoting culture and regional community development. These foundations will be made major shareholders of the corporations. Funded by dividends stemming from their shareholding of the corporations, the foundations will in turn provide a systematic contribution to society. I would like to communicate this approach, along with the implementation and results of public interest capitalism, to the world. To articulate a new partnership between culture and corporations and to promote this new approach to the world—one that highlights community revitalization and the creation of a utopia here and now through the medium of art, hand-in-hand with public interest capitalism—this is one of the significance of the Setouchi Triennale.

Paraphrased from the speech given at the Setouchi International Symposium in 2010



Photo: Hideaki Hamada