

Kurokawa Kisho

*‘I will not be remembered as an architect, as my designs are not perfect.
I will be remembered as a thinker.’ — Kurokawa Kisho*

Themes | Ways of living, urban development, solo culture, conservation and restoration, metabolism architectural movement
Medium | Architectural component



Installation view of restored Nakagin Capsule Tower unit (1970–1972), 2024. Photo: Dan Leung, M+

Name: Unit A806, Nakagin Capsule Tower (1970–1972), Tokyo, Japan
Maker: Kurokawa Kisho (Architect), Kisho Kurokawa Architect & Associate (Architectural Firm), Nakagin Building Company Limited (Developer)
Date: 1972, restored 2022
Description: The exterior of the capsule features a front door and a back window. Inside, basic amenities include a bed, restroom, and television, but omit a kitchen.

Background information:

- The Nakagin Capsule Tower is one of the few buildings constructed on Metabolism concepts.
- Emerging in the 1960s, Metabolism employed biological metaphors to envision buildings evolving alongside societal needs.
- The units lacked kitchens, designed not for families but as short-term lodgings for suburban residents working in the city centre.
- Demolished in 2022 due to deterioration, selected capsules were restored and acquired by international museums; Unit A806 in the M+ collection is one such example.

Extended information

M+ Collections webpage: [Related article:](#)



Nakagin Capsule Tower (1970–1972), Tokyo, Japan



Nakagin and Kurokawa: Iconic Tokyo Architecture in the 1970s–1980s

Additional notes:

- In the 1970s, when the Nakagin capsule units were first put on sale, each cost approximately HKD200,000. With the average Japanese citizen’s annual income at about HKD30,000, purchasing a unit would require seven years of income—excluding basic living expenses.
- Residents came from diverse backgrounds, including DJs, editors, and architects. Though the exteriors were identical, each interior was uniquely decorated.

Business Capsule			
タワ- A	タワ- B	タワ- A	タワ- B
A5-1-A	A5-1-B	A5-2-A	A5-2-B
449	447	447	445
A5-3-A	A5-3-B	A5-4-A	A5-4-B
446	437	437	448
A5-5-A	A5-5-B	A5-6-A	A5-6-B
451	384	384	450
A5-7-A	A5-7-B	A5-8-A	A5-8-B
446		393	445
SF			
タワ- A	タワ- B	タワ- A	タワ- B
A6-1-A	A6-1-B	A6-2-A	A6-2-B
430		453	451
A6-3-A	A6-3-B	A6-4-A	A6-4-B
433	435	450	441
A6-5-A	A6-5-B	A6-6-A	A6-6-B
		441	450
A6-7-A	A6-7-B	A6-8-A	A6-8-B
		455	454
A6-9-A	A6-9-B	A6-10-A	A6-10-B
		450	433
SF			
タワ- A	タワ- B	タワ- A	タワ- B
A7-1-A	A7-1-B	A7-2-A	A7-2-B
445	443	443	440
A7-3-A	A7-3-B	A7-4-A	A7-4-B
442	433	433	443
A7-5-A	A7-5-B	A7-6-A	A7-6-B
447	380	380	445
A7-7-A	A7-7-B	A7-8-A	A7-8-B
442		385	428
A7-9-A	A7-9-B	A7-10-A	A7-10-B
		454	437
SF			
タワ- A	タワ- B	タワ- A	タワ- B
A8-1-A	A8-1-B	A8-2-A	A8-2-B
445	443	443	440
A8-3-A	A8-3-B	A8-4-A	A8-4-B
442	433	433	443
A8-5-A	A8-5-B	A8-6-A	A8-6-B
447	380	380	445
A8-7-A	A8-7-B	A8-8-A	A8-8-B
442		385	428
A8-9-A	A8-9-B	A8-10-A	A8-10-B
		454	437
SF			

© Nakagin Capsule Tower
Reservation and Restoration

Questions for students

- Do you think the architectural concept of Metabolism could work in Hong Kong today?
- Could the Nakagin Capsule Tower have been saved from demolition? How?
- If you were a resident, what modifications would you make?

Key learning areas in connection with school curriculum

Visual Arts:

- Understand the relationship between society, culture, technology, and design, and how they influence one another
- Explore the humanistic concern behind architectural design

Suggested classroom activity

‘Capsule Tower Sales Brochure’

Duration: 45 minutes
Materials: Blackboard, chalk, magnets, capsule cards, drawing stationery
Activity details: Turn the blackboard into a sales display. Each student attaches their completed capsule card to the board to assemble a building. Together, create a mind map covering the building’s design, unit features, pricing, and other details.

Archigram

‘What is the value of M+ and having the stuff in there? It is a trigger of a means to an end, to continue the conversation of expanding architecture. Use every means at your disposal to disseminate it, review it, get it to inspire other people.’ — Peter Cook (Archigram)

Themes | Urban mobility, urban development, ways of living
Medium | Architectural models, architectural drawings, archival documents



Archigram's Instant City model in the M+ storage.
Photo © M+, Hong Kong

Name: Instant City
Maker: Archigram
Date: 1968–1970
Description: This model combines a highway in Santa Monica, USA, with audiovisual display systems, domes, vehicles, and a canopy suspended mid-air by balloons, forming a network driven by movement to blend learning and entertainment. This ‘roving metropolis’ could relocate to different neighborhoods, creating new encounters and interactions.

Background information:

- Archigram’s six founding architects were Warren Chalk, Peter Cook, Dennis Crompton, David Greene, Ron Herron, and Michael Webb.
- Archigram’s speculative utopian designs were never realised as buildings; instead, they were presented through publishing, teaching, and exhibitions.
- Instant City is one of over 200 Archigram projects in the M+ Collections. Its mobile attractions, cultural facilities, and lively programming foreshadowed the ‘pop-up’ festivals and event culture today.
- Archigram drew heavily on pop culture, with influences ranging from science fiction, comic books, hovercraft, airships, and fashion to The Beatles. Amid rising globalisation and air travel, their visions of living pods, capsules, and megastructures—and the city as a living organism.

Extended information

Related article:



*‘Hong Kong Is an Archigram City’:
The Archigram Archive
in the M+ Collections*

Additional notes:

- In the early 2000s, Chinese architects such as Ma Yansong of MAD Architects, URBANUS, and Li Hu of OPEN Architecture frequently cited Archigram as an inspiration and reference.



MAD Architects, Ma Yansong,
Superstar: a Mobile China Town, postcards,
Venice Architectural Biennale 2008, Venice,
Italy, offset lithograph on paperboard
© MAD Architects

Questions for students

- Do you think the concept of Instant City could be implemented in Hong Kong today?
- Given that Archigram never constructed any buildings, in what way might their work have influenced society?
- Looking around our city, what architectures align with the design philosophies proposed by Archigram?

Key learning areas in connection with school curriculum

Visual Arts:

- Understand the relationship between society, culture, technology, and design, and how they influence one another
- Explore the humanistic concern behind architectural design

Suggested classroom activity

‘Google Maps Roaming’

Duration: 15 minutes
Materials: Computers, projectors, and display screens
Activity details: Choose a neighborhood to explore together. Open Street View Google Maps to navigate the streets in a 360-degree panorama. Discover and record any architectural designs that share Archigram’s concepts, such as outdoor escalators, footbridges, media facades, and temporary venues.

Kuroki Yasuo

Themes | Solo culture, solo economy, children’s rights
Medium | Electronic products



M+, Hong Kong © Sony Corporation

Name: Sony 'Walkman' Portable Cassette Player, model TPS-L2
Maker: Kuroki Yasuo (Designer), Kozo Ohson (Designer), Sony Corporation (Manufacturer)
Date: 1979
Description: This portable cassette player was adapted from Sony’s ‘Pressman’ portable audio recorder. Equipped with headphones via a new jack, it became a high-quality device dedicated solely to playing music.

Background information:

- The idea came from Sony’s co-founder Masaru Ibuka, who asked for a device that would let him listen to music on flights.
- This design brought portable music to the world, it also enabled a private, immersive listening experience.
- While embodying a modern pursuit of lifestyles, the ‘Walkman’ also made it easier to isolate oneself from their surroundings.

Extended information

M+ Collections webpage: Related article:



Sony 'Walkman'
Portable Cassette Player,
model TPS-L2



Unboxing My First Sony
and Sanyo ROBO

Additional notes:

- Roughly 10 years after the birth of the Sony ‘Walkman’, a children’s version—‘My First Sony Walkman’—was released. Marketed not as a toy but as an authentic Sony product, it gave children the same listening experience as adults. It features a plastic body and an Automatic Volume Limiter System (AVLS) to protect young listeners’s hearing.
- The ‘Walkman’ has been linked to the rise of solo culture. The Census and Statistics Department forecasts that by 2046, single-person households will reach nearly one-quarter (23.8%) of all households in Hong Kong, indicating that living alone will become increasingly common.



Sony Corporation, My First Sony
stereo walkman portable
cassette player, model WM-
F3030, 1988, M+, Hong Kong
© Sony Corporation

Questions for students

- How much time in average do you spend listening to music by yourself daily?
- In what other aspects of daily life can you recognise solo culture?

Suggested classroom activity

‘Solo Activities’ Bingo Card

Duration: 45 minutes

Materials: Blackboard, chalk, magnets, Bingo cards, drawing stationery

Activity details: Create a large Bingo card on the blackboard listing solo activities—enjoying a meal, travelling, or going to the cinema. Invite students to share their experiences by raising hands, compiling a mini survey.

Key learning areas in connection with school curriculum

Visual Arts:

- Understand the relationship between society, culture, technology, and design, and how they influence one another
- Explore the humanistic concern behind architectural design

Michael Wolf



Learning Kit

‘The character of a city is not something deliberately shaped by city designers.’

— Michael Wolf, photographer of the 'Bastard Chair' series

Themes | Vernacular wisdom, labour rights
Medium | Readymade objects



M+, Hong Kong. Gift of Michael Wolf, 2017 © Michael Wolf

Name: Found chair collected for Michael Wolf's 'Bastard Chair' photography series
Maker: Unknown (Hong Kong)
Date: 1990s–2000s
Description: The core of this chair is a plastic water dispenser casing. A cushion rests on top, supported by a mooncake tin that raises its height. Cloth strips and cable ties secure the entire structure.

Background information:

- The This chair was collected by German photographer Michael Wolf for his Bastard Chair series.
- Sourced in Hong Kong, its maker remains unknown.
- Wolf documented everyday objects—how people use, reuse, modify, or transform them. This chair was likely assembled with materials found in an alleyway. Its humble components show resourcefulness.

Extended information

M+ Collections webpage:



Found chair collected for Michael Wolf's 'Bastard Chair' photography series

Related article:



From High-Rises To the Street: A Look Back at Michael Wolf's Photographs

Additional notes:

A 2019 study by the Hong Kong Workers' Health Centre and the Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions examined working conditions in Hong Kong's service industry:

- Employees spent over 80% of their workday in non-seated positions.
- Among employees at small companies, 52.3% reported no equipment to reduce leg strain.
- 64.6% of employers provided 10–20 minutes of scheduled rest time.



© Michael Wolf, *Sitting in China*, 2002. Chromogenic colour print. M+, Hong Kong. © Michael Wolf Estate

Questions for students

- What occupation do you think the chair's creator might have had?
- Where have you seen chairs made from repurposed objects?
- Does price predict comfort—or does design matter more?

Suggested classroom activity

‘Proposal for a Bus Stop Bench’

Duration: 120 minutes
Materials: Basic stationary
Activity details: Visit the nearby bus stop. Observe and log the approximate age of the waiting passengers for 15–30 minutes. Back in the classroom, split into groups and design a bench meeting the needs of one assigned age group.

Key learning areas in connection with school curriculum

Visual Arts:

- Understand the relationship between society, culture, technology, and design, and how they influence one another
- Explore the humanistic concern behind architectural design

Lee Kit

Theme | Breathing space
Medium | Installation art, painting



'In purity, I silently reach for you' (2011) at M+ Sigg Collection: Inner Worlds, 2025, © Lee Kit, Photo: Wilson Lam, M+

Name: 'In purity, I silently reach for you.'
Artist: Lee Kit
Date: 2011
Description: This mixed-media installation stages a restroom: white washbasin, multiple mirrors, a soap holder, an empty toilet paper holder, plus other fixtures and accessories. Cardboard paintings featuring skincare brand logos hang on the powder-blue walls.

- Background information:**
- Lee Kit grew up in fast-paced Hong Kong. The work's inspiration stems from urban restrooms as temporary breathing spaces and their ambiguous status between public and private spheres.
 - Sparse, carefully placed items evoke a muted sense of intimacy, prompting viewers to see everyday objects differently.
 - Lee's fascination with neatness and hygiene products is apparent in his paintings. These works critique Hong Kong's market-driven lifestyle while reflecting emotional attachment to commodity.

Extended information

M+ Collections webpage:



'In purity, I silently reach for you.'

Related article:



Inner Realms, Public Treasures: The M+ Sigg Collection

Additional notes:

- An anecdote circulates an employer installing a tap-card system for the restroom to monitor and control employee usage time.

Questions for students

- Do you consider public restrooms to be private or public spaces?
- Do you think a restroom is an ideal breathing space?
- What qualities should an ideal breathing space possess?

Suggested classroom activity

'A Corner for Peace of Mind'

- Duration:** 60 minutes
- Materials:** Printers, transparencies, ink pens, and correction pens
- Activity details:** Disperse students across campus to find a 'corner for peace of mind' and photograph it. Print the photos, have each student overlay a transparent plastic sheet, then sketch or add creative elements to align their corner with their ideal breathing-space qualities.

Key learning areas in connection with school curriculum

Visual Arts:

- Analyse the aesthetic and psychological effects arising from the application of visual elements and principles of organization
- Interpret and appraise works of art from different perspectives
- Understand the influence of social and cultural contexts on artistic creation

Yue Minjun

‘When people laugh, they are not thinking —
it is when they are most empty and most unfeeling.’ — Yue Minjun

Themes | Cultural symbols, consumerism, economic reform
Medium | Sculpture, installation art



Installation view of 2000 A.D. (2000) at M+ Sigg Collection: Inner Worlds, 2025, © Yue Minjun, Photo: Lok Cheng, M+

Name: 2000 A.D. (Group of sculptures. 25 figures)
Maker: Yue Minjun
Date: 2000
Description: 25 male figures, each roughly 1.8 metres tall, stand in neat rows like terracotta warriors. Every figure has identical faces, poses, and clothing, with yellow skin and an average build.

- Background information:**
- The 1990s was a period of rapid social and economic change in China. Many artists reflect the confusion they felt in this new era through their work.
 - The figures’ laughter is exaggerated, yet the cause remains unknown.
 - Their uniform stance, combined with eerie, ingenuine smiles, infuses the spectacle with a sense of intimidation and unease.
 - Yue Minjun uses the ‘laughing face’ as a cultural symbol to express the widespread sense of boredom and to satirise society during the rise of consumerism and economic reform in the early 1990s.

Extended information

M+ Collections webpage:



2000 A.D.
(Group of sculptures.
25 figures)

Related article:



Inner Realms,
Public Treasures: The
M+ Sigg Collection

Additional notes:

- The same cultural symbol of the ‘laughing face’ can also be found in another work from the M+ Collection. Yue appropriates the composition and title of the French painting *Liberty Leading the People* (1830). He replaces the background and the valiant Parisians of the revolution with a modern cityscape and a group of absurd ‘laughing men’, giving the work a cynical tone.



Yue Minjun, *La Liberté Guidant le Peuple*, 1995, oil on canvas, M+, Hong Kong, © Yue Minjun

Questions for students

- What social environment might this work reflect?
- Why do you think the artist made the figures completely identical?
- Why do you think the artist chose ‘laughter’ as the expression?

Suggested classroom activity

‘An Alternative Class Photo’

Duration: 10 minutes
Materials: Mobile phone or camera
Activity details: Invite the entire class to take a group photo, where every student’s expression, posture, and uniform are completely identical to create a unique atmosphere.

Key learning areas in connection with school curriculum

Visual Arts:

- Analyse the aesthetic and psychological effects arising from the application of visual elements and principles of organization
- Understand the influence of social and cultural contexts on artistic creation

Duan Jianyu

Themes | Fictional worlds, breathing space
Medium | Oil on canvas, painting



M+ Sigg Collection, Hong Kong. By donation
© Duan Jianyu

Name: ‘How to Relax on the Plateau—Milk an Ewe’
Maker: Duan Jianyu
Date: 2007
Description: The painting shows a figure in a flight attendant uniform milking a goat on a green lawn.

Background information:

- Duan Jianyu frequently depicts fictional narratives, placing ordinary people and objects in imaginary contexts.
- In this painting, the artist transports the flight attendant, from the city to a plateau. In this painting, the artist transports the main character, wearing as a flight attendant, from the city to a plateau.
- The plateau serves as a place of retreat, and the repetitive motion of milking offers an outlet for stress relief.

Extended information

M+ Collections webpage:



*‘How to Relax on the Plateau
—Milk an Ewe.’*

Related article:



*Inner Realms, Public
Treasures:
The M+ Sigg Collection*

Additional notes:

- Duan Jianyu’s early series A Guide to Life addresses topics of urban life, such as ‘How to Cook’, ‘How to Cultivate One’s Mind’ and ‘How to Love Life’.
- *How to Relax on the Plateau* is a subsequent series. Here, Duan shifts the settings to the rural plateau, with titles such as ‘How to Spend the Night on the Plateau’ and ‘Tell a Story to a Lamb’

Questions for students

- Why do you think the artist chose a flight attendant as the protagonist?
- What fictional worlds have fascinated you?
- If you were to create a personal life guide, what theme would you choose?

Suggested classroom activity

‘A Guide to Life How to _____?’

Duration: 60 minutes
Materials: Drawing tools
Activity details: Teachers may complete the prompt ‘A Guide to Life: How to _____?’ or guide students to pick their own titles. Each student is invited to extend Duan Jianyu’s A Guide to Life series, narrating an ideal world through drawing or other creative means.

Key learning areas in connection with school curriculum

Visual Arts:

- Discover the relationship between details and images in works of art
- Analyse the aesthetic and psychological effects arising from the application of visual elements and principles of organization
- Understand the influence of social and cultural contexts on artistic creation