

THE ARCHITECTURE OF SOU FUJIMOTO: PRIMORDIAL FUTURE FOREST

JULY 2 [WED] – NOVEMBER 9 [SUN], 2025 MORI ART MUSEUM [53F, ROPPONGI HILLS MORI TOWER]

The Mori Art Museum, in Tokyo, is pleased to present the exhibition *The Architecture of Sou Fujimoto: Primordial Future Forest* from Wednesday, July 2, to Sunday, November 9, 2025.

With offices in Tokyo, Paris, and Shenzhen, Sou Fujimoto (born 1971 in Hokkaido, Japan) is engaged in projects all over the world, ranging from private homes to universities, retail premises, hotels, and multi-purpose complexes. Since his high-profile debut with a *Aomori Museum of Art design competition proposal* in 2000, he has completed a series of celebrated projects, including the *Musashino Art University Museum & Library* (2010, Tokyo) and the *Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2013* (London), and recently the housing complex *L'Arbre Blanc* (The White Tree, 2019, Montpellier, France) and the music-focused cultural complex *House of Music, Hungary* (2021, Budapest). One of Japan's leading architects at the center of public attention, he is currently serving as the design producer for Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

This exhibition is the first major survey of Fujimoto's work. It provides a comprehensive overview, covering everything from work in his early years to projects currently underway, and following his architectural journey over the past quarter century, the features of his architecture, and the philosophy behind it. It takes advantage of the venue's expertise as a contemporary art museum, allowing anyone, not just people working in the field of architecture, to physically experience the essence of Fujimoto's oeuvre by including exhibits such as installations and large-scale models that provide a spatial experience, as well as prototypes. These complement conventional exhibits like scale models, plans, and photos of completed projects. The exhibition also reviews the role and potential of architecture through Fujimoto's vision of the future city.

Architecture and cities today are being called on to play a bigger role than before when it comes to issues such as the ecology and environment, continually changing human relationships, the need to bring together divided communities, and how our lives are affected by technological developments. We welcome visitors to join us as we take Fujimoto's practice as the context for considering how architecture could change our lives in times like these.



L'Arbre Blanc (The White Tree)
2019
Montpellier, France
Photo: Iwan Baan



House of Music, Hungary (interior)
2021
Budapest
Photo: Iwan Baan

PRESS RELEASE

Press Inquiries: Mori Art Museum Public Relations Office [within Kyodo PR]
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Message from Sou Fujimoto

Rather than focusing on looking back at the past, this survey is firmly anchored in the present and looking toward the future. As well as representing the culmination of work to date, it explores potential orientations for continuation. One of the roles of an architect is to create places that weave together relationships between people and between people and nature. For me, such a place is like a “future forest” where natural and human-made blend together. We live in an age where people perceive value in many different ways. Such fragmentation of values brings solitude as well as benefits, so I look for ways to engender connections that enrich people’s lives. It would be wonderful if the exhibition could encourage people to imagine how the future would look if we lived in buildings and communities like these. I hope that it will boost people’s hopes, inciting them to think positively about the future.

BIOGRAPHY

Born 1971 in Hokkaido, Japan. Graduated from the Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering at the University of Tokyo, he established Sou Fujimoto Architects in 2000. Among his recent renowned projects is the 1st prize for the 2014 International Competition for the Second Folly of Montpellier, France [*L’Arbre Blanc* (The White Tree)]. Additionally in 2015, 2017 and 2018, he won several international competitions with the 1st prize in various European countries. In Japan, he was selected as the Expo site design producer for the 2025 Japan International Exposition (Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan). In 2024, he was selected as the designer of the *International Center Station Northern Area Complex* in Sendai, Japan (scheduled for completion in FY 2031). His notable works include; *House of Music, Hungary* (2021, Budapest), *Ishinomaki Cultural Center* (2021, Miyagi, Japan), *Shiroiya Hotel* (2020, Gunma, Japan), *L’Arbre Blanc* (The White Tree, 2019, Montpellier, France), *Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2013* (London), *House NA* (2011, Tokyo), *Musashino Art University Museum & Library* (2010, Tokyo), *House N* (2008, Oita, Japan) and many more.



Photo: David Vintiner

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition Title: *The Architecture of Sou Fujimoto: Primordial Future Forest*

Organizers: Mori Art Museum

Curated by: Kondo Kenichi (Senior Curator, Mori Art Museum), Tsubaki Reiko (Curator, Mori Art Museum)

Exhibition Period: 2025.7.2 [Wed] - 2025.11.9 [Sun]

Venue: Mori Art Museum, 53F, Roppongi Hills Mori Tower, 6-10-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo

Hours: 10:00-22:00 | Tue: 10:00-17:00 | * Open until 22:00 on Sep. 23 [Tue].

* Admission until 30 minutes before closing. | * Open every day.

Admissions:

	[Weekdays]		[Sat., Sun. & Holidays]	
	On-Site	Online	On-Site	Online
Adults	¥ 2,300	¥ 2,100	¥ 2,500	¥ 2,300
Students (University/High School)	¥ 1,400	¥ 1,300	¥ 1,500	¥ 1,400
Children (Jr. High Students and under)	Free (across the board)			
Seniors (Ages 65 and over)	¥ 2,000	¥ 1,800	¥ 2,200	¥ 2,000

* It is encouraged to make advance booking for a designated date/time slot and purchase the admission ticket on the booking website.

* Admissions without advance bookings will be allowed so far as the time slots have not filled up on the day of your visit.

* All prices include tax.

* Ticket also valid for admission into the Mori Art Museum small programs that run concurrently: *MAM Project 033: Brie Ruais* and others

General Inquiries: 050-5541-8600 (Hello Dial, within Japan) / +81-(0)47-316-2772 (Hello Dial, from overseas)

www.mori.art.museum/en

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EXHIBITION TITLE

The thickly wooded landscape of Hokkaido is archetypal scenery for Fujimoto, who grew up in Higashikagura, a town lush with nature adjacent to Asahikawa in Hokkaido Prefecture. Seeing “a similar loose order amid the confusion” of the complex network of roads in a huge metropolis like Tokyo and situations in which a wide variety of things coexist, he finds elements of the forest there as well. Both the forest, which consists of small branches and leaves, and the city, with small things like flowerpots, bicycles, and billboards that exist along alleyways, are on a human scale. Forests and cities both have multiple layers, and they are both places where life comes into being and goes through the cycle of life and death. But forests are primordial, existing since long before the birth of humankind. The concept of the forest is one of the key factors central to Fujimoto’s creative practice, and is embodied in his work in many forms throughout his career. Fujimoto sees this concept as a model for future architecture and for the future of society. Inspired by that sentiment, the exhibition title includes both primordial and future in its theme: “Primordial Future Forest.”

HIGHLIGHTS

Fujimoto’s first major survey show, presenting a quarter century of major projects

With his *Aomori Museum of Art design competition proposal* submitted in 2000, the then-unknown Fujimoto won high praise from the likes of architect Toyo Ito. He was awarded second place, suddenly thrusting him onto the architectural scene. He went on to design a series of prominent projects, including the *Musashino Art University Museum & Library*, featuring bookshelves aligned in a spiral pattern based on the concept of a forest of books, the *Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2013*, consisting of white steel poles assembled into a three-dimensional, latticed structure, the *L’Arbre Blanc* (The White Tree), a housing complex featuring large balconies resembling leaves spreading out from a tree, and *House of Music, Hungary*, a music-focused cultural complex that blends in with the greenery of a park, blurring the lines between nature and architecture. He is currently working on a number of projects, including Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, the *International Center Station Northern Area Complex* in Sendai, Japan (scheduled for completion in FY 2031), and providing designs for mixed-use urban developments in Europe. This survey show offers an overview of his architectural journey over the past quarter century, covering everything from work in his early years to projects currently underway.



Shenzhen Museum (Shenzhen Reform and Opening-up Exhibition Hall)

Scheduled for completion in 2027
Shenzhen, China

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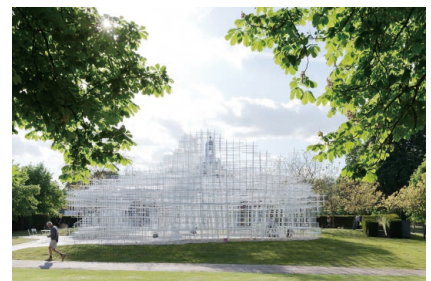
Meiji Park Management and Operations

Scheduled for completion in 2026
Fukuoka, Japan



Musashino Art University Museum & Library

2010
Tokyo
Photo: DAICI ANO



Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2013

2013
London
Photo: Iwan Baan

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■ Innovative approach for contemporary art museum architecture exhibitions

In addition to exhibits that have been the focus of architecture exhibitions in the past, such as scale models, plans, and photos of completed projects, this show features a large number of more innovative exhibits. These include large-scale models that provide a spatial experience of Fujimoto's designs, prototypes that are experimental representations of his thinking, a new large installation that represents Fujimoto's philosophy based on the concept of the forest, which is the starting point of his work, models using projections to visualize the movement of people, and an exhibit featuring conversations between architectural projects, as if putting on a dramatic performance. The show seeks to provide an experience of Fujimoto's worldview with greater appeal to senses of sight and sound, presenting an architecture exhibition in a form that takes advantage of the venue's expertise as a contemporary art museum.

■ The Grand Ring for Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan appears throughout the exhibition

The show presents the Grand Roof (Ring) project that has become the symbol of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. Fujimoto is serving as the design producer for the Expo. This exhibition zeros in on the Ring concept from a variety of perspectives throughout the galleries, including the 1:5 model of part of the Ring, photographic records of its exterior, project materials ranging from the Ring's original conception to its completion, and a model of the Ring included in the large *The Forest of Models* installation.



Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan
Scheduled for completion in 2025
© Sou Fujimoto Architects, © TOHATA ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS

■ Collaborations with other creators and researchers

Fujimoto has collaborated with a wide variety of creators, such as in cases like *Shiroiya Hotel* (2020, Gunma, Japan) where he has tasked contemporary artists and designers with creating new works to be installed in his own projects, and such as Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, where he asked young architects to design restrooms and rest spots. Creators he is collaborating with in this exhibition include Kurakata Shunsuke (architectural historian and professor at Osaka Metropolitan University), Haba Yoshitaka (book director and president of Bach Ltd.), and Miyata Hiroaki (data scientist and professor at Keio University).



Shiroiya Hotel
2020
Gunma, Japan
Photo: Tanaka Katsumasa

STRUCTURE OF THE EXHIBITION

■ The Forest of Models

The Forest of Models installation presents all of Fujimoto's projects, from work in his early years to projects currently being planned. In a large space of over 300 square meters, countless items are arrayed chronologically, including models, materials, and objects that are fragments of ideas, represented as one "forest." The forest shows the process by which projects develop, with one leading to another, providing an overall picture of Fujimoto's architectural work.



The Forest of Models (rendering of the installation)
© Sou Fujimoto Architects

■ Time Line

Through a collaboration with Kurakata Shunsuke (architectural historian, professor at Osaka Metropolitan University), the show posts a time line that provides an overall view of Fujimoto's career. Placing projects as well as quotes and ideas from the architect alongside architectural and social events allows the viewer to better grasp the historical context surrounding Fujimoto's architecture. Also presented are photos of his major projects, such as the *Musashino Art University Museum & Library*, *Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2013*, *L'Arbre Blanc*, and *House of Music, Hungary*.

■ Book Lounge

Based on the concept of *awai* (an interim space existing where different realms overlap), this book lounge is set in a gallery with an open feel and a window looking out onto the landscape outside. Containing Fujimoto's own writings, as well as related books selected by Haba Yoshitaka (book director, president of Bach Ltd.), one of the collaborators of this show, the lounge lets visitors leisurely contemplate Fujimoto's ideas and thinking. It creates an interim space (*awai*) for reading or not reading, allowing visitors to feel free to either immerse themselves in reading or take a break to simply gaze at the scenery outside.

■ Models Showing the Movement of People

This exhibit projects the movement of people onto architectural models of projects such as the *Annaka Environment Art Forum* (plan from 2004, Gunma, Japan) and *BEM Bâtiment d'Enseignements Mutualisés - New Learning Center for Polytechnic University* (2024, Saclay, France). Insights into how Fujimoto thinks about space can be gleaned from simulations created during the design stage that show how people will move around the architecture. This reveals the ambiguity of how each space serves as both interior and exterior. It also shows that the architecture comes into being through its relationship with its surroundings, rather than existing on its own, as well as the multifarious nature of places that can be both pathways as well as open spaces.

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■ The Grand Ring for Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan

The show presents a five-meter-high 1:5 model of part of the “Grand Roof” (Ring) that is the symbol of the Expo and will be one of the world’s largest wooden structures. The model allows visitors to experience the interior and exterior of the Ring, and the region and relationship between them, and also provides an overall view of the Ring, giving visitors a sense for the concept of the world possessing unity in the midst of diversity. The exhibition also presents materials relating to the Ring, from the time of its conception until its completion, and looks back on the process and discussions that took place.



Model of the Grand Ring, Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan
(rendering of the installation)
© Sou Fujimoto Architects

■ Architectural Projects Engaging in Conversation

This exhibit features multiple architectural projects by Fujimoto, such as *Ishinomaki Cultural Center* (2021, Miyagi, Japan) and *House of Music, Hungary*, portrayed in anthropomorphized form engaging in conversations with each other. Their conversations reveal the characteristics of each project, and the background and thinking behind its design.

■ International Center Station Northern Area Complex (Sendai)

The exhibition presents a large model of the multi-purpose complex center to be built in the city of Sendai, Japan that will house music halls and serve as the 2011 earthquake memorial (scheduled to be completed and opened in fiscal 2031). The design competition for the project held in 2024 selected Fujimoto’s proposal, which had as its theme “Many reverberations/One reverberation.” This is the embodiment of Fujimoto’s concept of the “Open Circle,” involving unity with diversity, diverse things reverberating with one another, as well as drawing together and spreading out. The entire project is presented, including materials that explain the process involved in going from design to proposal.



International Center Station Northern Area Complex (Sendai)
Scheduled for completion in FY 2031
Miyagi, Japan
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<https://tayori.com/f/soufujimoto-en/>

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