

Sea Time
of – TOHOKU
Project



On March 11, 2011,

a massive earthquake struck Japan's
Tohoku region.

The devastation did not come from the
earthquake alone; along the coast,
powerful tsunamis surged inland. Across
the country, the number of dead and
missing is estimated at around 18,500.

The disaster deepened in Fukushima,

where the tsunami caused a severe
accident at the Tokyo Electric Power
Company's Fukushima Daiichi (No.1)
Nuclear Power Station. Vast amounts of
radioactive material were released, and the
area within 20 kilometres of the plant was
declared a restricted zone, forcing about
160,000 residents to evacuate their homes.



Immediately after the disaster, I traveled to the affected areas as a volunteer. What I witnessed was devastating, and in the face of nature's force I felt a profound despair, realizing how powerless we truly are before it.

At that time, the whole country's attention seemed fixed on Tohoku. Nuclear plants were shut down across Japan, city lights dimmed, and people embraced energy-saving measures while confronting urgent social challenges.

Yet only a few years later, Tokyo returned to daily life as if the disaster had never happened. Meanwhile, the lives of those in the affected regions and the challenges of the nuclear accident remained unresolved.

It was a stark reminder of the human tendency to forget once the pain has passed — like “heat swallowed and gone from the throat.”

Once again, I asked myself:

what can I do,

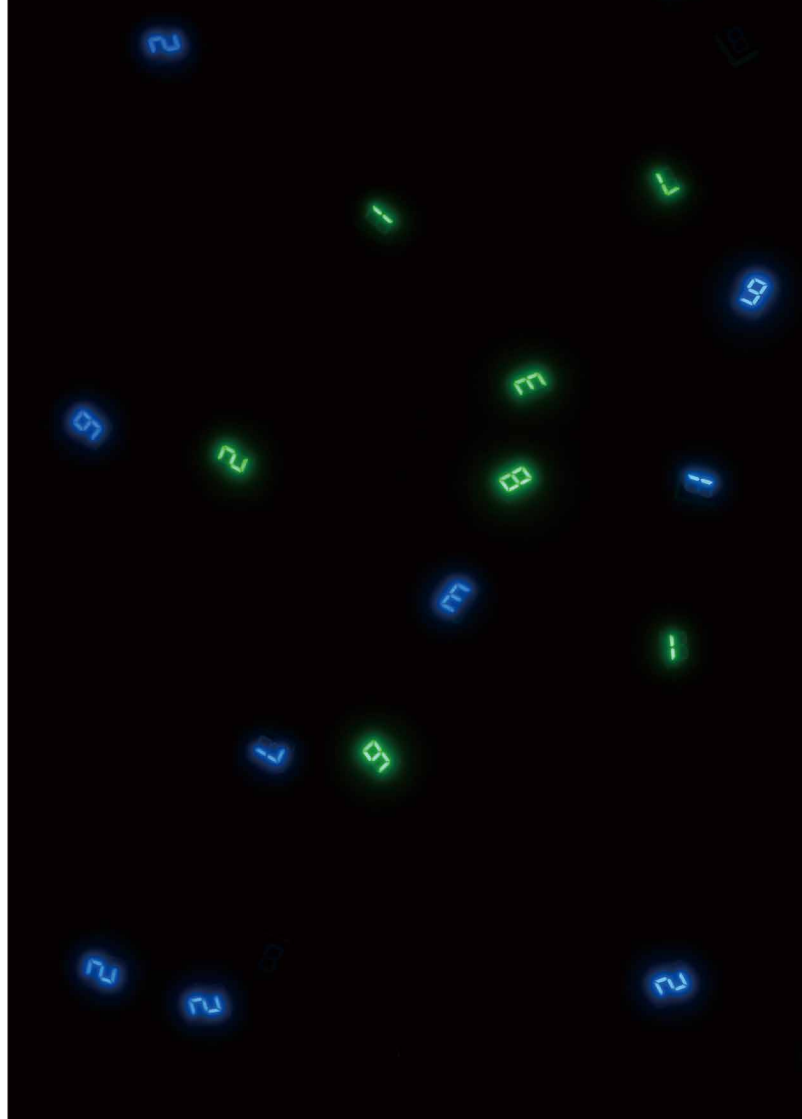
and what can art do?

Four years after 3.11, in 2015,

I envisioned the idea for
Sea of Time - TOHOKU.

It is a work to be permanently installed in the Tohoku region, using LED counters to carry forward the experience and memory of the disaster, while also creating a space to think of those we hold dear.

I decided that this work should not be created by me alone, but together with 3,000 people from all walks of life.





From 2016, I began creating the work through workshops with people affected by the disaster and those who hold Tohoku in their thoughts.

Together, we spoke about that day.

One person shared how they had spent years searching for a daughter lost to the tsunami.

Another recalled the moment a neighbor was swept away, while they survived.

Someone else said they could not speak of that day until 10 years later.

And yet, not one spoke against the sea.

From the outset, I knew this work must stand on a hill with a view of the sea — the sea I had seen during my volunteer work. I searched the coastline for nearly three years, until I finally found a place so ideal it gave me goosebumps. I loved it instantly.

As if by fate, the place that I found was Tomioka Town in Fukushima. It was located between the Fukushima Daiichi (No.1) and Daini (No.2) Nuclear Power Stations.

I hesitated. I had always wanted this work to be seen plainly, without filters, yet the weight of meaning in this site was immense. I have never held a fixed ideology about nuclear power; my position has been one of reluctant neutrality. Nuclear power draws on the atom, but unlike nuclear weapons, it was created to serve human life — and I too have lived with its benefits. For this reason, I could not take a loud, righteous stand either for or against it.

To keep listening to diverse voices,

and to keep thinking

— this place is the perfect topos for that.

I firmly believe that this project, which I consider my life's work, will be unlike any other: a work that invites reflection on life and death, on the meaning of existence, and on the future itself.

To make this project a reality, much support is still needed. I invite you to join us as one of those helping to shape this place together.

Tatsuo Miyajima



Museum: Sea of Time – TOHOKU Art Museum

The Sea of Time – TOHOKU Art Museum will be built in Tomioka Town, between the Fukushima Daiichi (No.1) and Daini (No.2) Nuclear Power Stations — a landscape forever shaped by loss, yet searching for renewal.

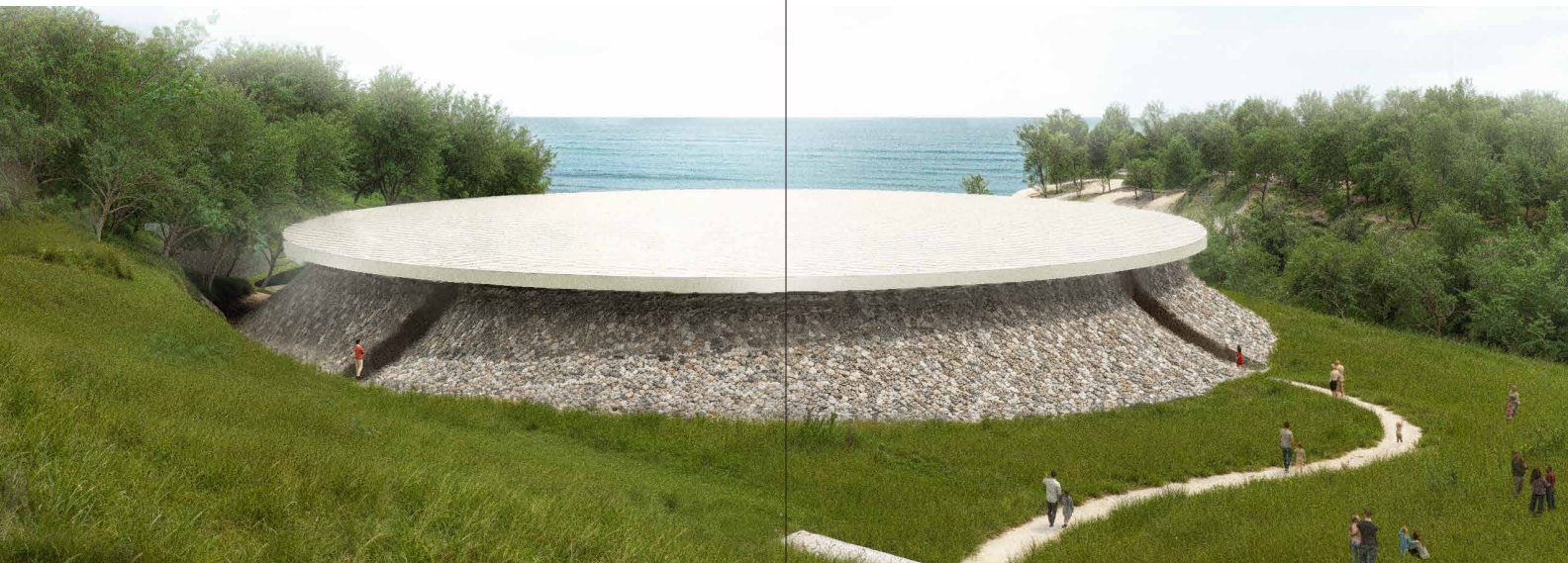
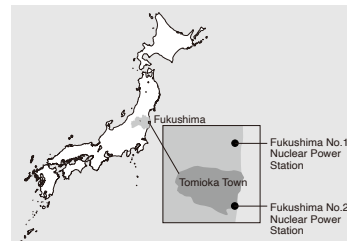
The site spans 36,744 square metres — an open expanse equal to five football pitches. From the entrance, visitors walk slowly towards the sea. With each step, the sound of the waves grows, a

gradual unfolding of the ocean's presence. It is a soundscape of memory: gentle and beautiful, yet inseparable from the events of 3.11. The museum will be designed by Tsuyoshi Tane, an architect known for drawing deeply on memory and place. His vision is not to impose but to create a building that listens — a space where silence, sound, and art can speak together.

Here, *Sea of Time – TOHOKU* will find its permanent home. More than a structure, the museum will be a living site: a place where remembrance is kept alive, where art continues to raise questions, and where dialog across generations can take root.

In Tomioka Town, the museum will stand as both witness and promise — carrying memory forward while opening a horizon of hope.

Name: Sea of Time - TOHOKU Art Museum (Provisional Name)
Location: Tomioka Town, Futaba District, Fukushima Prefecture
Site Area: 36,744 m² (Planned)
Design: ATTA - Atelier Tsuyoshi Tane Architects
Completion: 2027 (Planned)





Support Artist

The Sea of Time – TOHOKU Project is sustained by artist Tatsuo Miyajima and the generosity of those who share its vision. From the beginning, it has relied on personal funds and donations. Every contributor is honoured as a “Support Artist,” with names to be inscribed in the completed museum. Donations cover essential costs — from producing 3,000 waterproof LED counters to preparing the site and building the museum. By joining, you help create a lasting act of remembrance and renewal.



Join the Project

If you would like to support the project financially, you can participate in the following ways.

1. Donate

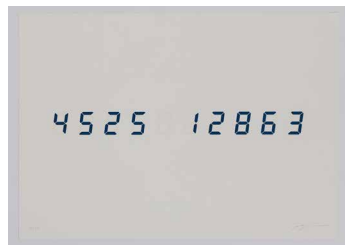
The target construction cost for the museum is 2 billion yen.

Fundraising is currently underway through donations and sponsorships.

For details, please visit our donation page. All donations are securely processed through a trusted service to ensure that your contribution is fully protected. We are deeply grateful for your support.

2. Purchase Artworks

Works by Tatsuo Miyajima are available for purchase. Each purchase functions as a donation, with proceeds supporting the production and operation of the project. Please note that availability is limited.



Life Face for Sea of Time - TOHOKU Type A /
©Tatsuo Miyajima, Courtesy of Akio Nagasawa Gallery

Information

We share the latest updates on the project through our social media channels. There, you can find interviews with people living in Tohoku and with Support Artists, progress reports on the project, coverage of events, and glimpses of everyday life in Tomioka Town.

Subscribing to our newsletter or following us on social media is a meaningful way to support the project. We would be grateful if you could continue to accompany us with your interest and encouragement.



Tatsuo Miyajima

Contemporary artist. Born in 1957 in Tokyo. Miyajima gained recognition at the 1988 Venice Biennale. He has since exhibited in 250 venues across 30 countries. He received an Honorary Doctorate from University of the Arts London in 1998 and Japan's Art Encouragement Prize in 2020.



Tsuyoshi Tane

Architect, born in Tokyo in 1979. Founder of ATTA – Atelier Tsuyoshi Tane Architects. He leads projects worldwide under the concept “Archaeology of the Future.” Major works include the Estonian National Museum, Vitra Garden House. Awards include the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France.

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Project Team

Plan_Tatsuo Miyajima

Architect_Tsuyoshi Tane

Graphic design_Rikako Nagashima

Support_Sea of Time - TOHOKU Art Museum Supporters

Project direction_Tae Yoshihara

Editorial Team

Design_Rikako Nagashima, Miku Suzuki

Text, translation_Joyce Lam

Edit_ito-soken, Tsukika Yoshikawa

Project management_Fuko Ogino

Photos_

p.1,12,13,20_Yuki Iwanami

p.2_Tomioka Town

p.4_Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, Inc.

p.7_Nobutada Omote

p.8_PinS Project

p.14,15,16,17_@Atelier Tsuyoshi Tane Architects

p.19_Tatsuo Miyajima Photo_Lisson Gallery Milano

p.19_Tsuyoshi Tane Photo_Yoshiaki Tsutsui

“Sea of Time - TOHOKU” Project Executive Committee
(Tatsuo Miyajima Studio)

TEL: +81-297-21-7650 FAX: +81-297-20-6543

MAIL: contact@seaoftime.org



