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Born: September 13, 1941

Nationality: Japanese

Masterpiece: Church on the Water

“In all my works, light is an important controlling factor ... I create enclosed spaces mainly by means of thick concrete walls. The primary reason is to create a place for the individual, a zone for oneself within society. When the external factors of a city’s environment require the wall to be without openings, the interior must be especially full and satisfying.” – Tadao Ando

Biography

Tadao Ando has led a storied life, working as a truck driver and boxer prior to settling on the profession of architecture, despite never having taken formal training in the field.

He works primarily in exposed cast-in-place concrete and is renowned for an exemplary craftsmanship which invokes a Japanese sense of materiality, junction and spatial narrative through the pared aesthetics of international modernism.

In 1969, he established the firm Tadao Ando Architects & Associates. Since then he creates lots of significant buildings such as Church on the Water (in Tomamu), Rokko Housing, Nagaragawa Convention Center (in Gifu).

In 1995, Ando won the Pritzker Architecture Prize, considered the highest distinction in the field of architecture. He donated the \$100,000 prize money to the orphans of the 1995 Kobe earthquake.

Tadao Ando's architecture follows the natural forms of the landscape (rather than disturbing the landscape by making it conform to the constructed space of a building). The architect's buildings are often characterized by complex three-dimensional circulation paths. These paths interweave between interior and exterior spaces formed both inside large-scale geometric shapes and in the spaces between them.

His "Row House in Sumiyoshi" (Azuma House), completed in 1976, is an early work that begins to show elements of his characteristic style. It consists of three equally sized rectangular volumes: two enclosed volumes of interior spaces separated by an open courtyard. By nature of the courtyard's position between the two interior volumes, it becomes an integral part of the house's circulation system.

Ando's housing complex at Rokko, just outside Kobe, is a complex warren of terraces and balconies and atriums and shafts. The designs for Rokko Housing One (1983) and for Rokko Housing Two (1993) illustrate a range of issues in the traditional architectural vocabulary—the interplay of solid and void, the alternatives of open and closed, the contrasts of light and darkness. More significantly, Ando's noteworthy achievement in these clustered buildings is site specific—the structures survived undamaged after the Great Hanshin Earthquake of 1995. *New York Times*

architectural critic Paul Goldberger argues convincingly that "Ando is right in the Japanese tradition: spareness has always been a part of Japanese architecture, at least since the 16th century..."

Ando's concrete is often referred to as "smooth-as-silk." He explains that the quality of construction does not depend on the mix itself, but rather on the form work into which the concrete is cast.

Tadao Ando is one of the most significant architects in the world.

Notable Work

1976 – Azuma House, Sumiyoshi, Osaka, Japan

1981 – Koshino House, Ashiya, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan

1981 – Atelier in Oyodo, Osaka, Japan

1983 – Rokko Housing One, Rokko, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan

1986 – Chapel on Mount Rokko, Kobe, Japan

1988 – Church on the Water, Tomamu, Hokkaido prefecture, Japan

1995 - Nagaragawa Convention Center, Gifu, Japan

2002 - Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, United States

2003 - Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, United Kingdom

2003 - 4x4 house, Chiyoda, Tokyo, Japan

2005 - Gunma Insect World Insect Observation Hall, Kiryu, Japan



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