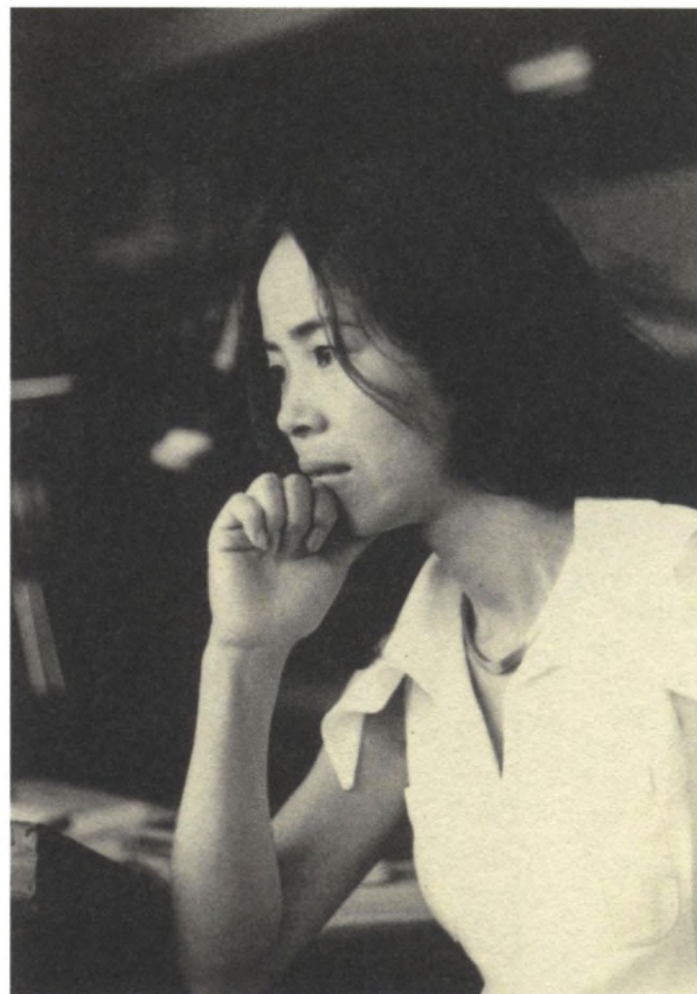


Itsuko Hasegawa
in conversation with
Thomas Daniell



Itsuko Hasegawa in the lab of
Kazuo Shinohara, 1969
Courtesy Itsuko Hasegawa

In December 1986 – the beginning of Japan’s brief-but-incandescent economic bubble – *Toshi Jūtaku* (Urban Housing) magazine published a special issue on the theme ‘Ephemerality’, guest-edited by Kazuhiko Namba, Akira Kuryu and Kiyoshi Sey Takeyama. The latter contributed an essay titled ‘86-nen wa shōrai kioku sarubeki toshi to naru darō’ (1986, A Year that Should be Long Remembered), in which he discussed Japan’s accelerating economic growth and the effect this was having on Japanese architectural design. Takeyama identified the emergence of a new tendency that he called ‘light’ architecture, a distinction he explained using premiated and commended entries from the recent competition for the Shonandai Culture Centre: ‘heavy’ architecture was exemplified by the proposals from Shin Takamatsu and Hajime Yatsuka, ‘light’ architecture by those from Toyo Ito, Kazunari Sakamoto and Itsuko Hasegawa, the winner of the competition. Hasegawa was thereby anointed as the vanguard figure in a significant new tendency, one that still dominates the Japanese architectural world. Astoundingly, the Shonandai Culture Centre was the first architectural competition she had ever entered. A few years later it was her first completed public building, and the first in a long series of public buildings she would win through competition. Hasegawa quickly became recognised for her innovative aesthetic sense – built volumes broken down into interdependent ‘islands’ and wrapped in perforated, translucent screens – and her ground-breaking emphasis on broad public participation in the design process as well as in the finished buildings.

Prior to Shonandai, Hasegawa had been known only as a designer of small, experimental houses. She spent the 1970s as the sole full-time employee of Kazuo Shinohara, a hugely influential architect and theorist. The nascent ‘light’ architects – Hasegawa, Ito and Sakamoto – were then being described, somewhat controversially, as the ‘Shinohara School’, purportedly disciples who were applying and extending their mentor’s vision of architecture. In 1979, the year she founded her own office, *SD: Space Design* magazine published a feature on the Shinohara School that included a one-page essay about Hasegawa titled ‘Onna de aru koto’, which roughly translates as ‘On Being Female’. In an ideal world, her gender would not be an issue, but in the real world it greatly compounds the importance of her achievements. Throughout her career, Hasegawa has been a pioneer in many ways, one of the few female architects to attain a substantial position in the international avant-garde, and the first from Japan.

I spoke with Hasegawa in January 2016, at her new rented office space in Tokyo. She was still in the process of unpacking, having recently vacated B Y House, the office building she built for herself in 1985. Now partly a museum for a permanent display of her work, B Y House will also function as a temporary gallery for other architects and artists, and an event space for lectures and workshops – another example of her generosity to the profession, and her advocacy of architecture as a stage for public activity and interaction. Hasegawa is in the process of retrospectively evaluating and summarising her career, having just published a hefty three-volume box-set of her work – primarily photographs, but interspersed with explanatory essays by her and critical essays by others – and a large-format, limited edition folio of her sketches. In conversation she alternates between humility and pride, insecurity and confidence, sometimes within the same sentence. She spoke freely about the setbacks and conflicts that have punctuated her career. Too freely, perhaps – after seeing a raw transcript of our conversation, Hasegawa quickly asked for several of the more inflammatory or defamatory episodes to be cut. Clearly, many of her achievements came at a personal price, but what she has thereby enabled for younger generations of architects – male as well as female, international as well as Japanese – is priceless.

—*Thomas Daniell*



Clockwise from top left: first day of middle school, 1953;
high-school student, 1958; with her university
art teacher, c 1960; university student, c 1960;
first day at the office of Kiyonori Kikutake, 1964
(photograph Shozo Uchii); high-school student, 1958
Courtesy Itsuko Hasegawa



Clockwise from top left: on the roof terrace of the Aono Building, c 1982 (photograph Mitsumasa Fujitsuka); with the competition-winning model of the Shonandai Culture Centre, 1986; with Toyo Ito, c 1974; researching *minka* with Teruaki Ohashi, c 1968; on the Shonandai site, c 1988; at the NC House, 1990; in Cardiff, 1994; with Kiyonori Kikutake at the Sky House, c 1999
Courtesy Itsuko Hasegawa

TD *After graduating from Kanto Gakuin University you worked for Kiyonori Kikutake from 1964 until 1969, during his Metabolist period. Why did you choose him?*

IH Actually, I didn't. He chose me. At the end of my third year of study, Kikutake called the university, requesting that I come to his office and make the model for his entry to the Kyoto International Convention Centre competition. He didn't know who I was, but he'd seen a balsa-wood model of a house that I'd designed in an exhibition of student work organised by Kisho Kurokawa and Arata Isozaki. My professor had submitted it without asking me, and it received first prize. Balsa-wood models were unusual then, but I'd learned how to make them through designing and building my own yacht. Since childhood I'd always spent a lot of time outside, playing tennis and sailing. My grandfather was involved in boatbuilding, so I often saw the design drawings. I wasn't a good student at university, spending most of my time sailing in Yokohama Harbour – friends of mine would answer my name when the teacher took attendance. It was only after my third year that I decided to give up sailing and take architecture more seriously, partly because of the invitation from Kikutake, but also because I decided I was exerting myself too much physically and not enough mentally. After I helped with that first competition model, Kikutake asked me back to help with the design of the Asakawa Terrace House (1964) during my summer vacation. It was a simple, long apartment building. I drew all the plans, elevations and sections in pencil on A1 sheets of paper. Recently there was a retrospective exhibition about Kikutake, and I was amazed to see that he had kept those poor drawings of mine and put them in beautiful wooden frames.

TD *Why did you choose to study architecture in the first place?*

IH When I was at high school, a friend told me that her father had studied architecture at Waseda University and ran his own practice, designing houses with her mother helping. She said it looked like fun. But both my father and my uncle – who was my high-school mathematics teacher – told me that I would have to study at the University of Tokyo or Kyoto University if I wanted to become an architect. Their architecture departments are in their engineering faculties, and they only had male students at that time.

TD *Was it a rule that there were no female students?*

IH No, but very few women applied. Reiko Tomita, one of the founders of Team Zoo, was then in her first year of study at the University of Tokyo, so she hadn't yet entered the architecture programme. When I was told that I couldn't go and study architecture, I got really angry and stopped going to class for the final two or three

months of high school. I had never been a truant before that. The teachers at my all-girls school told me I should go to Japan Women's University. When I was younger, I had wanted to become a botanist, because I liked walking in the countryside and collecting plants. My mother was an artist who did Japanese-style paintings, and she said I should study fine arts and become a nature painter. Supplied with these suggestions, I decided not to go to university at all, but spend my time doing oil paintings at home instead. Then my sister, who was studying in Tokyo, told me that Kanto Gakuin University was going to start a yacht club for female students; as an added bonus, it had an architecture department too. So I suddenly changed my mind and applied to study there. But it was really the experience of working for Kikutake while I was a student that made me decide to become an architect. Kikutake was very famous, and would generally only accept students from the top universities who were also top of their graduating class – I didn't really qualify. When I joined the office, Kikutake said he only wanted one new staff member at a time, in order to train them properly. But things changed. Four months after me, Mitsuru Senda – who was from Kiyoshi Seike's lab at Tokyo Institute of Technology – started working there, then a year later five new people entered at the same time, including Toyo Ito.

TD *Kikutake divided his staff into three teams based on his design theory of ka, kata, katachi, which might be translated as 'force, gesture, shape', but which he explicitly equated with conceptual planning, schematic design, construction documentation. Which group were you in?*

IH I was in the *kata* group, which did the main design work.

TD *Having been assigned to one team, was it possible to move to a different one?*

IH It never happened while I was there. I sat right next to Kikutake, so I was often involved with developing the initial image sketches, and was permitted to design quite freely. Unfortunately, Shozo Uchii, the leader of the *kata* team, and Shokan Endo, leader of the *katachi* team, were often annoyed by my contributions. It started with the first project I worked on, the Miyakonojo Civic Hall (1966). I went with Kikutake to meet the structural engineer, Gengo Matsui, who asked us to make a form that would allow the structure and services to be concentrated at a single point. So I sketched a shape resembling the canopy of a giant pram, which Kikutake liked so much that he used it for the final design. Shozo Uchii hated my proposal – he had wanted to make a sober concrete box. When Miyakonojo was published, Uchii wrote the text, but refused to use the word 'pram', instead explaining it as a tympanum structure. For the Hagi Civic Centre (1968), Shokan Endo had taken a very

careful, precise design to quite an advanced stage – the detailed design was complete, and the cost estimation was underway – when Kikutake suddenly decided that he didn't like the reinforced concrete structure. We were in a car together, and he asked me what kind of architecture I wanted to make. I said that I wanted to construct buildings like boats, telling him about my sailing days and the boat design drawings I had seen as a child. He asked me how boats were made, and I explained the way steel plates are welded onto very beautiful steel frames. He went home that evening and drew some small sketches, then gave them to me the next morning and told me to draft new plans and sections. I worked through the night revising the design. I was nervous that everybody would be angry with me for making changes at such a late stage, so when I gave the completed drawings to Endo I told him, 'This is what Kikutake wants', and then rushed home. When I returned the next day the office was still in uproar.

Uchii was always entirely logical in his approach, and he felt that what I did wasn't logical. But Kikutake had an amazing feel for shapes. When I intuitively said 'pram' or 'boat frame', he understood. Aside from his abstract *ka kata katachi* theory, he had a concrete methodology for making architecture. As a designer he was less logical, more pragmatic. The truth is, he just wanted to make everyday life a bit more beautiful. It was a great experience to be developing images together with him, but the hostility it provoked in other people was unpleasant, so in my final year in the office I moved my desk away from Kikutake and mostly worked alone on interiors and furniture design. Kikutake was a gentleman who always treated women very well, though I was usually the only one in the office. When I was very busy I asked him to employ another interior designer to assist me. Two different women came, but each quit after a couple of months, saying 'it's impossible to work like this', and so I usually worked alone.

TD *Did you go to the construction sites of the projects you worked on?*

IH Generally only the people in the *katachi* group went to the construction sites. I would sometimes go when I was working closely together with Kikutake on an interior design, but he would always accompany me: a building site was too dangerous a place for a lone woman, he thought. Toyo Ito was in the *ka* group, meaning he didn't do any actual design but worked instead on concepts, or urban planning, looking at how architecture is placed in the city. During his fourth year in the office, Ito saw me and Kikutake working together on interiors, and asked if he could do some design work too. So Kikutake gave him the job of designing the Itabashi Kindergarten, and

I helped him with the design of the children's furniture. As Ito had quite an unusual sensibility, the design ended up being a bit different from other work produced by Kikutake's office. Ito was also Kikutake's representative on the Expo '70 team, in charge of the Expo Tower. He was often sent to meetings at Kenzo Tange's office, and was good at communicating Kikutake's intentions. I also met Tange once, for some issues related to the tower interiors.

TD *Did you often talk about architecture with Toyo Ito while you worked together?*

IH We were so busy that we could only talk during our lunch breaks. But the next person to join the office was Yuzuru Tominaga. He liked to drink, so we all got together after work quite often.

TD *You and Ito both quit at the same time, in 1969. Was that by chance?*

IH I think Ito left one year after me. I was there for five years, then I went to study in the lab of Kazuo Shinohara at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. Around the time I was preparing for the entrance examination, Ito suggested, half-jokingly, that we both join Arata Isozaki's atelier. Everyone had heard about that strange episode where people were dancing naked on Isozaki's roof. Rather than going to study at such a serious place, Ito said, it would be more fun to work in Isozaki's office. Though I liked Isozaki's architecture, I think Ito didn't really understand Shinohara very well, so I confidently proclaimed, 'I will go to the boring place'. I wanted to design houses, but until then I had been working on large-scale projects. I would do everything from exterior perspectives through to interior design details – I was considered good at drawing, so I'd drawn a huge number of measured plan drawings and perspective images. At the time, public architecture was very symbolic and authoritative. There was a lack of communication between architects and citizens that led to many problems with public buildings, so I wanted to do smaller things. I'd seen Kazuo Shinohara's House in White (1966) in a magazine, and I thought there was a connection to Kiyonori Kikutake's own home, the famous Sky House (1958). The Sky House is basically one large room, which is a traditional Japanese approach, based on the *minka* (vernacular private house). The living room of House in White may also be seen as a one-room *minka*. While I was still a student, Kikutake and his wife guided me around the Sky House, which left a great impression on my thinking. That was when I first decided that I wanted to design houses. I had no desire to work for Isozaki, and I liked Kazuo Shinohara's approach, so I went to study in his lab.

TD *Why didn't you join the office of Masako Hayashi, for example? She was from the same generation as Shinohara, and designing mainly*

houses, not to mention that she would have been the most famous woman architect in Japan at that time.

IH After I saw the House in White, I had no interest in going anywhere other than Shinohara's lab. Anyway, Masako Hayashi refused to take on female staff, because she thought they would inevitably quit after a while, to get married. She did her undergraduate degree at Japan Women's University, but then studied in the lab of Kiyoshi Seike at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, where she overlapped with Kazuo Shinohara. So she and her husband Shoji Hayashi – also a well-known architect – occasionally visited Shinohara lab during the years I was there. Whenever we all had dinner together, she would tell me that architecture was no profession for a woman, and that I should hurry up and quit and get married. I told her, jokingly, that if I established my own office, I would hire only female staff. She acted shocked, saying, 'Don't do that!'

TD *Were there other female students in Shinohara's lab when you joined?*

IH No. Some arrived later. But after I had applied to enter the lab, I was invited to a seminar there on the theme of whether or not a woman could be an architect. They were actually debating whether or not female students should be allowed to join them. It was tough to enter the room – there were no other women. To begin with, my dress sense turned out to be unacceptable. I had recently been to London, so I was dressed in foreign fashion, a miniskirt with long boots and a white jacket. Everybody else was wearing subdued clothes. I had been permitted to wear almost anything I wanted in Kikutake's office, though he was quite particular about fashion. He told the other staff to wear black sweaters during winter, and there was a rule that you should wear a black jacket for meetings with clients. But in Shinohara's lab at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, everybody was sloppily dressed, wearing work clothes, jeans and filthy jumpers. Some of these people took exception to my appearance and debated whether I needed to change my wardrobe. I realised then that they considered architecture to be based upon masculine criteria. At the seminar they discussed issues that up to then I had only vaguely understood, making it clear that architecture is an intellectual construct, based on rigorous theoretical and philosophical reasoning; that buildings are engineering structures which must be reconciled with social behaviours, and that there are severe obstacles in the way of women who decide to practise architecture. At the conclusion of the seminar, Shinohara said to me, 'To become an architect, you must have the ability to first become masculine, and then once again become feminine.'

TD *And were you able to de-feminise yourself as he asked?*

IH No, I didn't try to change anything about myself. But Shinohara could be malicious. Early on, he bought everyone in the lab souvenirs from France, his first trip to a foreign country. He gave an extremely beautiful, very feminine graduate student called Mariko Goto a wonderful pink scarf, but he bought me a black jumper with a label that said 'unisex'. I was shocked and confused, and immediately hid it away in my bag, then took it home and put it in my wardrobe. It's still hanging there. I never wore it. My gift was probably more expensive than hers, but everyone was besotted with Mariko, and it was well known throughout the university that Shinohara had given her that pink scarf. I found out later that everyone thought he hadn't given me anything at all.

TD *At the Tokyo Institute of Technology, you were initially a research student and only later Shinohara's assistant. Did you write a dissertation?*

IH I was a student for the first two years, but I didn't write a dissertation or go to classes. Instead, I travelled throughout Japan looking at famous examples of *minka*, just driving with some other students from Tohoku to Okinawa. Shinohara's doctoral dissertation was titled 'Nihon kenchiku no kūkan kōsei no kenkyū' (Research on the spatial composition of Japanese architecture), so I wanted to understand the origins of his ideas before I studied with him.

TD *And why did you change from a student to an employee?*

IH Shinohara asked me to stay and help me with his architectural projects, so I became a staff member of the university. I worked as his assistant for about ten years, but not just on architectural projects. When Shinohara was on holiday, I also taught and graded his classes for him.

TD *On architecture?*

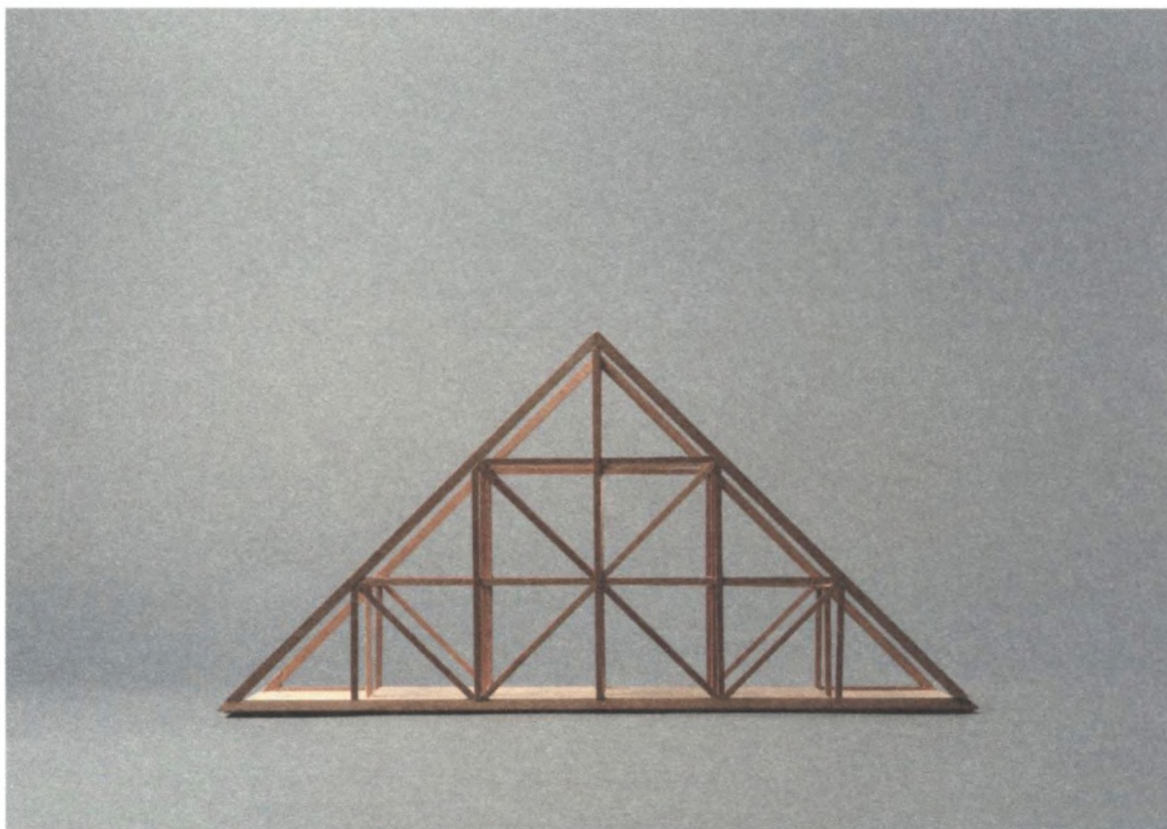
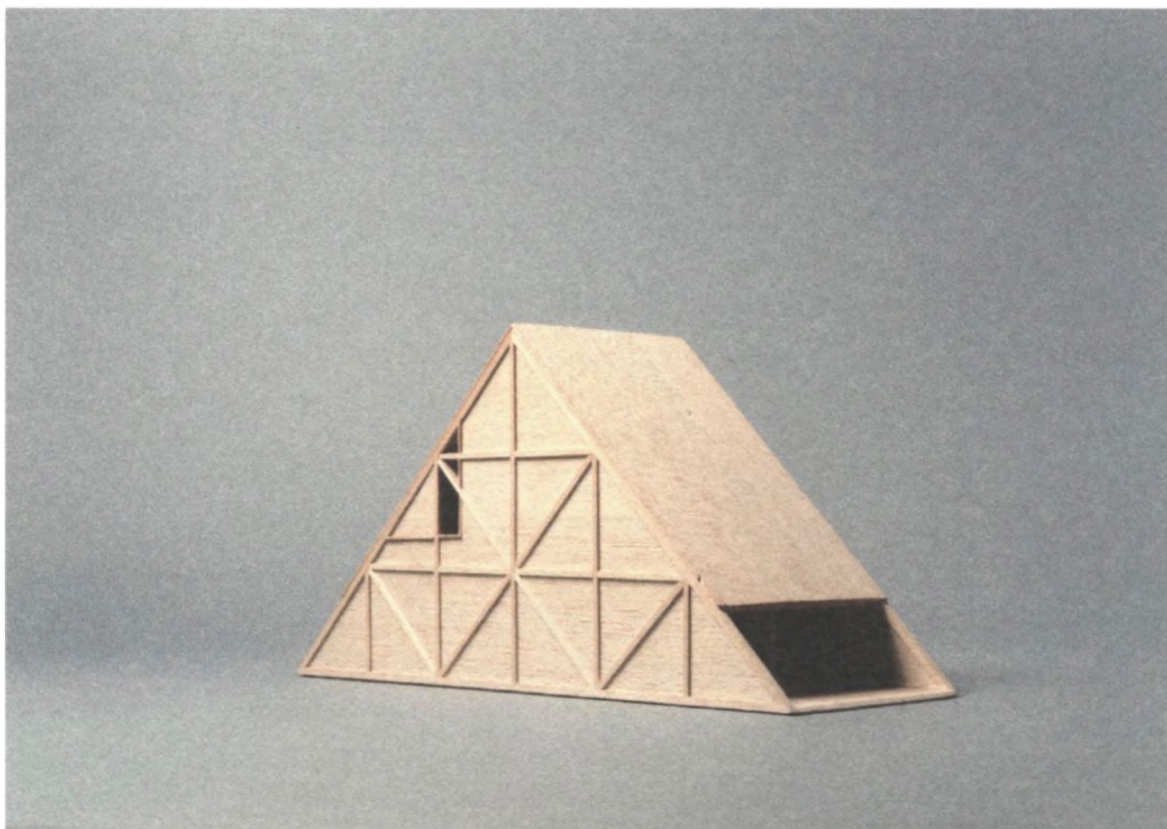
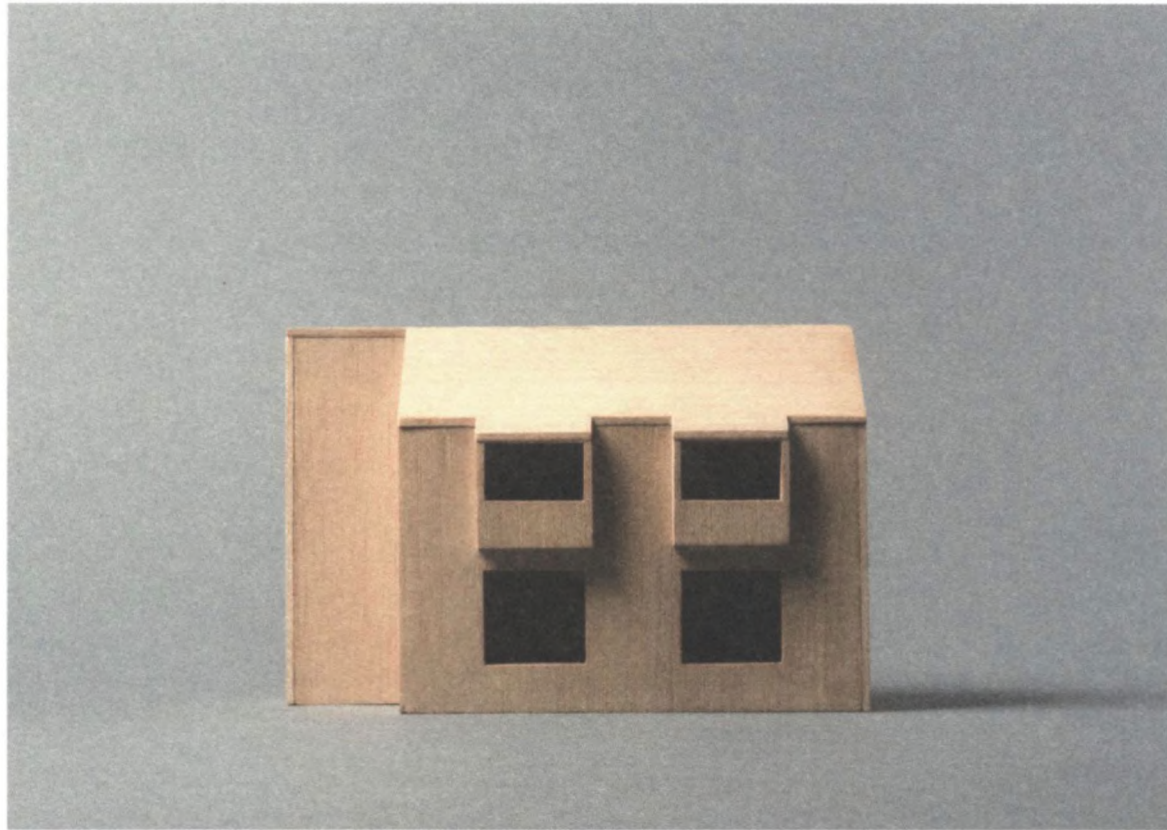
IH No, for his classes teaching descriptive geometry to undergraduate students. His first degree was in mathematics, from Tohoku University, after which he became a mathematics instructor at Tokyo Medical and Dental University. After a year of that, he enrolled in the architecture programme at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, studying in the lab of Kiyoshi Seike.

TD *I assume there was a relationship between his teaching of geometry and his architecture?*

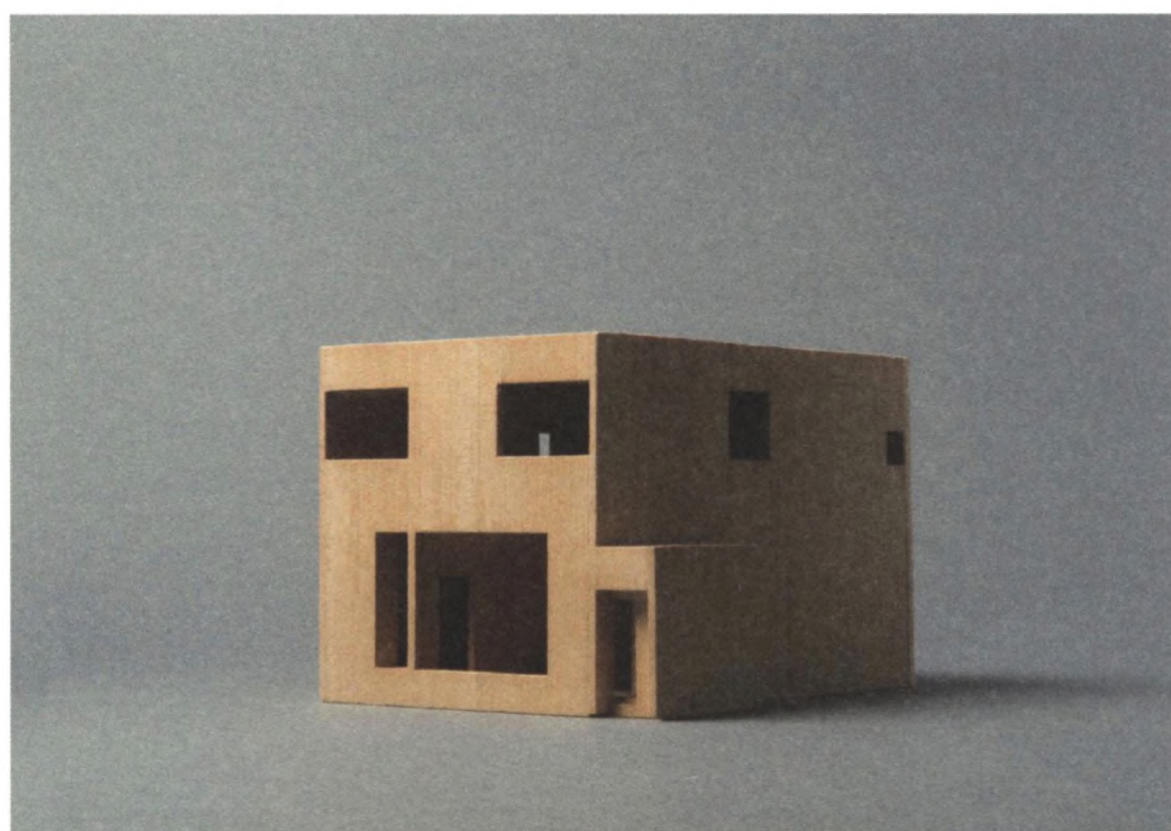
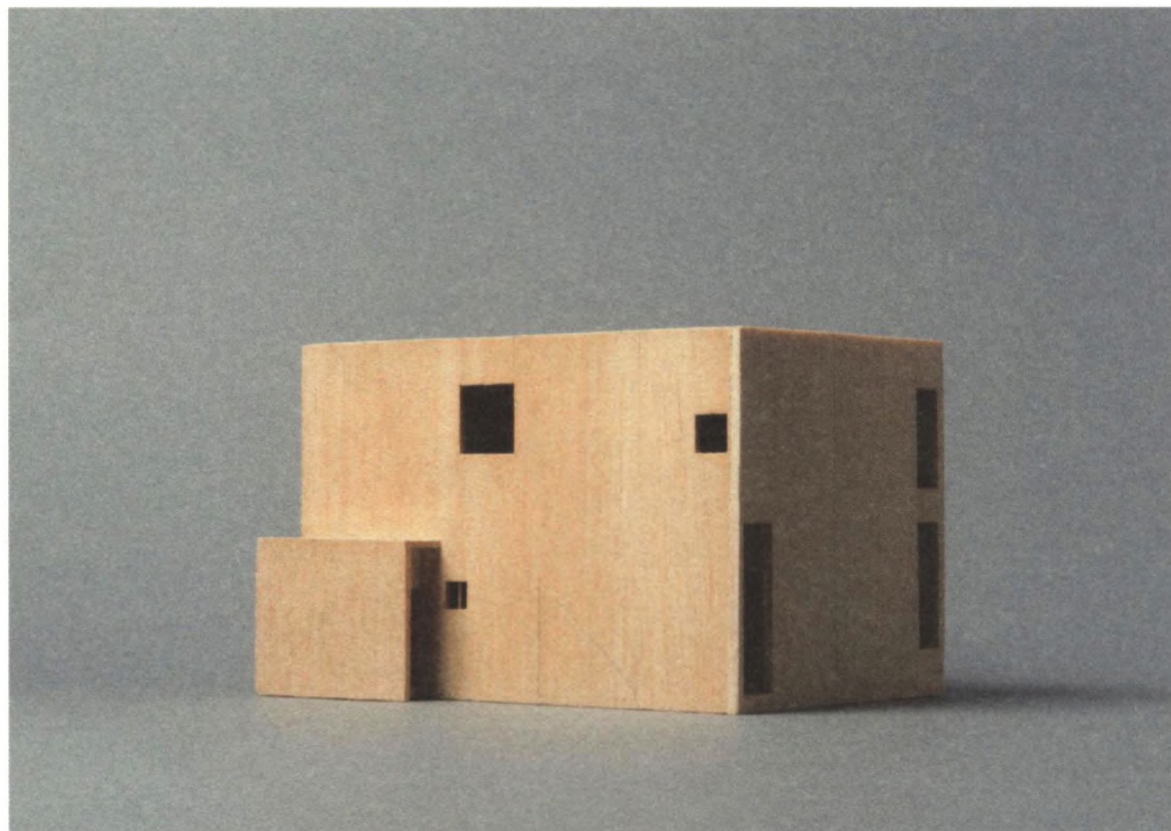
IH Not really. That's just how Shinohara got his salary. But he also had a few postgraduate students for classes in architectural design. They also helped with his projects.

TD *Did Shinohara have a first-class architect licence?*

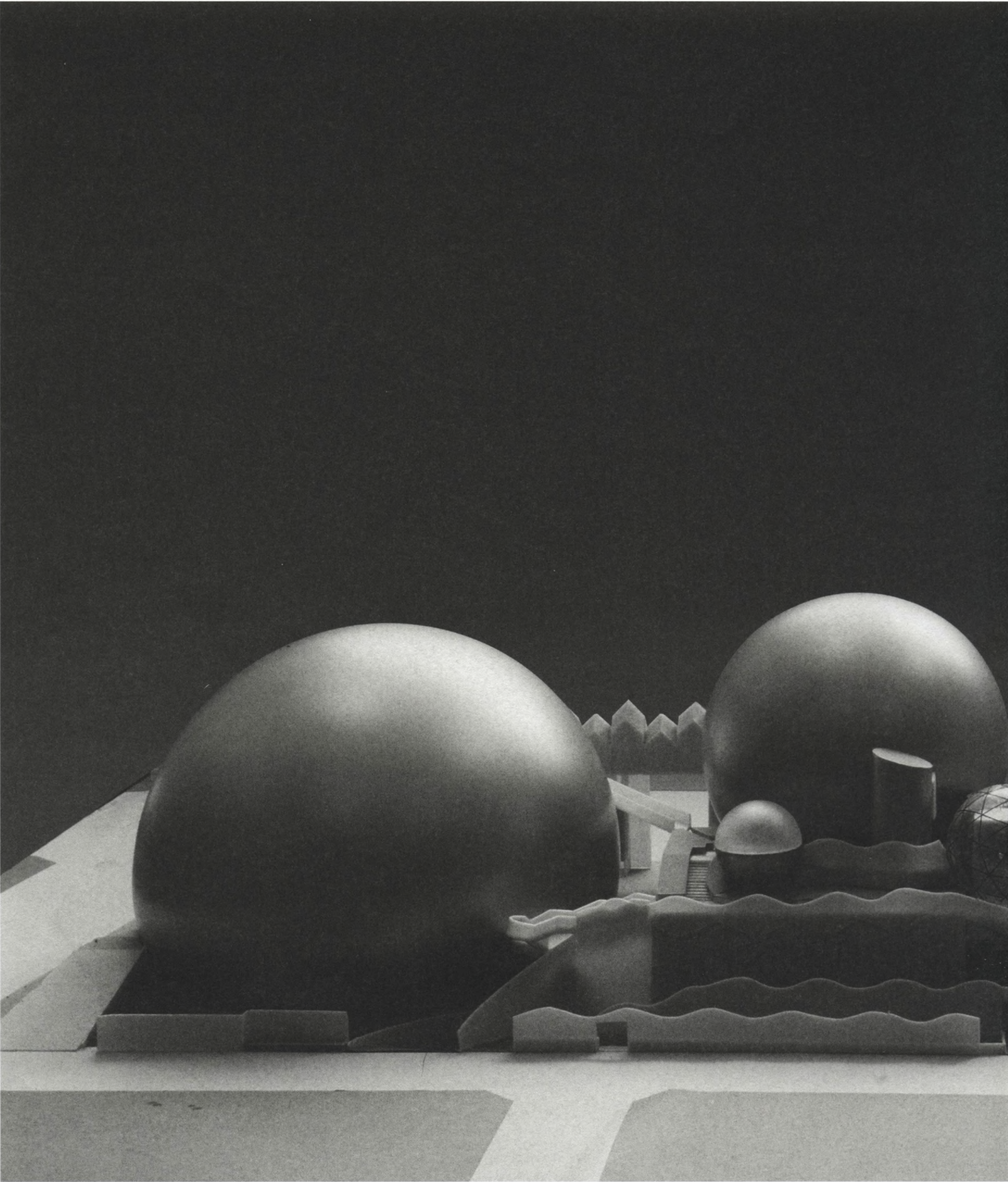
IH No, but I did. I gained the qualification while I was working at Kikutake's office,

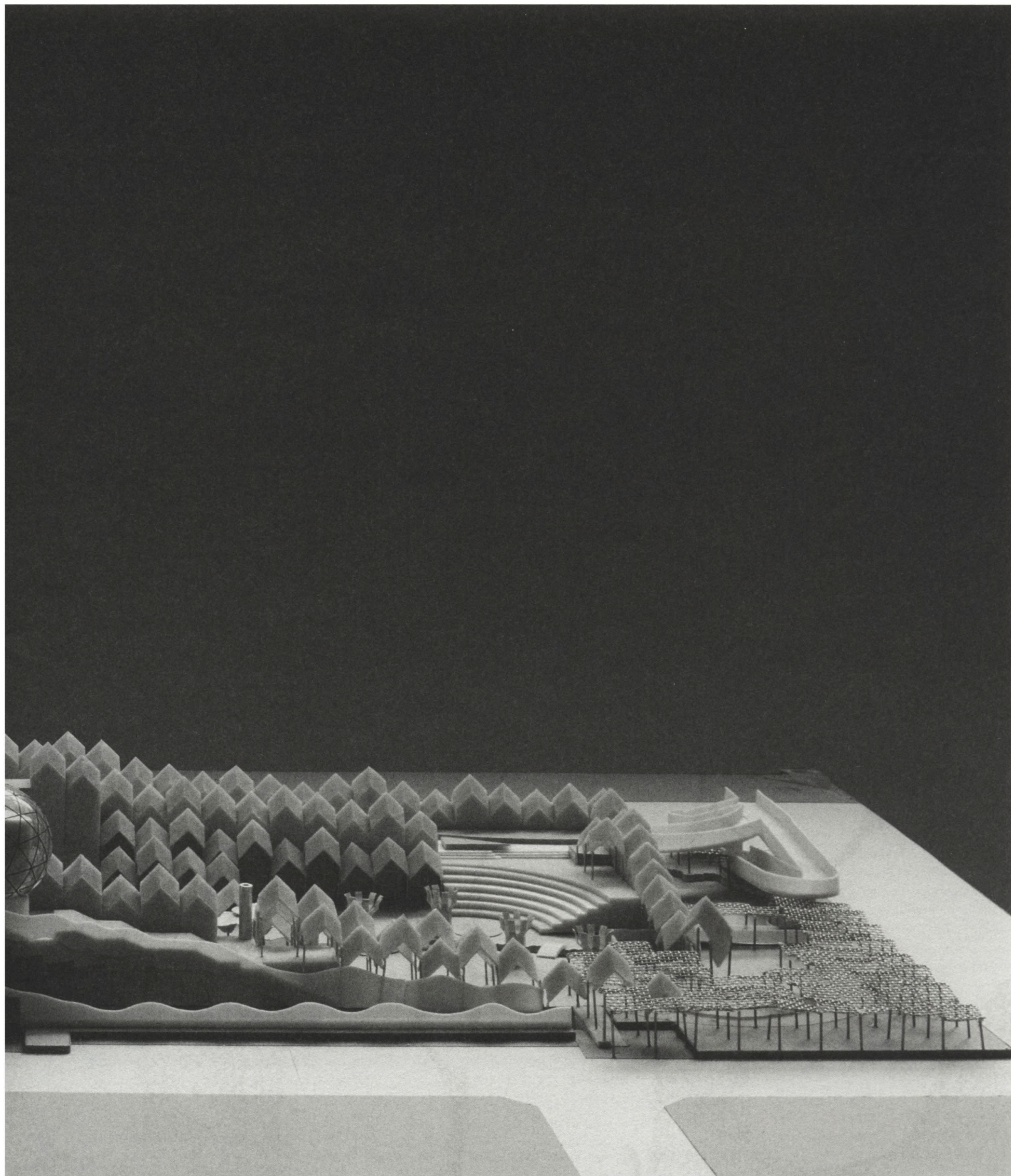


House 1 at Yaizu, 1972,
and House 2 at Yaizu, 1977
Photographs Kayoko Yoshida
Courtesy Itsuko Hasegawa



House at Midorigaoka, 1975
and Stationery Shop at Yaizu, 1978
Photographs Kayoko Yoshida
Courtesy Itsuko Hasegawa





so Shinohara always used my name and licence for building permit applications.

TD *So Kazuo Shinohara's buildings in the 1970s were actually Itsuko Hasegawa buildings. Amazing. But how did he manage before you joined him?*

IH In the 1950s and 1960s all his houses were wooden structures, so a first-class architect licence wasn't necessary. Most contractors will have at least a second-class architect licence, so they could apply for the building permits on his behalf. Many of the early houses were built by a contractor called Bau Kensetsu, which used its licence for the building permits.

TD *During the 1960s the pressures of postwar reconstruction inspired many architects to make proposals for efficient, minimum dwellings, and to develop techniques for industrialised construction, but Shinohara was known for a more poetic, irrational approach.*

IH Yes, his houses were like artworks. When I first met him in his lab, he was carving a block of clay with a knife, like a sculptor, to make a model of a house. I'd read his 1967 book *Jutakuron* (Housing Theory), in which he wrote that he was basing his work on tradition, whereas most other Japanese architects were focusing on technology, especially in the build-up to the world expo in Osaka in 1970. In a way, Shinohara was a very conservative person. But when I said to him, 'I came to study under you because I like your House in White', he replied that he had already moved on from the House in White, and was now going to make concrete boxes. Whenever I mentioned traditional houses, he would get angry with me. I quoted his statement that *minka* are like mushrooms, growing naturally in their soil – an image that I really liked – and said I also wanted to make houses like that. He said, 'Forget about all that, I've already moved on'. He was, in a sense, a great architect, but many problems arose because of his attitude towards the more mundane aspects of practice. He would nonchalantly say things like, 'It isn't necessary to see the site, it isn't necessary to listen to the client'. He started to ignore all the normal requirements of the design process in order to turn the architecture into an artwork. He might design a building for the sake of a single photograph. I decided I didn't want to make architecture like that. Buildings are for people to live in. I think architecture should come from regional characteristics, and provide amenity for modern life. He started doing the opposite of '*minka* as mushroom'. His designs became less like architecture and more like art objects. In a way, I learned from Shinohara by negative example...

TD *You began working with Shinohara at the exact moment of his shift from what he called his 'first style', based on tradition and using wooden structures, to his 'second style', based on abstract*

geometry and using reinforced concrete structures. Perhaps this wasn't a coincidence, but came down to the fact that he was now able to build in concrete because you had a licence.

IH I don't think so. When I entered Shinohara's lab, he had already done the design for the Uncompleted House (1970), which was reinforced concrete. Actually, soon after I entered the lab, Kikutake tried to get me to come back to his office. Kikutake didn't really know who Shinohara was, so when I left to study at Tokyo Institute of Technology, he'd assumed I was in Kiyoshi Seike's lab. Apparently he called Seike and said, 'I'm having a tough time without Hasegawa here and I want her to come back'. Seike rushed over to the lab to tell me. When Shinohara realised that Kikutake had called Seike instead of him, he was less than pleased. He jumped up and said, 'Hasegawa, call him right now, in front of me, and refuse him!' So right there and then I had to phone Kikutake and tell him that it would be too difficult to work in his office while studying. But I was surprised to discover how important I was to Kikutake. Soon after that, Shinohara and Kikutake were both invited to give lectures at the Architectural Institute of Japan (AIJ) on the same day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Since they had never met in person, Shinohara decided to invite Kikutake for a drink in the bar of a nearby hotel. Shinohara liked to drink. Kikutake had a low tolerance for alcohol, but accepted the invitation because he wanted to meet. The evening spiralled into a huge argument. After a couple of drinks, Shinohara said in an off-hand way that he was contemptuous of Metabolism. Kikutake was completely taken aback, and started to argue. Shinohara explained that he was moving beyond the traditional composition of the House in White towards something more modern, searching for a new type of functionalism. Kikutake didn't understand. He believed that function was something that arose after a space was made – I realise now that I inherited the notion of *garandō* (open void) from Kikutake. They just couldn't communicate. They were using the same words, but in very different ways. I had to sit between them and translate. Shinohara said that even while designing small houses, he was exploring ideas about society. Kikutake said that even while designing individual buildings, he thought about issues of land ownership beyond the frame of architecture, by doing his huge Marine City designs and so on. Both of them were delving into issues around society and the city, but for the first time I saw how their different standpoints could lead to

miscommunication. This was partly due to their background. When Kikutake was young, he'd lived in a house where there were no books, but Shinohara had always read all kinds of books, including philosophy and mathematics. Afterwards, Shinohara said that he hadn't understood anything that Kikutake had said, and told me to write a report on the differences in the way they used words. There is a big difference between the vocabulary of a house designer who thinks like an artist, and that of a major architect doing large projects. I looked at the context – that is, when they used a word like 'functionalism' I looked at the surrounding words. I spent one full year doing that. This was before word processors. I wrote it all out by hand, and presented it to everyone in the lab. Shinohara found it interesting, so we started to analyse the vocabulary of architects with a mainframe computer at the university. This was the 1970s, so computers were very difficult to use. That research became Mariko Goto's master's thesis.

TD *I think that you are probably the only person who fully understands the ideas of those two architects. Shinohara wrote that his second style began with the Uncompleted House, but he only ever showed very abstract interior photographs in his publications, so no one quite knew what it looked like.*

IH I was there when those photographs were taken. Shinohara sent me to the Uncompleted House with Koji Taki, an art critic with a background in aesthetics and philosophy. He was also a photographer, and had just founded an experimental magazine called *Provoke* together with some other photographers, such as Daido Moriyama. That was the first time I met him. Just the two of us were at the house. I watched him spend a whole day taking photographs. He concentrated so intensely, moving all the furniture and decorations around. I was baffled by why he took so much time and trouble over photos of a simple concrete volume. Shinohara had said that the House in White embodied a new nature, yet now he seemed to be pursuing an abstracted nature, trying to create something dynamic in a static concrete space. I found this contradiction bewildering. A few years before Shinohara died, Sou Fujimoto, Ryue Nishizawa, Kengo Kuma and I had a public conversation with him as part of the 'Architecture of Tomorrow' exhibition and symposium at Gallery MA. The other three asked me why I had chosen to join Shinohara's lab. I said it was because I had seen House in White, and Shinohara, who was sitting next to me as always, pulled a sour face. But after that he wrote another essay in which he discussed the House in White, and before he died I think he again came to feel that it was his masterpiece. So rather than the later concrete houses, I prefer the more traditional houses,

*Previous: Shonandai Culture Centre /
competition model, 1986
Photograph Katsuaki Furudate
Courtesy Itsuko Hasegawa*

such as the Umbrella House (1961) and the first house he designed for the poet Shuntaro Tanikawa (House in Kugayama no 2, 1958). Those designs are what drew me to him, but he had already moved on to other things, so he always had trouble with my design approach. 'Stop doing that!', he would yell.

TD *His shift to concrete also happened during the build-up to Expo '70, which was dominated by Metabolist-style architecture. Was the raw, massive quality of those houses perhaps implicitly intended as a criticism of the modular precision and industrialisation that attracted the Metabolists and their followers?*

IH He always wanted to go against the prevailing trends. Concrete was easy to use, but it was also a statement against the steel and glass of the architecture at Expo '70, and the related social and political circumstances. I went to see the expo with Shinohara, but he showed absolutely no interest. He walked around grumbling the whole time – 'there is zero architecture here', he said – and refused to go inside any of the pavilions. It just made him angry. On the second day he wouldn't even go back, so I went with two other students from Shinohara's lab.

TD *Why did he go to the expo in the first place?*

IH Shinohara always wanted to know about new movements in architecture. But after we got back to Tokyo, he had a big argument with Koji Taki about it, while I arbitrated. Even though he appeared cool, Shinohara would often quarrel with other people, particularly with Taki. But they were close friends. Shinohara really liked Taki's photographs of the Uncompleted House, and asked him to shoot some other projects. But Taki was having doubts about architectural photography. He'd decided he wasn't going to do it any more – architecture magazines didn't like his photographs, because they were so abstract. So he and Shinohara started to argue more frequently. Their relationship gradually worsened as their ideas and values diverged.

TD *In Shinohara's 'third style' he sometimes used wooden structures and traditional ideas, notably in the second house he designed for Shuntaro Tanikawa (Tanikawa House, 1974), the holiday villa in the forest in Karuizawa, with its sloping earthen floor.*

IH That house was the cause of the worst fight I ever had with Shinohara. He'd been ill with tuberculosis, recuperating in a sanatorium, and had done hardly any drawings, so I'd developed a design over the course of many meetings with the client – well, mostly with his wife and son. The design was largely complete by the time Shinohara recovered and came back to the lab. He handed me some floor plans he had drawn showing concrete walls of various thicknesses. It looked like an array of grave-stones. 'What's this?', I asked, 'A sculpture? It isn't architecture. You can't make spaces with

only walls. Doesn't architecture need a roof?' He immediately became furious and yelled, 'Hasegawa, you can quit tomorrow! Pack up your things and get out!' Then he stormed off. Over the years I was there, he fired me many times, but this time I actually did clear out my desk. Then he came back in the morning and told me not to leave. But we had a huge argument that day about what architecture is. It looked like we might come to blows, it was so terrible. Shinohara said he wanted to bring the atmosphere of Karuizawa inside the house, the sounds and the smell of fallen leaves, and thereby make a 'new nature'. That is when he decided to incorporate the sloping ground of the site within the house. Then he asked Tanikawa and his wife to come to see the new design. They looked at the model, and saw the sloping dirt floor. His wife hated it. She got angry at Shinohara, saying, 'How can we live here if there is dirt inside? This can't be a living room, even if we put chairs there. You obviously don't understand the damp climate of Karuizawa'. She wanted to use my original design, but Tanikawa said, 'Even though the plan designed by Hasegawa is very good, I want Professor Shinohara to design my house, so I will endure this unusual proposal'. Houses designed by Shinohara tended to have a big influence on family relationships. I often visited the site of the Tanikawa House while it was under construction. When it was complete, I saw the sloping earthen floor in the main room, and finally understood Shinohara's 'new nature'.

TD *How many other staff members did Shinohara have?*

IH There were no real staff members. Aside from me, he had one assistant for the classes in descriptive geometry, and there were always two or three postgraduate students who would help on the architectural projects, unpaid. So I was made to do most of the work. To be honest, I was like his secretary, office manager and project director all rolled into one. I would persuade clients to accept his design proposals. I would devise the details necessary to implement his abstract spaces. When he was sick I would do his drawings for him, when he was in a foul mood I would attend meetings in his place. I would collect the design fees. I would revise and edit his texts. Shinohara hated construction sites and rarely visited, so I would supervise the sites, but he often complained that the results didn't exactly follow his drawings. It was difficult but always interesting, seeing what he would do next.

TD *Though you were obviously very busy, you also found time to do your own projects. You designed six houses and one commercial building under your own name while working for Shinohara. Did he know and approve?*

IH Yes. My first real project was for a young male relative of mine (House 1 at Yaizu, 1972).

I asked Shinohara if he had any objections, and he told me it was fine to work on my own projects, but only in my own time. On weekdays I had to be at school, so I did my designs at home during the vacations and on weekends. They were all wooden structures, except House in Midorigaoka (1975), which was reinforced concrete. I also supervised the construction sites myself. When other people in the lab asked if they could do the same, they were refused.

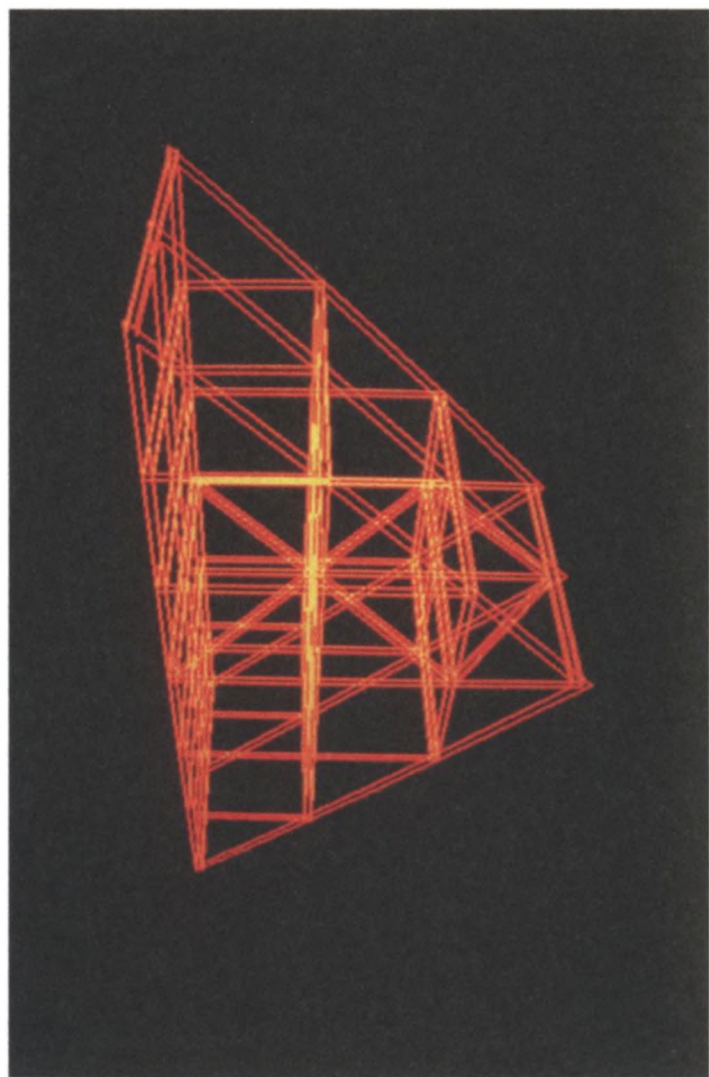
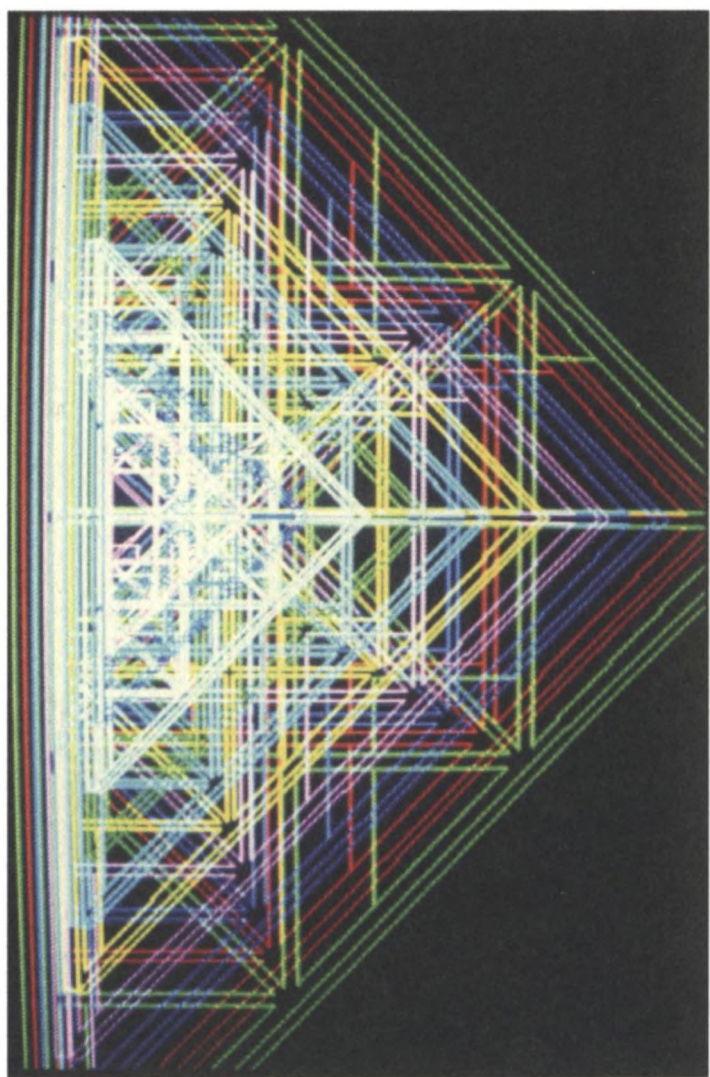
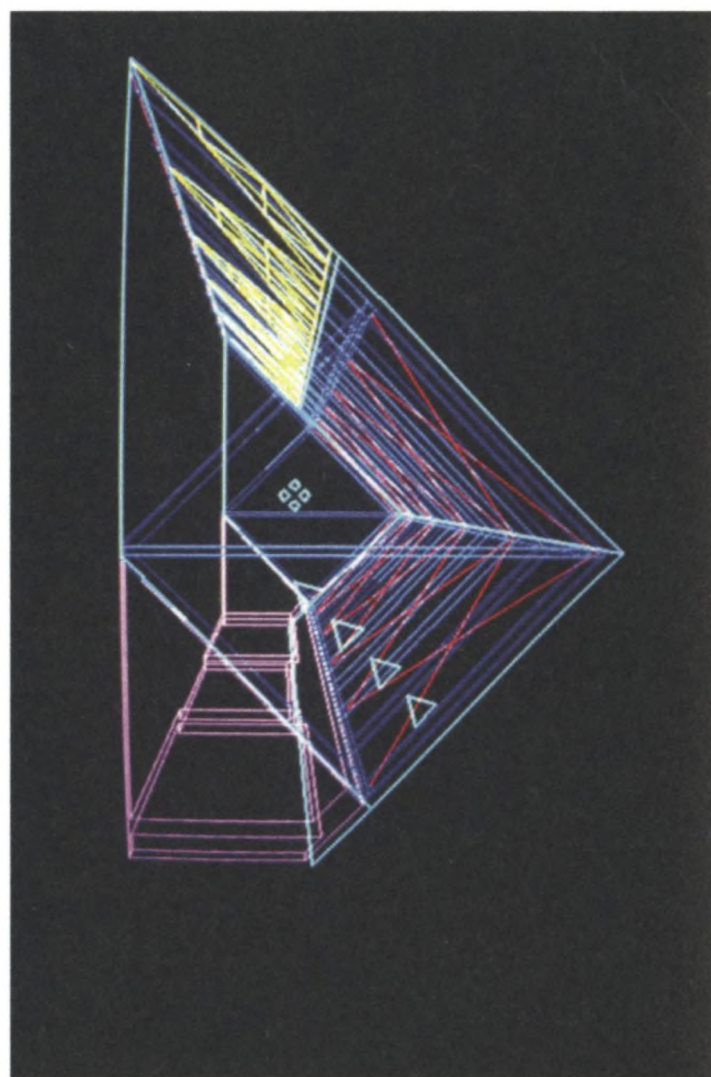
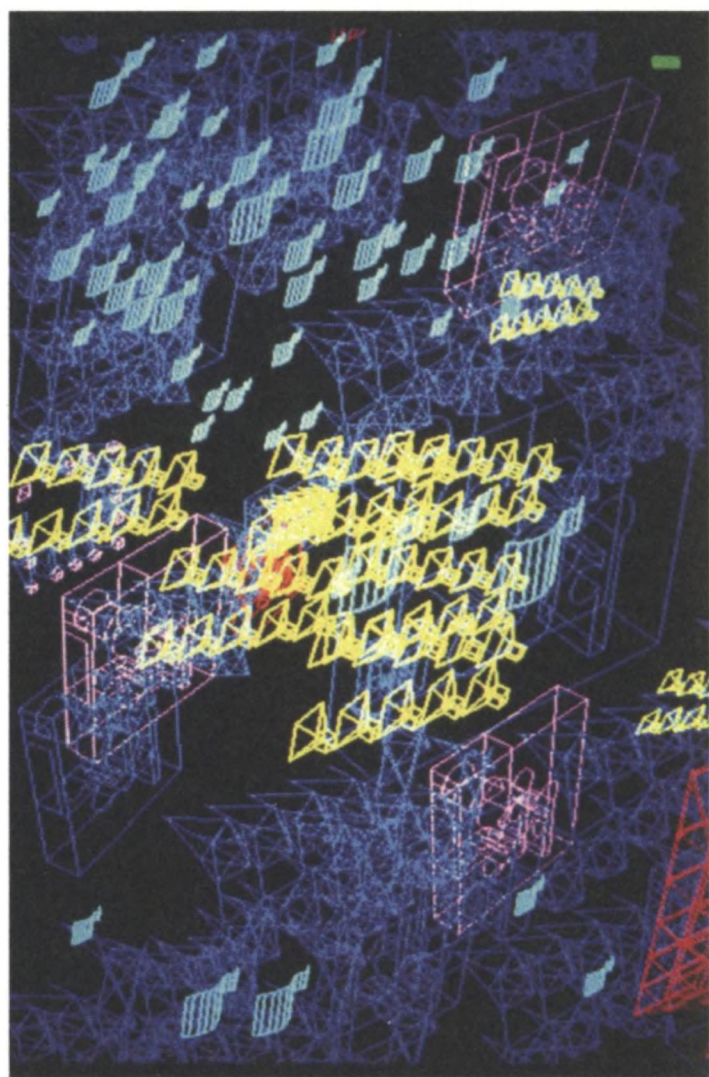
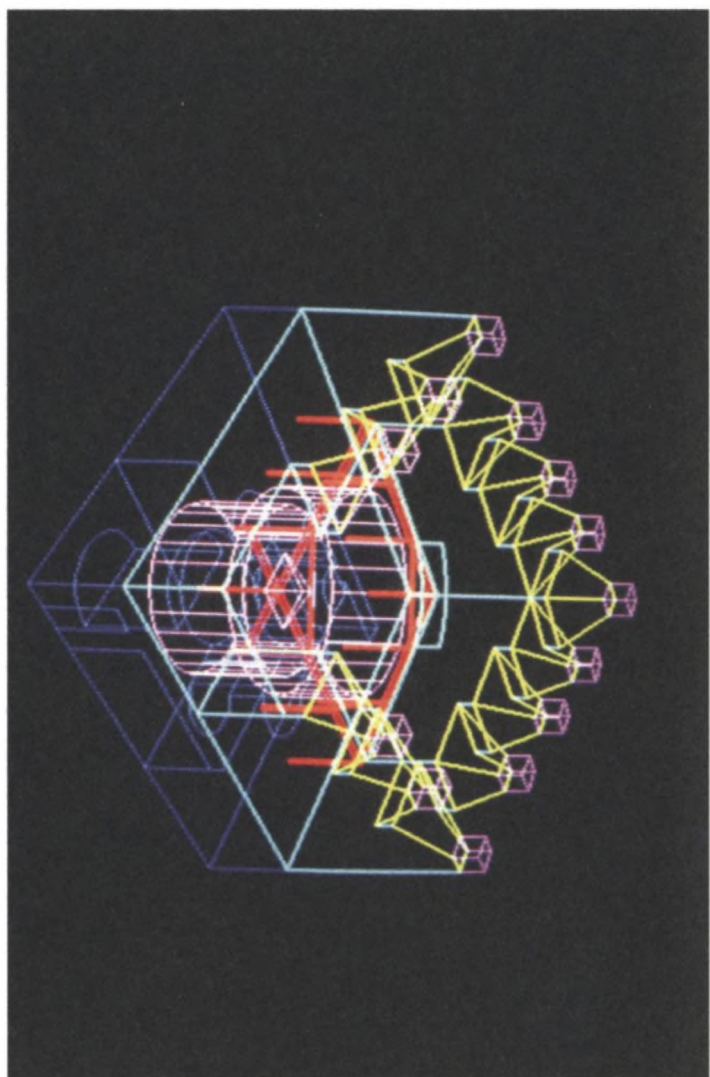
TD *What did Shinohara say about your designs?*

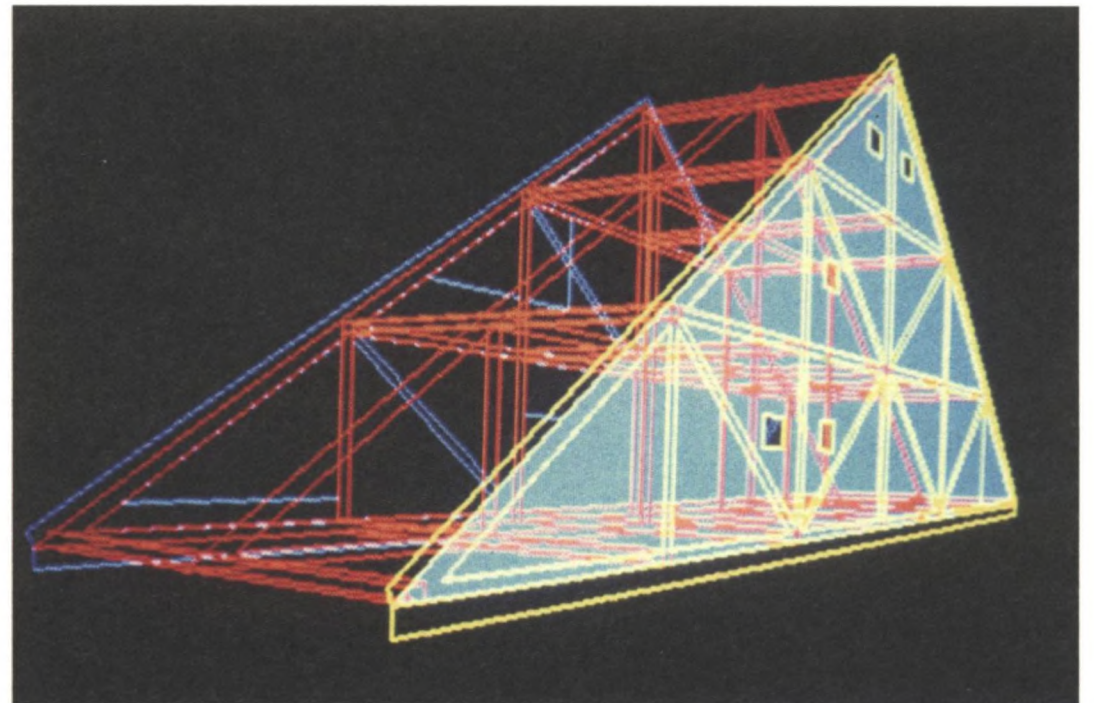
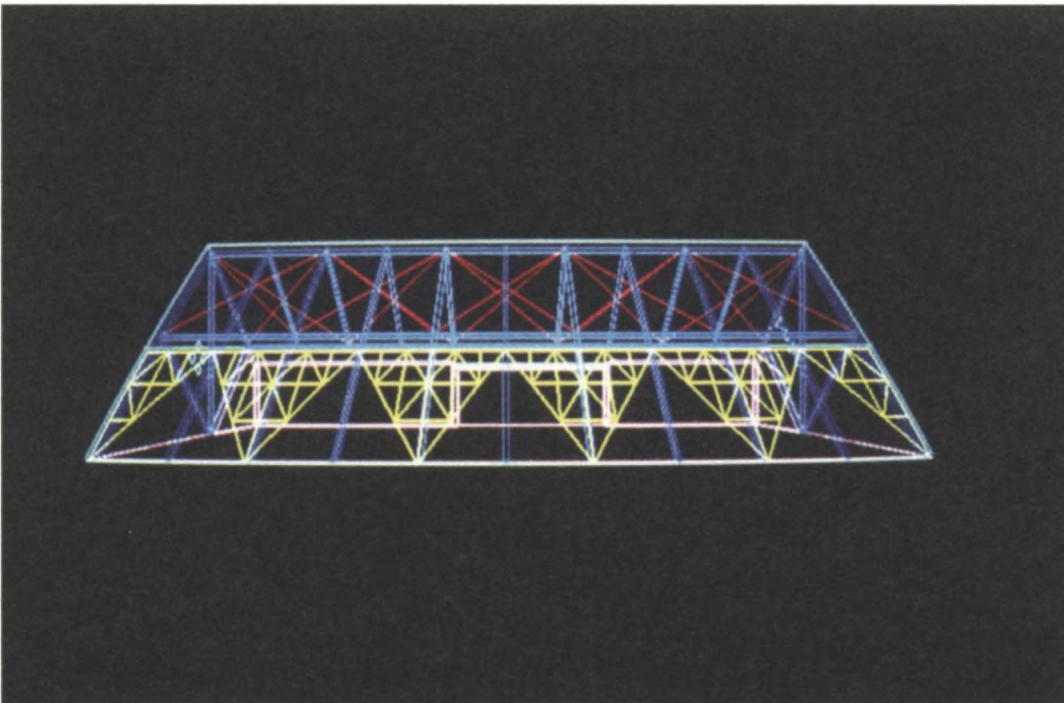
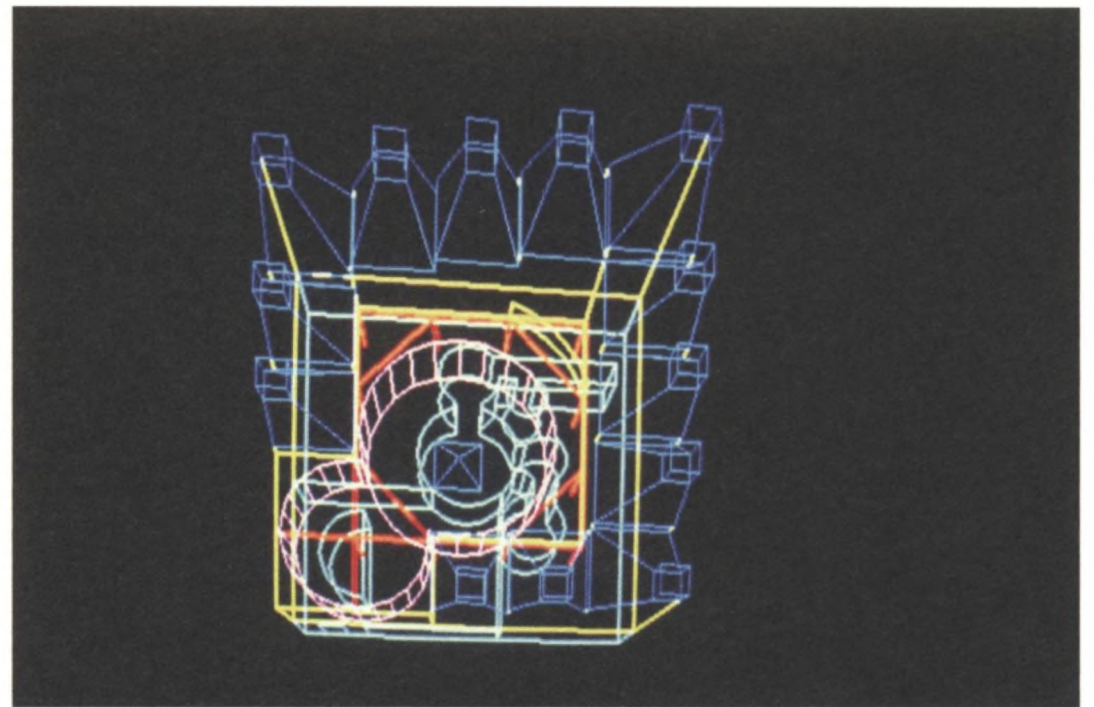
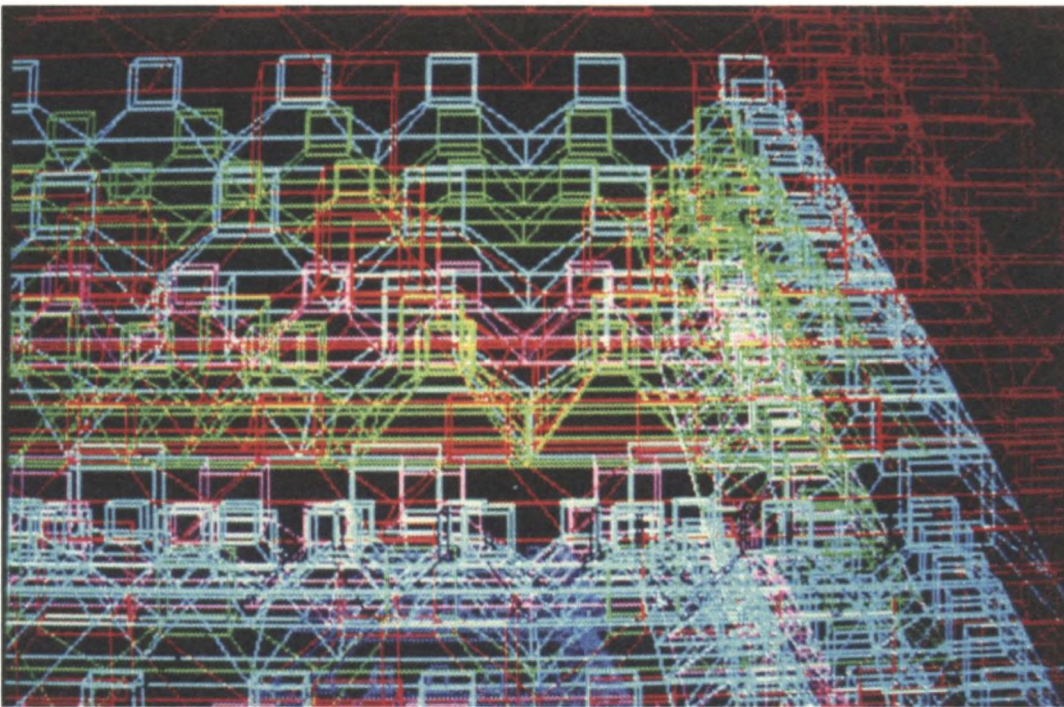
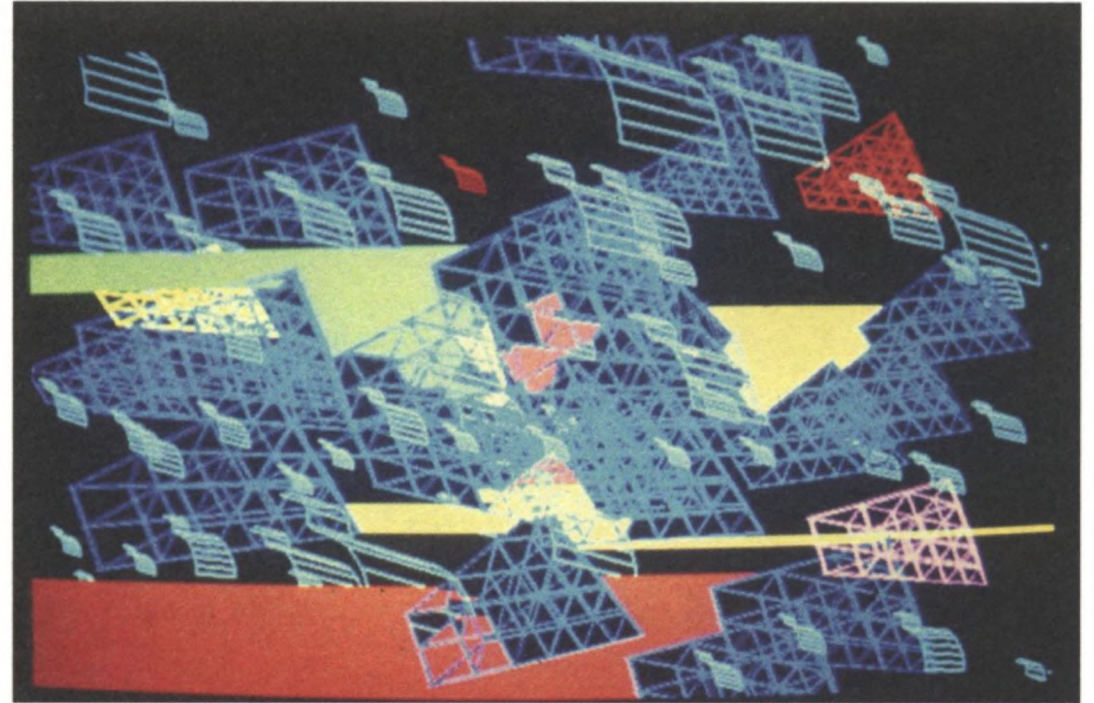
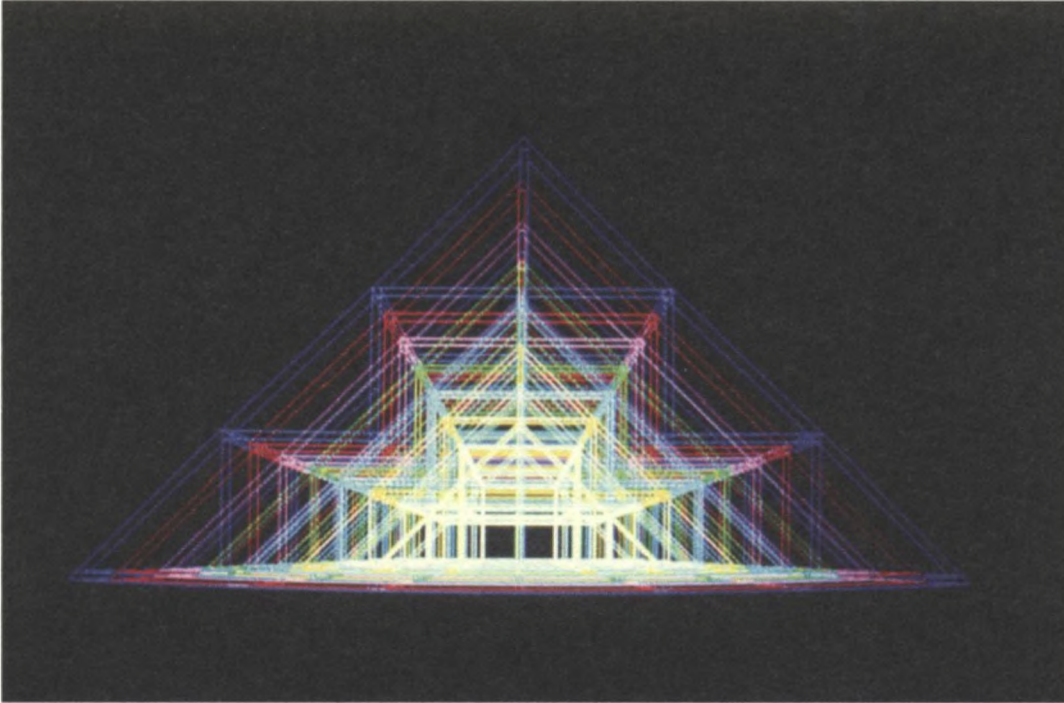
IH He made no criticism, but also gave no praise. He saw them when they were published in magazines, but never went to see them in reality.

TD *Did Koji Taki look at your projects?*

IH Yes, he often visited the lab. We had a friendly relationship. After I built House 2 at Yaizu (1977), he published an essay on my body of work up to then, with the title 'Tayōsa to Tanjunsu' (Diversity and Simplicity). He wrote that I omitted certain conventional things from my designs in order to achieve visual simplicity, but these omissions implied a multiplicity or diversity. It was the most stimulating critique I had received until then, and it guided my subsequent design approach. From the Tokumaru Children's Clinic onwards, I would try to introduce overt diversity and multidimensionality into the architecture. Isozaki would also visit the lab often, and from the two of them I learned a great deal about international architecture, and other systems of aesthetics and philosophy. I was always deeply influenced by Taki. Some people say I have been too influenced by him. Taki was a great supporter of our generation.

After I took Professor Takamasa Yoshizaka from Waseda University to visit my House in Midorigaoka, he asked me to show him more houses designed by architects from my generation. So I introduced him to Toyo Ito, who had just completed the House in Nakano Honmachi (White U, 1976) for his widowed sister. Yoshizaka asked Ito to give a lecture at the house for some of his students. Many other people came along that evening, such as Osamu Ishiyama. But rather than talking about the spatial theory behind the house, Ito explained it using the dated language of classical planning theory, as he had been doing at Kikutake's office. He talked as if it was the grave of his late brother-in-law, showing photos of the interior containing some geometric models that he had bought – cylinders and cones and cubes lit by spotlights. It was really weird. Everybody became bored and irritated, and started to walk out while he was still talking. Ito was so upset. To cheer him up, I said, 'Let's have Koji Taki look at this house and write a critique of its spatial ideas'. Taki agreed to visit the house, but said, 'I will send a message to Ito by taking





Wire-frame CAD drawings, c 1985
(House at Oyama, Work M, House 2 at Yaizu,
Bizan Hall, House at Oyama)
Courtesy Itsuko Hasegawa

photographs'. And so he lay down on the floor and took those famous photographs in which children are leaping about inside the house. Taki's photographs allowed Ito to see his own architecture in a new light.

TD *You started your own office in 1979, but in January that year SD: Space Design magazine published a special issue on Kazuo Shinohara, which included a section about a so-called 'Shinohara School' that categorised you, Toyo Ito and Kazunari Sakamoto as somehow being disciples of Shinohara. How did you feel about being placed in the Shinohara School?*

IH I think that the term Shinohara School was probably invented by Koji Taki, and was then used by some critics to describe architects who designed small houses using clear geometric forms. We weren't really a group, in the sense of describing ourselves as such, or meeting regularly and debating ideas and so on. Kazunari Sakamoto and I didn't overlap at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, because he moved to Musashino Art University after he finished his master's degree. He didn't get on well with Shinohara, and was often critical of him. After Shinohara retired, the Tokyo Institute of Technology was looking for a successor, so they hired Kazunari Sakamoto, then he invited me to help. Soon after Koji Taki had taken those photos of the House in Nakano Honmachi, Ito told me that he wanted to meet Shinohara. He knew very little about Shinohara then. So I set up an invitation for him to visit the lab. Ito brought Osamu Ishiyama with him. But rather than using the front gate of the Tokyo Institute of Technology, the two of them climbed over a concrete wall, then went into a culvert, got lost, and finally didn't ever make it to the lab. Shinohara was angry: 'What happened to our guests?!' So I invited Ito to the completion party of Shinohara's House in Uehara (1976), though I don't know if they actually met in person for the first time then, or later on.

TD *What was the trigger for starting your own office?*

IH When I received the commission for the Tokumaru Children's Clinic (1979), I thought that it was too large to be done part-time. The client was a famous pediatrician, and his accountant had told him that my fee couldn't be paid unless I had a registered office. I told Shinohara that I would stay with him for one more year, but I spent that year working on the Tokumaru project. So I stopped working for Shinohara in 1979, but officially left the university in 1980. Shinohara asked me not to leave, but accepted that I had to do so.

TD *Did you remain on good terms?*

IH At first, but our relationship gradually deteriorated as I became more successful. He supported me for a while, treating my office like an annexe to the Shinohara lab – he would be

constantly calling me on the phone, asking how I did particular construction details. In 1986, I received the Architectural Institute of Japan Prize for Bizan Hall (1984), due to Shinohara being on the jury. But soon after, I received first prize in the competition for the Shonandai Culture Centre (1990), and Shinohara called Fumihiko Maki – who had been on the jury – and said, 'She can't receive two prizes at once, so you must withdraw the Shonandai prize.' Maki himself told me that – he said, 'Your old teacher seems to be a bit crazy.' The Shonandai announcement had already appeared in newspapers and on television, so the prize couldn't be withdrawn, but from that time on I began to sense a growing jealousy on Shinohara's part. He began to avoid me. I was winning competitions and building public architecture, and it made him angry. He somehow thought it was insolent of his former assistant to surpass him.

TD *Just after you completed Bizan Hall, SD: Space Design magazine published its first special issue on your work. It contains a long interview with you titled 'Kenchiku no Feminism', which could be literally translated as 'The Feminism of Architecture' – though I think the English word 'feminism' has been adopted into Japanese to mean something more like 'chivalry', in the sense of showing special consideration towards women. The interviewer is anonymous, and the interview is only in Japanese, but it also has an English title with quite a different nuance: 'The Feminine Touch in Architecture'.*

IH That interview was done by Koji Taki. He invented the title, both the Japanese and English versions, and it angered many people, even though the content of the interview was really nothing to do with feminism. Many other architects complained in public, and even to me directly: 'What is the meaning of that title? Women making architecture?! Most women should quit architecture!' Osamu Ishiyama was particularly furious about it.

TD *Ishiyama is a famously eccentric individual, but were there others who had equally strong feelings?*

IH Ishiyama was the leader of a group of young architects from my generation who called themselves the Basara. It's a word from the medieval period that refers to dandies and libertines, or young radicals who reject tradition and authority in order to create shocking new types of art. Basara was somehow opposed to the Shinohara School. They were frightening. Unlike the Shinohara School, which was very genteel, they were very aggressive. They insisted that architecture could never be feminine, that it was always masculine. Taki was astonished by their reaction. 'What kind of people are these?', he asked me.

TD *Perhaps they didn't mean that a woman couldn't be an architect, but rather that you*

shouldn't be promoted using the rubric of feminism. Who was in the group?

IH Aside from Ishiyama, it included people like Kiko (Monta) Mozuna, Kijo Rokkaku, Toyokazu Watanabe and Kazuhiro Ishii. Strangely, Toyo Ito was part of Basara as well as the Shinohara School.

TD *I guess that's why the SD: Space Design feature on the Shinohara School described Ito as a 'failed student'.*

IH Soon after that, the Japan Institute of Architects – not the Architectural Institute of Japan – inaugurated a Rookie of the Year award. Kenzo Tange, who was then the director of the JIA, said that he wanted more women to participate. I was contacted by Nobuo Hozumi, a professor at Waseda University, to tell me that he was recommending my House in Kuwabara Matsuyama (1980) for the award. At that time, I just happened to be together with Toyo Ito and Osamu Ishiyama, and they made a big fuss, trying to get me to decline. Ishiyama said, 'I would never accept anything from the JIA establishment, endorsed by Tange. Isozaki wouldn't accept either. Any architect from our generation would decline, so you just can't accept that prize.' So finally I declined the award. But the following year, Ito joined the JIA and received the Rookie of the Year award for his House in Kasama (1981), despite having been so opposed to me doing so! The competitiveness and jealousy of male Japanese architects is incredibly powerful. It prevented me from doing many things.

TD *Do you think that there is a difference between female architects and male architects?*

IH There are certainly masculine and feminine types of architect. Masako Hayashi was very masculine, in my opinion.

TD *Having established your own office, were you able to employ women, as you had promised – or threatened – Hayashi?*

IH Eventually. At first it was difficult to employ anybody at all. I could put all my energy into the work, since I was no longer working just on weekends and holidays, but having left the lab I'd lost my university salary. And it's hard to make a living doing houses. I'd already been published quite widely, so many people came to visit, hoping to work for me, but I couldn't afford to pay them. My first staff member was male, Masaki Shitaka, a University of Tokyo graduate introduced to me by Shinohara. Shitaka came straight from school, with no work experience. He couldn't draw or make models, and he knew nothing about building sites. I don't know why Shinohara recommended him, but he later became very valuable to me. Many others arrived over the years. Kazuyo Sejima wanted to join my office after she graduated from Japan Women's University. Her professor wrote a very formal recommendation letter on her behalf. But I had recently hired

another graduate of the same university, and other staff members were complaining that she was completely incompetent. I decided not to hire anyone else from that university, and I didn't even give Sejima an interview. So she joined Ito's office. We are good friends now – she still has the rejection letter I wrote, which is so full of feigned politeness that we laugh about it.

TD *From the House at Kuwabara Matsuyama onwards, perforated metal panels became your signature motif. They allow the perception of light, air and human movement through the walls. You wrote at the time that you wanted to create spaces filled with 'grains of light'. What inspired this?*

IH I was raised near Suruga Harbour, and the sea was always sparkling with what looked like grains of light. We would often go to the seaside for picnics. Even if the air was cold, the sand would be warm, and we could swim in the sea, which was calm and glittering. I wanted to make similarly beautiful grains of light in my architecture, but I didn't know how. It couldn't be a facade pattern. It had to be real light. A traditional Japanese house brings in natural light through lattices and *shoji* screens. So rather than dealing with concrete, I wanted to create a more traditional atmosphere by bringing in light and air with new, porous materials. The only perforated metal panels I had ever seen in Japan were screens behind bus drivers, which had a floral pattern of holes. The client for the House at Kuwabara Matsuyama happened to own a company that made metal components. I asked if they could make aluminium panels perforated with circular holes. He said of course, they would make anything I wanted. But aluminium was not much used in architecture, and had never been used for exterior walls. So I got them to make all kinds of samples. I asked for about 35 different types. I wasn't just testing the size and shape and density of the holes, but also their layout – for example, some were arrayed at 45 degrees, some at 60 degrees. I laid them all out on an exterior stair at my office, and watched the effects of light and shadow across the day. As the sun moved, grains of light from the 60-degree layout became increasingly oval-shaped, while the 45-degree ones stayed circular and just got smaller. So I thought that I could achieve the effect I wanted only with a 60-degree layout. The House at Kuwabara Matsuyama is covered with aluminium panels that reflect the changing colours of the sky. One wall is made of sliding panels of perforated aluminium, but when they are all closed, they appear to be a single, seamless panel. Shitaka calculated the precise locations of the holes to achieve that effect. He loves doing calculations. I hate it. After I completed the B Y House (1985), many other architects, such as Kisho Kurokawa, sent their staff to study the details of the sloping facade

of perforated panels, using tracing paper to copy the pattern directly. Back then, perforated metal wasn't mass-produced. Now you can just choose from a catalogue. Architecture should not have solid surfaces. I wanted to use high technology to create something that seemed natural. With computers I am now able to achieve a kind of fluctuation, like a living thing.

TD *Several other architects, notably Toyo Ito, started using perforated metal panels around the same time as you. Did you influence each other?*

IH Yes, I think so. We were all experimenting with materials. I also started using ASLOC extruded cement panels, which had been invented by a friend of my brother. The panels are very strong, but also contain an air cavity, so they act as insulation. They were mainly being used to build shelters for pigs. I was asked to design a building using them for a site in Yaizu, near the train station, but that was when I was still with Shinohara, so I didn't do it. When Ito saw the panels he told me that he wanted to use them, so I introduced him to the inventor.

TD *Your big break was the Shonandai Culture Centre, which made you an international star. The competition was held at the historical moment that the Japanese asset price bubble began, but it also ushered in a whole new approach to public architecture in Japan. Until then, such competitions had invariably been won by large, established offices with relatively conservative design proposals. All the finalists for Shonandai were very radical, possibly due to the presence of Arata Isozaki and Fumihiko Maki on the jury. Many of the entries also attempted to bury the architecture, to diminish the usual grandeur of a public building.*

IH I was surprised by the similarities in thinking between my entry and people like Toyo Ito and Kazunari Sakamoto. We all tried to make the architecture into a landscape. When I'd visited the area, I'd met an elderly woman who told me that when she was a child the site was a hill where she gathered mugwort. My first sketch was of a hill with the architecture buried inside. My staff told me that it would never win, because public architecture needs a grand facade. So during the design process, I gradually raised the building above the ground. The final proposal had about 70 per cent of the volume buried. That was the first time I had entered a competition, and I was sure I had no chance of being selected. I was about to leave for a lecture in Los Angeles when I got a call from Kiyoshi Seike, head of the jury, asking me to come in for a second-stage interview. I was sure it would be a waste of time – I was bound to lose, and thought I would rather go to Los Angeles. Nonetheless, everybody insisted that I went to the interview, so I cancelled the lecture and lost the price of the air ticket. But I won the competition.

Shonandai is often called a bubble-era building, but that's not right. It was built with

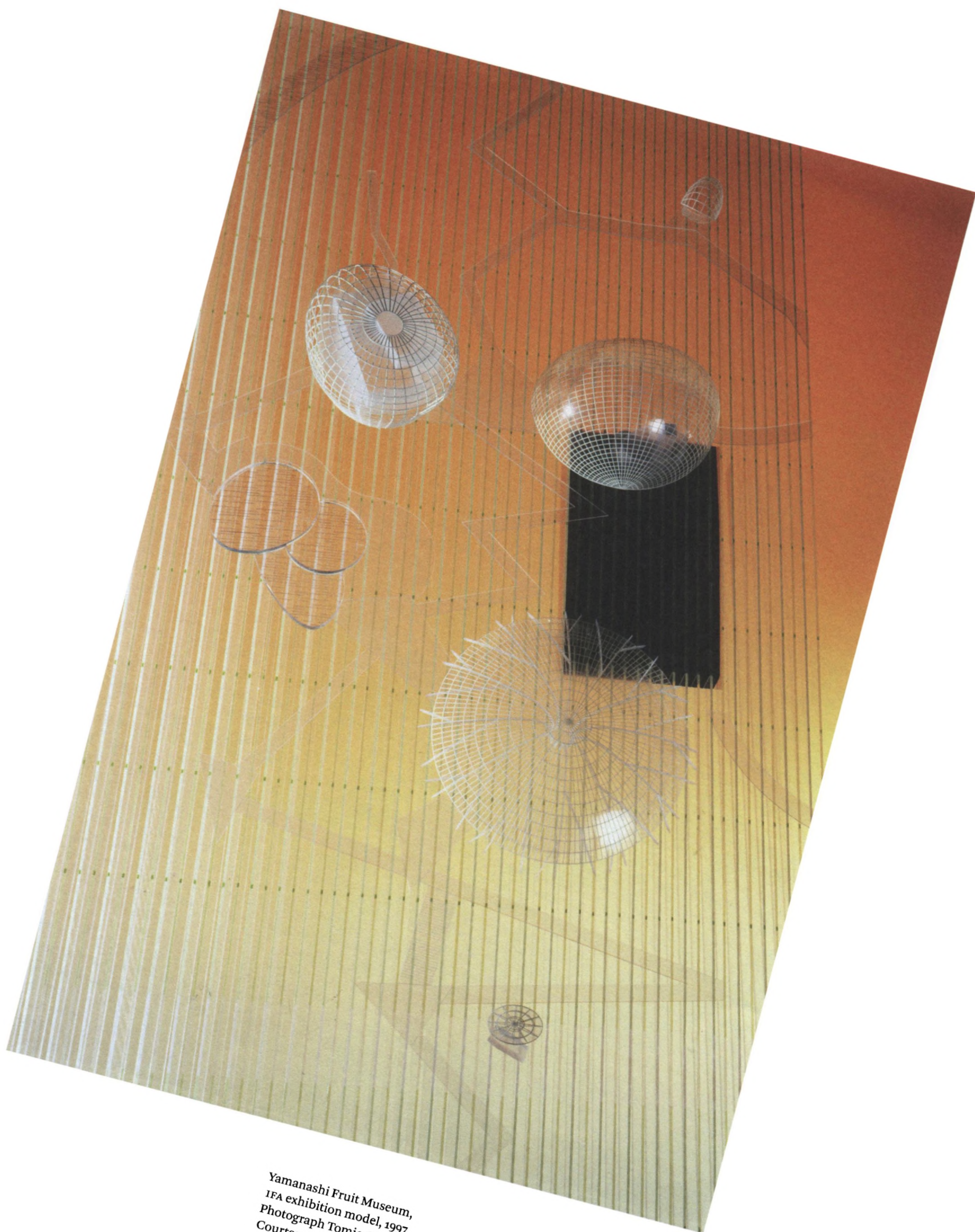
money that the local metropolitan government city had already saved. The first stage of construction was completed before the bubble. During the second stage of construction, the bubble began, construction costs soared, and the budget became very difficult. In Japan, bubble architecture is constantly treated as if it were equivalent to the postmodern movement. However, postmodernism possessed a critical awareness of many issues, such as European historicism, regionalism and citizen participation. The differing context of consumer-oriented commercial architecture of the bubble must not be overlooked.

TD *Your success with Shonandai made it possible for younger, experimental practices to feel they had a chance at major competitions. And indeed they started to win, to the extent that during the bubble years every new public building in Japan seemed to be attempting to outdo its predecessors in terms of sheer architectural innovation. What was the reaction to Shonandai at the time?*

IH People who expected a symbolic and magnificent work of architecture were outraged. Public architecture was supposed to be a political symbol, and I was accused of breaking that model. I was criticised for enabling public participation, as if I was pandering to the lowest level. The emphasis on participation is now normal, but then it was unprecedented. Once it was finished, the mayor described it as a facility that mingled architecture, people and nature. Kiyoshi Seike also complimented it, but others who had been on the jury were negative. Ito was annoyed at me because he had been certain he would win. One famous critic said that it was indeed a *harappa*: an empty field, with streams and artificial trees, full of people, but no architecture.

TD *You often describe your architecture with the terms harappa (empty field) and garandō (open void). I assume you mean spaces without defined function, for people to use freely. Does this relate to Shinohara's idiosyncratic notions of 'functional space' and 'wasted space'?*

IH I partly inherited his ideas about traditional architecture. But I am trying to make spaces that are more casual and lively. Whereas Shinohara wanted to make a symbolic space, something like a church, I want to make something more like a bazaar. I use *garandō* to describe private houses and *harappa* to describe public buildings. We need free spaces for human interactions at every scale. I don't want to feel restricted by functionalism, to have to divide up a building into many small spaces, each with a specific purpose. It is the large empty spaces that allow a building to remain useful in the future. Of course, I also design in response to the opinions and desires of the end users. But I don't simply follow their opinions, I also think about the region and its future. My approach has been heavily criticised in Japan,



Yamanashi Fruit Museum,
IFA exhibition model, 1997
Photograph Tomio Ohashi
Courtesy Itsuko Hasegawa

but regarded highly in France, America and especially England. Peter Cook and Rem Koolhaas were very supportive.

TD *When did you first start to meet members of the international avant-garde?*

IH I first met Peter Cook in the mid-1980s, during his first visit to Japan, at a party held by Isozaki. Peter did a kabuki-style greeting at the party, and everybody roared with laughter. Later he invited me to the Bartlett, and I taught there for about one month. While I was in London I was also asked to give a lecture at the Architectural Association. That afternoon, I met Alvin Boyarsky, and he called Peter Cook to join us, and then the three of us drank far too much. By the time I gave the lecture, I could barely read my English notes. Afterwards Boyarsky invited many of his friends and acquaintances to a party. I was surprised to see so many famous people. A lot of great people were at the Architectural Association then, such as Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi. Possibly that was the very first time I met Rem. Tschumi quickly became a close friend. All the members of Archigram were there. Nigel Coates called me, wanting to get in, but he was turned away at the door. The next day, Peter Cook took me on a tour of London. We walked along the Thames, toured Kew Gardens, and visited some unique English pubs. I'll never forget how much fun we had. When the first stage of construction of Shonandai was over, I received many invitations to lecture in Europe. In 1987 I spent about a month giving lectures in Europe, beginning in London at the Architectural Association, then on to Oslo, Helsinki, Copenhagen and Frankfurt. Also I was invited to enter many competitions in foreign countries. I won first prize in the Cardiff Opera House competition, before the project was awarded to Zaha Hadid – and, of course, it was taken away from her as well. I think I first met Zaha in 1992, when I was invited to judge an RIBA International Student Competition. That same year I was invited to the Harvard GSD as a visiting professor. My class was next door to Rem's class. In 2001 I received an honorary degree from University College London for which my entire office was invited to the ceremony and party – it was held in the front courtyard of the Chadwick Building, I think. I remember that Zaha Hadid and Norman Foster were there. But I was surprised when I learned the reason for the honour – it was related more to my method than to the resulting architecture. Under the old European class system, architects were seen as part of the aristocracy, so a design methodology that included listening to the end-users was very unusual. It later became common in Japan, but only after many struggles. It was very surprising, but after winning Shonandai, I consistently won first prize in every competition I entered for many years. Other architects

often got angry about it, though after Shonandai the competition system in Japan changed. From then on, most public buildings were won through open competitions, and everybody says that was caused by me.

TD *At least from Shonandai onwards, you have often used the term 'second nature' with regard to your work. Where did the idea come from?*

IH I was using the concept much earlier, but it really became important for Shonandai. I didn't mention it in the competition proposal, but I started using it in discussions with the local citizens during the design development phase. Kikutake had used the term 'second nature' in his 1969 book *Taishiya Kenchikuron: Ka Kata Katachi* (Metabolist Architecture Theory: Force, Gesture, Shape), and Shinohara talked about 'new nature', but my approach is different. By 'second nature', I mean that the involvement of people over time can enhance natural beauty and produce a pleasant environment, like *satoyama* – the environment around traditional Japanese villages that is created by generations of subtle human intervention. People are a part of nature, but it is now impossible to include untouched nature in architecture and cities, so I am always thinking about how to manipulate new materials and technologies to create sensations resembling nature.

TD *Technology has always been prominent in your work. You must have been one of the first architecture offices in Japan to use computers – the 1985 issue of SD: Space Design devoted to you has nothing but coloured wire-frame computer drawings on its cover. That was unprecedented, I think. Before then, SD covers invariably featured photographs of buildings, with the occasional hand drawing or silkscreen print. Almost no one was using computers in architecture, and certainly not for presenting their work. Were you also using computers as part of the design process?*

IH I think we were the first architecture office in Japan to start using computers, but those early wire-frame computer drawings weren't for any particular purpose. A friend from the Tokyo Institute of Technology taught me how to draw them. I found it interesting and enjoyable, so I started doing them all the time. Back then, personal computers were mainly being used as game consoles. By the early 1990s most Japanese architecture offices had shifted to a mixture of hand drawings and computer drawings, but only my office was equipped with one computer per person. In 1992 or 1993 I remember giving a lecture in the Netherlands – Rem and others were in the audience – and when I showed some 3D computer images everybody got really upset, saying computers should not be used for designing architecture. Some of the larger projects use geometrical forms that only

became possible because of computers, such as the distorted ovoid volumes of the Yamanashi Fruit Museum (1995). Soon after winning the competition, I was invited to give lectures in Harvard and London, where I showed some images of the design. I was approached by Cecil Balmond of Arup, who offered to do the structural analysis. We had meetings in Boston, London and Japan. I told them I wanted to make the real building just like the competition model – woven steel members without any joint elements. I suggested that we use welded joints, like in shipbuilding, but they said it was impossible. So we consulted Mitsui Engineering and Shipbuilding in Yokohama, who told us it was possible. Arup was amazed that such huge curvilinear volumes could be built with welded joints. We also used computers to optimise costs and energy usage, and those techniques were further developed for the Niigata Performing Arts Centre (1998). All the entries for that competition used ink drawings, except mine, which used computer printouts containing a mixture of analogue and digital.

TD *Did your 'archipelago' planning concept emerge from the Niigata design?*

IH I first used the term 'archipelago' for Niigata, but looking back I think the idea of breaking a building into several elements, rather than one big mass, began with Shonandai. Architecture comprising a collection of small islands coexisting with the abundant air between them; that is what I call the archipelago system. At Shonandai most of the volume was underground, with various elements – the globe, the village of triangles – placed upon the *harappa* above. The Oshima-Machi Picture Book Museum (1994) used connecting ramps and bridges in various places. At the Sumida Culture Factory (1994) the architecture was divided into three parts according to the three main functions, then each part connected with bridges, and finally the whole volume wrapped with perforated metal panels. At Yamanashi Fruit Museum, the independent glass domes are linked by gardens, bridges, outdoor pathways and underground galleries. Bridges are visualisations of human movement, and my hope is they give rise to various encounters and collaborations.

For the Niigata Performing Arts Centre, I wanted to design the overall landscape, breaking the building down into independent islands connected by bridges. The whole site was turned into a performance garden. The project took seven years from start to finish, and as it developed I held many workshops with local people and specialists. I turned the three main functions – concert hall, theatre, Noh stage – into oval volumes 'packaged' in double-skin glass facades. The main lobby was treated as a glazed courtyard. Niigata is a cold region, so some mechanical equipment was necessary

there, but overall we were able to cut energy usage by about 30 per cent. I wanted to control light and heat using perforated metal panels. There are two layers of perforated aluminium within the double-skin glass facades, and they can move up and down independently, thereby adjusting the aperture ratio and controlling the amount of sunlight that enters. We installed German-made sensors to register the outside temperatures and light incidence angles, and these are connected to computers that calibrate the height of the panels and the aperture ratio. I insisted that these move very slowly, like yacht sails being raised or lowered by hand. It is actually quite low-tech, but the computers allowed us to calculate the running costs. It saved a lot of money that could then be used elsewhere in the project.

TD *I think Niigata is one of your most significant projects, but the design was publicly criticised by Hajime Yatsuka. He accused you of copying the oval shapes from OMA's Congrexpo in Lille (1994).*

IH The roof forms I used at Niigata may have resembled that OMA project, but the arrangement of the programme was quite different. Rem later said that he was completely unconcerned. Anyway, I have always liked ovals. They appear naturally when I draw because I am always making islands. At the time of the Niigata competition, there was a boom in the use of ovals among many Japanese architects. Isozaki and Sejima were also using a lot of ovals and circles back then. They were nothing out of the ordinary. So, on the contrary, it may have been Rem imitating Japanese architects.

TD *Perhaps you were attacked because you were winning so many competitions.*

IH Hajime Yatsuka was one of the finalists in the Shonandai competition, but I won first prize. The same thing happened with Niigata, so possibly that made him mad. Yatsuka is an old friend, and we have since reconciled, but losing a competition is a painful experience. That is why Isozaki and Shinohara fell out. Isozaki often visited Shinohara lab. He would bring bottles of wine to drink with Shinohara while they chatted. That all stopped after the Yokohama Port Terminal competition in 1995. Isozaki was on the jury, and he published some negative comments about Shinohara's entry, saying that he rejected it because it had the symbolic form of a Japanese sword. So Shinohara lost to the young team of Alejandro Zaera-Polo and Farshid Moussavi, who had just

left OMA. At that time Shinohara had been devoting all his energy to the Euralille hotel project, commissioned by Rem, and was very disappointed when it was cancelled. Shinohara furiously accused Isozaki of distorting the Yokohama competition results. They had an intense debate in the pages of *Nikkei Architecture* magazine, but they never spoke again. Soon after the competition, there was a launch party for that huge monograph on Shinohara published by TOTO. Isozaki attended, but he found it unbearable and slipped away before it finished. Isozaki also started to avoid me, because I was seen as part of the Shinohara School. Isozaki always played an active part as a 'producer' in the Japanese architectural world, selecting and bringing together other architects for projects such as Kumamoto Artpolis and Nexus World Housing (1992), which included several foreign architects – Rem, Christian de Portzamparc, Steven Holl. He also produced Gifu Kitagata Housing (1998), for which only women architects were invited – Kazuyo Sejima, Christine Hawley, Liz Diller and so on – but in fact, Kitagata Housing was originally my project, commissioned by Gifu Prefectural Governor Taku Kajiwara. I spent about ten years organising conferences and competitions for women architects, and during that time I assembled that team. But one day Isozaki called me and said, 'I think it will be difficult for a woman to coordinate a collaborative project for women architects, so let's do the project together.' I don't really understand what happened, but before I or the governor knew it, Isozaki had taken charge of Kitagata Housing and I was dropped from the project. Governor Kajiwara was very angry about it. I think that Isozaki began to give me a wide berth after that. He had close relationships with European architects as well as Japanese architects, and also played a great role in promoting Japanese architects abroad. So because he was in charge of selecting the Japanese participants for the Venice Biennale, I didn't go as a representative of Japan, but as an international exhibitor invited directly by Hans Hollein.

TD *With the increasing number of female architects in Japan, can we possibly identify a 'Hasegawa School'?*

IH Some of my former staff members have become quite successful. Tomoko Taguchi is doing good work, and also very involved with the JIA. Takehiko Higa and Yasuko Kawaharada formed a practice called kw+hg architects, and

they have won many public competitions, such as Musashino Place library (2011), which received an AIJ award this year. Taiji Fujimori did a lot of furniture design while he worked for me, and now has an award-winning product design office. Naoko Tarao did a clever renovation of a high school in Nagoya, as well as some good houses and renovations of pre-war buildings. She is now one of the directors of the Tokyo Society of Architects and Building Engineers. Souhei Imamura is very active teaching and writing. Ever since I founded my office, I have had an unbroken series of teaching positions at various universities in Japan. The female students are really excellent. There are some social pressures that prevent women from becoming architects, but I feel that things are improving.

TD *Do you regard yourself as a woman architect, or simply an architect?*

IH Either is fine. I have no strong opinion on that topic. When I first started to think seriously about architecture, during my last two years of study at university, I was suddenly overwhelmed by doubt. I felt like a failure because I was insufficiently rigorous and logical in my approach. I used to think that I would always feel that way, as long as I practised architecture, but I began to realise that my sense of failure was due to my misgivings about architecture based on a 'male principle' and my inability to adapt myself accordingly. The more I was criticised for not being sufficiently engineering-minded, the more I began to consider what a feminine architecture, or a feminine architectural discourse, might be like. In retrospect, I was searching for an alternative 'female principle'. In the architectural world objective, public architecture occupies the centre, but my interests lay in the subjective, private architecture on the periphery. I recently completed a large project in Shanghai (Caohejing Block 3, 2014), which I won in a competition. We started by creating a complex pattern in sheets of perforated aluminium. I visited a textile art museum that displayed all kinds of Chinese lace, used in coats for women, which inspired the design of the perforations. When I made a presentation to the client representative he was delighted and said, 'At last we can do a womanly building. It is normal for both men and women to work here in China, and this is exactly the kind of building that we need.' So as society changes, perhaps such distinctions will disappear.