

**A|N BLOG**QUICK HITS AND BIG THOUGHTS FROM THE **ARCHITECT'S** NEWSPAPER**In Chicago, Toyo Ito Reflects on 3.11 Earthquake**

By Chris Bentley

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HOME-FOR-ALL IN RIKUZENTAKATA. (NAOYA HATAKEYAMA / COURTESY TOYO ITO &amp; ASSOCIATES)

Japanese architect and 2013 Pritzker Laureate Toyo Ito visited the Art Institute of Chicago Tuesday, reflecting during two public lectures on how the 2011 earthquake and tsunami that devastated his homeland changed his approach to design.

At 72 years old, the accomplished architect might be expected to rest on his laurels. But Ito said his entire approach began to change during the 1990s. "I used to pursue architecture that is beautiful, aligned with modernism," he said through an interpreter during a talk with Korean artists Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joonho; Yusaku Imamura, director of Tokyo Wonder Site; and artist Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle. Instead, he said, he began to ask what elements of a building make it livable.



ITO'S SENDAI MEDIATHEQUE.

On March 11, 2011, the most powerful earthquake ever to hit Japan killed more than 15,000 people and destroyed hundreds of thousands of buildings. Like many Japanese architects, Ito wanted to help. From a series of discussions with quake victims rendered homeless, Ito's firm developed their "Home-for-All" project.

Tuesday evening Ito delivered the Art Institute's Butler-VanderLinden Lecture, titled "Architecture after 3.11". He described how government recovery plans failed to inspire or comfort those they were supposed to assist. They were too compartmentalized, isolating, and ignorant of the "dreams and visions" of their users, Ito said. One home Ito's group built for 3.11 victims salvaged giant kessen cedars, devastated by the tsunami, for construction material — "a sign we're rebuilding," he said.

Ito said he's often asked how to bridge the gap between this post-disaster work and his typical practice. His reply: "Build architecture that is open to nature and harmonizes with people."



"EL FIN DEL MUNDO," PICTURED, AND ITS SEQUEL "AVYAKTA" ARE TWO HD FILMS THAT BOOKEND THE EXHIBIT BY KOREAN ARTISTS MOON KYUNGWON AND JEON JOONHO. (SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO / MOON KYUNGWON AND JEON JOONHO)

Ito's visit also included a tour of "News from Nowhere," the first U.S. presentation of the work by Korean artists Moon Kyungwon and Jeon Joonho.

Moon and Jeon meditate on a post-apocalyptic society composed of nation-corporations that control the technology necessary to sustain life after a 22<sup>nd</sup> century global catastrophe. That equipment is displayed throughout, along with a pair of lyrical videos that sketch the story of two survivors. The exhibition also features elements of Ito's "Home-for-All" project alongside work from fashion designers Kuho Jung and Kosuke Tsumura; mime Yu Jin Gyu; and design firms MVRDV and takram design engineering.

The exhibit is on display at the Sullivan Galleries — 33 S. State St., 7th floor — through December 21.

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