

Higashikawa, the Town of Photography

First Annual “Kengo Kuma & Higashikawa” KAGU Design Competition

- Introduction

We are entering a time in which the value and potential of rural areas are being reconsidered. Higashikawa, the "Town of Photography," and "Cultural Capital of Photography," is a beautiful town in Hokkaido, Japan. Located in a beautiful rural setting, surrounded by the Daisetsuzan mountains, it is also blessed with pure groundwater. With the aim of communicating the richness of life through architecture and furniture, the town has decided to start a new initiative in collaboration with architect Kengo Kuma, who has a strong interest in the use of architecture and design in rural settings.

Higashikawa, with its small size and thriving furniture production industry, has long implemented programs that would only be possible here: It starts with the “Your Chair” project, which gives the children a sense of safety and belonging from a young age. In Elementary School, the children learn while surrounded by wooden furniture. When they graduate Junior High School, as a graduation present, they take home their wooden chairs that they have used and cared for three years. It is now time to start a new project and train the young people who will be the leaders of the next generation.

As the world endures the new Coronavirus crisis, the problems with our overcrowded metropolitan lifestyles have become clearer, and a search for a new lifestyle has begun. The resources and possibilities in each region are beginning to provide inklings of ideas for the development of this new lifestyle. Architect Kengo Kuma has joined us in supporting our town and our region. He is an early advocate of promoting the appeal of regional communities through architecture, with a strong interest in expanding the use of local resources and educating the next generation of young people. In a sense, Kengo Kuma, who is working on regional revitalization through the world of architecture, and Higashikawa, a sparsely populated town blessed with a rich environment and a thriving furniture industry, are working together to propose a new way of life.

It is our great hope that many people will join this initiative and enrich the hearts and lives of people around the world. The competition will begin in 2021, the memorable year of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

- Purpose:

The town of Higashikawa is a major producer of Asahikawa furniture. We are calling for designs that embody KAGU, a new, mindful way of life for the young people who will shoulder the responsibilities of the future.

KAGU is an extension of the conventional concept of furniture that aims to connect people to the world. We use a variety of objects in our daily lives, but it is difficult to see the context in which they are made and used.

We realized that in the current way of life, we handle objects without care and treat them poorly, all in the name of saving time and effort; people rush to get results, and don't take the time to think deeply about the items they are using. This can have many harmful effects.

Our hope is that the upcoming KAGU design competition will provide an opportunity for your ideas, which have a lot of potential, to take shape and be used for a long time, so that a path towards mindful living can be realized little by little.

- Theme: Wooden chairs
 - ※ The main material of the chair must be wood.
 - ※ The work must be previously unpublished. However, in the case of class work or graduation displays, the design will be considered as unpublished.
- Eligibility: Students enrolled in various educational institutions in Japan and abroad who are 30 years of age or younger as of March 31, 2021 are eligible to participate.
 - ※ In the case of group applications, all members of the group must meet the requirements.
 - ※ Each individual may only participate in one group.
- Number of entries: one per applicant or one per group.
- Registration fee: none
- Format: All submissions should be digital, and sent to: design@kagu-higashikawa.jp
 - The application form can be found and downloaded on the “Kengo Kuma & Higashikawa” KAGU Design Competition homepage:
<https://www.kagu-higashikawa.jp/english/>
 - Entry:
 - ※ The title, main idea of the design, explanation of the work, as well as a sketch, drawing, CG model, or model photo of the work should fit onto a single A3-size sheet (single-sided, landscape layout). The minimum font size is 10 points.
 - ※ The registration number received during the pre-registration process should be indicated in the lower right-hand corner of the work in 72-point size.
 - ※ Only English or Japanese may be used.
 - ※ The work should not include any expressions, symbols, or characters that may identify the entrant.
 - ※ The final submission should be an A3 PDF file.
 - ※ The file size must be 3MB or less.
- Inquiries:
 - To make an inquiry, please send your name and contact information to official@kagu-higashikawa.jp. The organizer will contact you as soon as possible.
- Pre-registration:
 - Please register through the “Kengo Kuma & Higashikawa” KAGU Design Competition homepage. Once we receive the form, we will issue a registration number and send it to the contact information provided by the applicant.
 - The deadline for pre-registration is February 27th, 2021 at 12PM (noon) Japan Standard Time.
- Submission period:
 - Entries should be submitted between March 25th, 2021 and March 31st, 2021 at 12PM (noon) Japan Standard Time.

- Judging:
 - The selection will be narrowed to 10 works by the judges.
 - The 10 designs will be announced on the Higashikawa official website, as well as by individual correspondence in mid-May 2021.
 - The selected applicants will be asked to create a 1/5-scale model of their design and present it. (Any materials may be used in the model; please note that models will not be returned)
 - The final judging process (and prize allocation) will consist of a public presentation in Higashikawa, after which the judges will deliberate (*1). The full process is described on the website. (*1 It is possible that some of the judges will participate remotely)
 - The award ceremony will be held immediately after the judges come to a decision, so applicants must be able to come to Higashikawa on the date of the judging and award ceremony.

- Final judging and award ceremony date: Saturday June 26th, 2021. The planned location is Higashikawa, Hokkaido, Japan.

- Awards and prizes:
 - Kengo Kuma Award (Grand prize, 1 entry): 500,000 yen
 - Excellence Award (3 entries): 100,000 yen
 - Honorable mentions (6 entries)

※ The ten winners will be asked to attend the final judging and awards ceremony. In addition, they will be provided with accommodations during their stay in the town, and the transportation fee to and from their place of residence.

※ Prize-winning works may be commercialized. Details of commercialization will be discussed separately with the prizewinners. The organizer reserves the right of first refusal in case of commercialization.

- Judges:
 - Chairman: Kengo Kuma (Architect, Professor at the University of Tokyo)
 - Judges:
 - ◇ Toshiko Mori (Architect, Professor at Harvard Graduate School of Design)
 - ◇ Masahiro Harada (Architect, Associate Professor at Shibaura Institute of Technology)
 - ◇ Teppei Fujiwara (Architect, Associate Professor at Yokohama National University)
 - ◇ Katsuhiko Hibino (Artist, Professor at Tokyo University of the Arts)
 - ◇ Asao Tokolo (Artist)
 - ◇ Noritsugu Oda (Chair Researcher and Design Advisor to the town of Higashikawa)
 - ◇ Hiroshi Nakamura (Architect, NAP Architectural Design Office)
 - ◇ Eisuke Tachikawa (Design Strategist, Evolutionary Thinker, Representative of NOSIGNER)

- Legal matters:
 - All copyright and design rights to the submitted works belong to the applicant(s).
 - If your work is commercialized, we will discuss legal matters with you separately.
 - The organizer will reserve the rights to display the work, to post it on printed matter, and to use it for publicity online and in magazines.

- Organizer:
 - “Kengo Kuma & Higashikawa” KAGU Design Competition Executive Committee
 - ◇ Composed of: The Town of Higashikawa, Higashikawa Chamber of Commerce, Higashikawa Tourism Association, Higashikawa Agricultural Cooperative, Higashikawa Construction Association, Higashikawa Forestry Association, Higashikawa Promotion Corporation, Asahikawa Furniture Cooperative, Higashikawa Town Council, and the Higashikawa Board of Education
 - ◇ Sponsorships: under development
 - ◇ In cooperation with: under development

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