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| **Kurokawa, Kishō (黒川紀章) (1934–2007)** |
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| Kishō Kurokawa was born in 1934 in Kanie, Aichi prefecture, Japan, and studied architecture at Kyoto University, obtaining his bachelor’s degree in 1957. Further studies at the University of Tokyo under Kenzō Tange, graduating with a master’s from its Graduate School of Architecture in 1959, were followed by doctoral studies at the same institution until 1964. Kurokawa was a key proponent of Metabolism, the Japanese architectural movement that utilised biology as a metaphoric vehicle to reconfigure the cityscape and architectural practice, which came to attention at the World Design Conference 1960 in Tokyo.  File: Kurokawa\_Nakagin\_Capsule\_Tower.jpg  Figure 1: Kishō Kurokawa in front of Nakagin Capsule Tower, Tokyo (1972). Photo: Tomio Ohashi. Courtesy of KKAA, Tokyo.  Founding his own practice called Kishō Kurokawa Architect & Associates (KKAA) in Tokyo in 1962, Kurokawa’s projects during the 1960s and 1970s were mainly located across Japan. They included the Resort Center Yamagata Hawaii Dreamland (1967) and the Nakagin Capsule Tower in Tokyo (1972), the latter being a key example of Metabolism. The late 1970s saw Kurokawa pursuing engagements overseas, while the 1980s onwards consolidated such activity abroad, including projects such as the Japanese-German Center of Berlin (1988), Melbourne Central (1991), a new exhibition wing at the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (1998), and Astana International Airport, Kazakhstan (2005). Kurokawa received numerous awards, including the Académie d’Architecture Gold Medal, France (1986), Richard Neutra Award, USA (1988), AIA Pacific Rim Award, USA (1997), Dedalo-Minosse International Prize, Malaysia (2003-2004), Walpole Medal of Excellence, UK (2005), and an International Architecture Award, USA (2006). Honorary doctorates were bestowed on Kurokawa by Sofia University, Bulgaria (1988), Newport Asia Pacific University (now Anaheim University), USA (1990), Albert Einstein International Academy Foundation, USA (1990), and the Universiti Putri Malaysia (2002). Kurokawa died of heart failure in 2007.  File: Kurokawa\_Van\_Gogh\_Museum.jpg  Figure 2: Kishō Kurokawa, New Wing, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (1998). Photo: Sels Clerbout. Courtesy of KKAA, Tokyo.  The World Design Conference 1960 in Tokyo saw Kurokawa, then in his twenties, collaborating with his Japanese peers and key foreign counterparts. His participation as a presenter propelled him into the spotlight. A number of Japanese architectural figures from Kenzō Tange’s orbit — namely, Kiyonori Kikutake, Masato Otaka, Fumihiko Maki, Noboru Kawazoe, and Kurokawa — jointly published their individual essays as a manifesto and disseminated it at the event. Entitled *Metabolism: The Proposals for New Urbanism*, it included Kurokawa’s essay ‘Space City’ and posited what they saw as a need for an updated approach to architecture and urban planning – one where the built environment effectively renews itself, as living organisms do, in response to an ever-changing context through modular, extendable, and replaceable components. Kurokawa was closely involved with Metabolism from its inception until its heyday, which is generally regarded as having occurred with Expo ’70 in Osaka. The Expo included Kurokawa’s Toshiba IHI Pavilion, Theme Pavilion, and Takara Beautilion.  File: Kurokawa\_Toshiba\_IHI\_Pavilion.jpg  Figure 3: Kishō Kurokawa, Toshiba IHI Pavilion, Expo '70, Osaka, Japan (1970). Photo: Tomio Ohashi. Courtesy of KKAA, Tokyo.  While Kurokawa’s adoption of the architectural palette of concrete, steel, and glass may imply a rejection of tradition — particularly Japanese architectural tradition, with its long history of wooden structures — Kurokawa’s work has been shown to extend such tradition and aesthetic in certain respects. Subjected to repeated earthquake and seismic activity, typhoons, tsunamis, extreme seasonal variation, and wartime destruction, Japan’s architectural evolution, being characterised by renewal and replacement, imprinted itself upon Kurokawa’s modus operandi and was carried into a new context. With materials like wood characteristically appearing unadorned in traditional Japanese contexts, fostering an expression of unmediated integrity, so too were the latter-day materials typically left exposed and in their raw state. With these concepts of ‘impermanence’ and ‘materiality’, related themes upon which Kurokawa elaborated at length included ‘receptivity’, ‘detail,’ and ‘sustainability’.  Kurokawa’s evolving interest in symbiosis in the 1980s — with its focus on the integration of differences and beneficial outcomes — became increasingly reflected in his architectural work and in writings such as *Each One a Hero: The Philosophy of Symbiosis* (1997). His completion of the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (1998), which required an edifice reflecting both the local and the global, was achieved through a synthesis of traditional Islamic and internationally modern features and aided by the inclusion of a rainforest garden to harness a sense of place.  File: Kurokawa\_Kuala\_Lumpur\_International\_airport.jpg  Figure 4: Kishō, Kurokawa, Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia (1998). Photo: Tomio Ohashi. Courtesy of KKAA, Tokyo.  The National Art Center, Tokyo (NACT) (2006), located between the city's Aoyama Cemetery and busy Roppongi district, hosts both curated exhibitions and those of the various Japanese art associations across its many cavernous spaces. Being an exhibiting rather than collecting institution had implications for NACT's design. The lucid articulation of space – the expansive, lung-like atrium mediating between the venue’s galleries and exterior – is achieved largely through the rhythmic undulations of its all-encompassing, south-facing glass facade, lending the structure its particular respiratory demeanour while simultaneously exemplifying Kurokawa’s ideas on symbiosis.  File: Kurokawa\_National\_Art\_Center\_Tokyo.jpg  Figure 5: Kishō Kurokawa, National Art Center, Tokyo (2006). Photo: Koji Kobayashi / SPIRAL. Courtesy of KKAA, Tokyo.  File: Kurokawa\_National\_Art\_Center\_Tokyo\_2.jpg  Figure 6: Kishō Kurokawa, National Art Center, Tokyo (2006). Photo: Neilton Clarke.  As a forward-thinking and young architect whose presence began blossoming in the 1960s, Kurokawa is credited with having helped put twentieth-century Japanese architecture on the map. Utilising the growth of mass media in the post-war period as an advantage, he was a visible presence in newspapers, magazines, and on TV at that time. From 1974 on Kurokawa began appearing as a regular commentator for NHK, Japan’s national broadcasting network, strengthening his own profile while acting importantly as an ambassador for architecture in a context where post-war renewal, regeneration, and development were still central concerns. Kurokawa’s multifarious activity over the course of his career encompassed the promotion of sustainable, eco-friendly architectural practices, evolving to a point where he became highly vocal about environmental matters in later years. While not elected when running as both a Tokyo gubernatorial candidate and Japanese Upper House candidate in 2007, Kurokawa initiated Kyousei Shintō (The Symbiosis New Party), which held protectionist issues central to its platform. As he was a stakeholder and senior advisory board member of Anaheim University since 1998, the California-based institution established its Kishō Kurokawa Green Institute in Kurokawa’s honour in 2008.  File: Kurokawa\_Oita\_Stadium.jpg  Figure 7: Kishō Kurokawa, Oita Stadium, Oita, Japan (2001). Photo: Koji Kobayashi / SPIRAL. Courtesy of KKAA, Tokyo. Other Selected Architectural Works Zhengdon New Town, Zhengzhou City, China (ongoing)  Nagasaki Prefectural Archaeological Center, Japan (2009)  Oita Stadium, Oita, Japan (2001)  Toyota City Stadium, Aichi, Japan (2001)  Osaka International Convention Center, Japan (2000)  Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia (1998)  Nara City Museum of Photography, Japan (1991)  Chinese-Japanese Youth Center, Beijing, China (1990)  Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan (1989)  National Bunraku Theatre, Osaka, Japan (1983)  National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan (1977)  File: Kurokawa\_Hiroshima\_City\_Museum\_of\_Contemporary\_Art.jpg  Figure 8: Kishō Kurokawa, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan (1989). Photo: Tomio Ohashi. Courtesy of KKAA, Tokyo. Useful Links [Kishō Kurokawa homepage (includes sections on projects, writings, and other details)](http://www.kisho.co.jp)  [Political Architecture: Interview with Kishō Kurokawa](http://www.tokyoartbeat.com/tablog/entries.en/2007/07/political-architecture-interview-with-kisho-kurokawa.html)  [Metabolism - The City of the Future: Dreams and Visions of Reconstruction in Postwar and Present-Day Japan (Mori Art Museum exhibition, Tokyo, 2011-12, with material by and devoted to Kurokawa)](http://www.mori.art.museum/english/contents/metabolism/index.html)   [Anaheim University Kishō Kurokawa Green Institute](http://www.anaheim.edu/schools-and-institutes/kisho-kurokawa-green-institute) |
| Further reading:  (Koolhaas, Rem Koolhaas on Japan's Metabolism Movement)  (Koolhaas and Obrist)  (Kurokawa, Each One a Hero: The Philosophy of Symbiosis)  (Kurokawa, Kisho Kurokawa: From Metabolism to Symbiosis )  (Kurokawa, The Philosophy of Symbiosis)  (Nanjo, Yasuka and Kikuchi)  (Schmal, Flagge and Visscher)  (Whyte) |