



Japan, 2019

During our stay in Japan, we had the opportunity
- thanks to the Order of Architects of Milan and ADF -
to visit Tokyo, Kyoto, Naoshima, Teshima, Inujima and
Nara.

This is our travelogue.

Sofia Paoli and Simone Marchetti



TOKYO day 1

After a 13-hour long flight, we arrive at the Park Hotel in Shimbashi in the early afternoon, waiting for us at the metro stop there is arch. Francesco Ristori of ADF with his wife, who give us a bit of advice to start our exploration of the city. He will be our kind guide in Tokyo.

Fighting with the jetlag we leave the hotel and we head towards Ueno Park, some trees are still in bloom and the garden of peonies is very beautiful. We walk to Asakusa, the oldest part of the city, and after dinner we end up in a small and funny Jamaica-themed room, where a group of Japanese boys sings karaoke songs with Jamaican sounds but with Japanese lyrics.



TOKYO day 2

In the morning we visit Hibiya Park, the gardens of the Imperial Palace and walk to Yasukuni Dori Avenue, where there are a number of shops selling beautiful old books from all over the world and ancient Japanese prints. In the afternoon we meet with Francesco Ristori in Ginza, a shopping district and luxury department stores. Walking around Ginza Francesco leads us to visit Tokyo station, Wako, Ginza Place and all the other iconic buildings in the area. For dinner Francesco takes us to Ginza 6 with his colleagues from Garde Tomomi Narita, Minami Kohmura and Makoto Otani, and we try our first excellent teppanyaki! Dining with them is very interesting, we have very fruitful conversations about Japanese culture and architecture in Japan.



TOKYO day 3

We meet Francesco and the architect Wataru Ishikawa at the Armani flagship store in Ginza: the store project was followed by Garde as local architects. The store manager takes us to visit the building and tells us about the process of choosing materials, specifically the 7 different types of stone used for the floors that distinguish the store. We have lunch at the Armani restaurant with the architects.

We move to Shibuya and walk into Yoyogi Park, where we visit the Mei-Ji shrine.

We meet again with Francesco who shows us around the Garde office where we know many of his colleagues, and then he takes us to visit Omotesando and specifically some of the shops he followed with Garde. We visited Kuma's Pineapple shop, John Pawson's Jil Sander, MVRDV's Gyre, Herzog & de Meuron's Prada Building, SANAA's Dior, Tadao Ando's Omotesando Hills, OMA Coach and many others. In the evening we moved to Shinjuku where we had dinner and explored the Golden Gai, a very compact area made up of only tiny bars (for 3, maximum 4 people each). The atmosphere is surreal and very characteristic.



KYOTO
day 4

Early in the morning we leave for Kyoto: more than three and a half hours of Shinkansen, the famous bullet train. With the bus we reach the area of Arashyama, on the west side of the historical center. The area is famous for the bamboo grove and the river. We have lunch in a small, very traditional restaurant on the river, and taste mysterious things with strange textures and tastes we've never tried. We visit Tenryu-ji and the bamboo grove. We sleep in a beautiful Ryokan and dive in our first Onsen!



KYOTO
day 5

We visit as much Japanese gardens and temples as possible: Nanzen-in, Ginkaku-ji, the inevitable Zen garden of Ryoan-ji, Saiho-ji's moss garden and many others. What leaves us breathless, however, is the Tofuku-ji Temple, whose gardens were designed by Mirei Shigemori in 1939.



KYOTO
day 6

With the metro we reach the Shinto Shrine Fushimi Inari-taisha, we walk almost to the top and on the way back we stop in a beautiful cemetery at the base of the path. In the evening we walk in the Geisha district, and we are lucky enough to spot one of them.



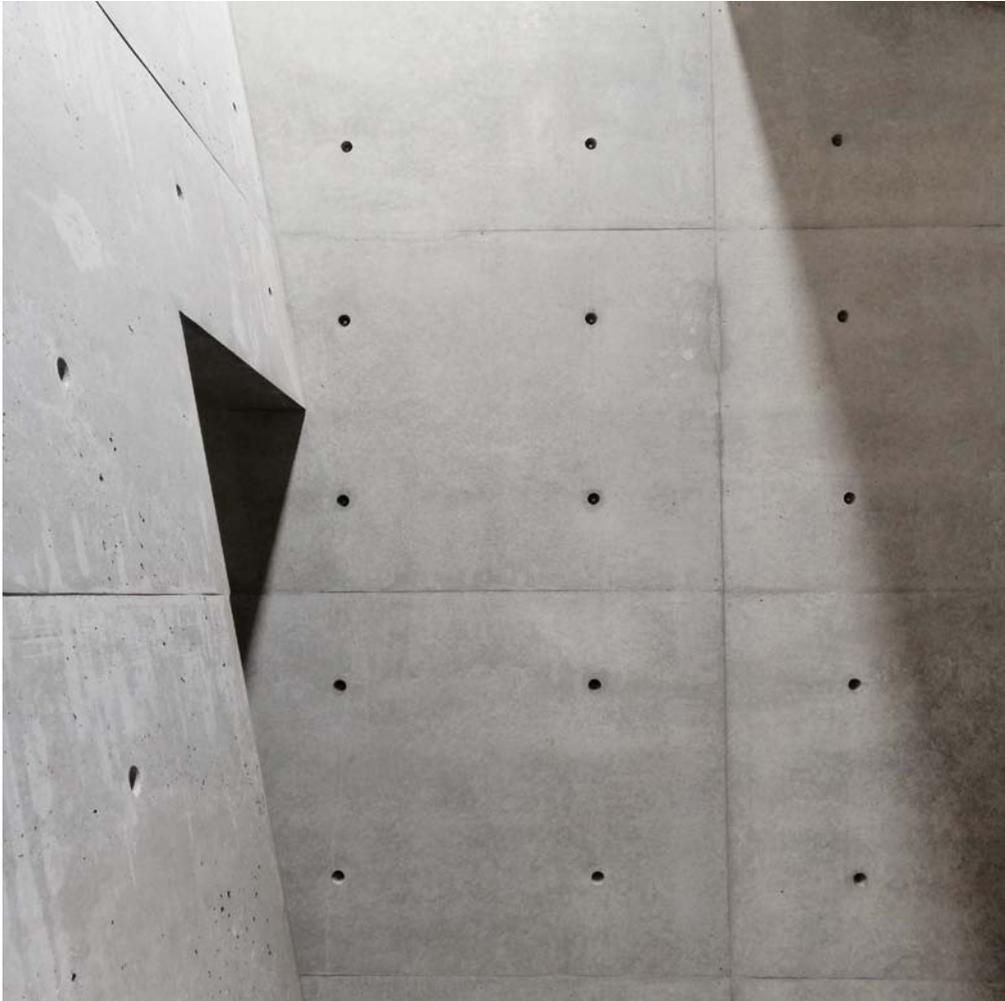
NAOSHIMA
day 7

We leave very early from Kyoto to reach Naoshima, we have to take a train, then a bus and finally a ferry. We reach our hostel at lunchtime, rent bicycles and after a quick lunch we visit the Benesse House Museum, the Lee Ufan Museum and the incredible Chichu Art Museum: we are bewitched by Walter de Maria's room and the water lilies of Monet. This place is magical.



INUJIMA and TESHIMA
day 8

We wake up very early and take a boat to Inujima, where we immediately visit the Inujima Seirenscho Art Museum, a very interesting project of industrial restoration. Then, walking through the island, we see the Inujima Art House Project and the Inujima Life Garden. In the afternoon we take the ferry boat again and go to Teshima, to visit the Teshima Art Museum, which is a real sensory and mystical experience. We return to Inujima with the last ship.



NAOSHIMA and NARA
day 9

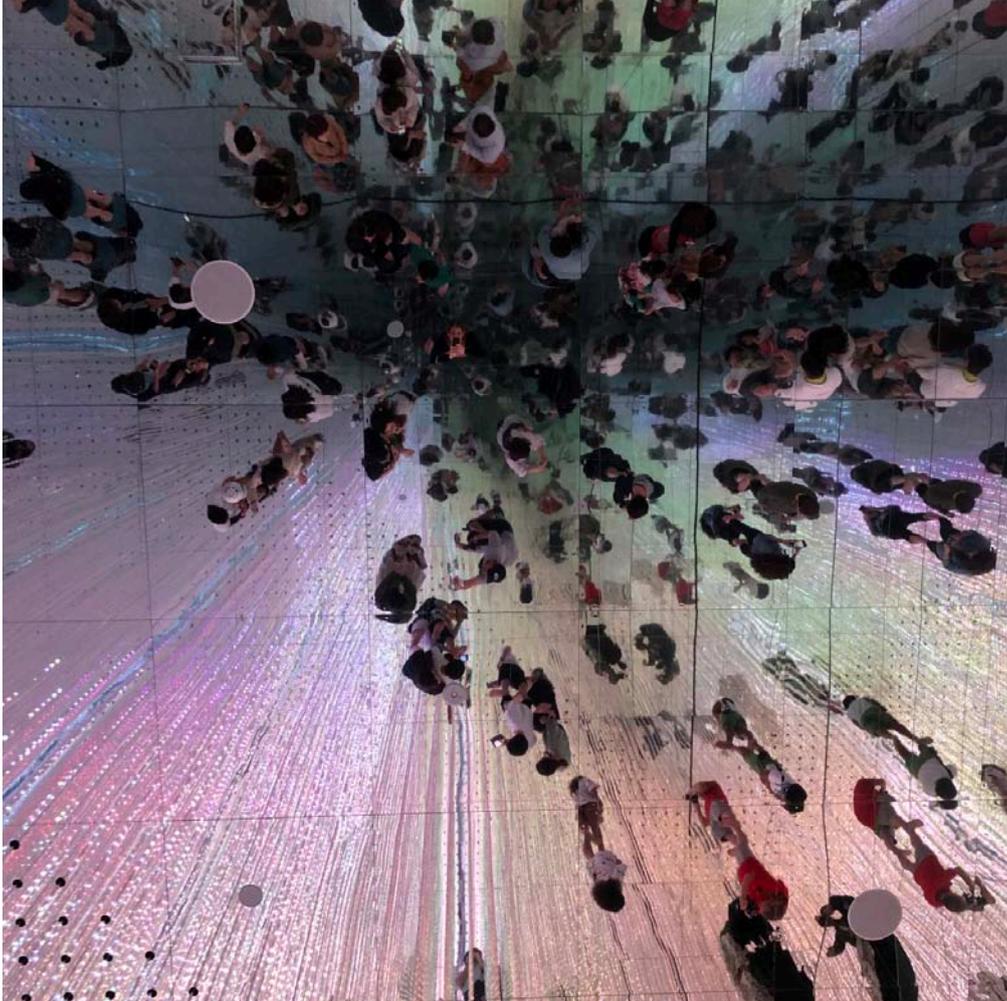
We dedicate the morning to the visit of the installations in the houses of Honmura and we conclude with the visit of the Tadao Ando Museum. We take the ferry that brings us back to the mainland and we head towards Nara, the journey is very long.



NARA
day 10

Nara park and the deers during the Golden Week... super crowded but we had a lot of fun!

In the afternoon we visited the old part of the town with its tiny streets, very typical atmosphere. The most beautiful part of the day was the dinner: we entered a super typical Izakaya, no touristic at all, the owner and her husband welcomed us very warmly, cooking super tasty food for us and making us feel at home.



TOKYO
day 11

We're back in Tokyo! We had booked in advance the tickets for the Teamlab Planet exhibition, and it's really worth it! It's a super multisensorial experience, a sort of crazy playground for adults. Later on, we visited the Hamarikiyu Gardens, a peaceful place in the middle of Tokyo's skyscrapers. Then we had a walk in Akihabara, in Ginza, and we ended up having dinner in a very nice place who's only dish where chicken skewers of all kinds!



TOKYO
day 12

The Skyview in Roppongi is our first visit of the day: Tokyo from above is impressive. Then we moved to the 21_21 Gallery designed by Ando, but we were much less impressed by this architecture, having visited his works in Naoshima. In the afternoon we have walked in Daykaniama, we spent a lot of time inside the TSite bookshop e and then we walked to Ebisu, where we had dinner in a covered market.



TOKYO
day 13

Our incredible experience has come to an end, and we have to go back to Italy. We will be back in Japan to explore it better for sure, hopefully very soon!



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