



Umbrella House at Vitra Design Museum, photos by Michaela Nettell, Spring 2023

ENCOUNTERS

-- with Kazuo Shinohara's Umbrella House [篠原一男建築の「傘の家」との巡り合い](#)

A research project and publication by Michaela Nettell [Michaela Nettell による研究プロジェクトと出版物](#)

ENCOUNTERS is an artist's book about Kazuo Shinohara's 1961 Umbrella House. Bringing together contemporary responses to the building by 14 international artists, architects and writers, the project offers new, expansive readings of Shinohara's work. A roundtable discussion in May 2024 will generate a central text for the publication and establish a thematic framework for production and design. A launch event and exhibition will be held at Passengers gallery, London in September 2025.

「巡り合い」は、篠原一男『傘の家』を題材にしたアーティストブックです。14人の国際的なアーティスト、建築家、作家による建物への現代的な反応を結集するこのプロジェクトは、篠原作品の新しく幅広い解釈を提供します。2024年5月の円卓会議では、出版物の中心となるテキストが作成され、制作とデザインのテーマ別枠組みが確立されます。2025年9月にロンドンの「Passengers」ギャラリーでローンチイベントと展示会が開催される予定だ。

In making ourselves a place to live, we first spread a parasol to throw a shadow on the earth, and in the pale light of the shadow we put together a house – Jun'ichiro Tanizaki
住む場所を作るには、まず日傘を広げて大地に影を落とし、その影の淡い光の中で家を建てる

inhabited space transcends geometrical space ... in other words, inhabited space has all the elasticity of the human mind – Gaston Bachelard
居住空間は幾何学的空間を超越します。つまり、居住空間には人間の精神のすべての弾力性が備わっています

ENCOUNTERS is a collaborative research and publishing project about Umbrella House, post-war architect Kazuo Shinohara's smallest residential building. Built in Tokyo in 1961, Umbrella House was recently saved from demolition and reconstructed at the Vitra Design Museum in Germany.

The outcome of the project will be a 130-page, full-colour book presenting new responses to Umbrella House by 14 practitioners working across fine art, filmmaking, creative writing, architecture and calligraphy. A roundtable conversation at the heart of the book will provide a contextual and thematic framework for the rest of the content. A launch event and exhibition will be held at Passengers gallery, London in 2025, the centenary of Shinohara's birth.

Many of Shinohara's clients were artists or writers, and his buildings are known for their enigmatic and poetic qualities, but artistic responses to his work remain scarce. The lack of female voices in discussions around his architecture is also something the group feel compelled to address. Through imaginative encounters and cross-disciplinary conversation, the book will offer bold, insightful interpretations of Umbrella House to expand the existing technical, historical and almost exclusively masculine narrative around Shinohara's oeuvre.

Contributors include academic experts on Shinohara; the architects who coordinated Umbrella House's relocation to Europe; and a range of creative practitioners for whom Shinohara has either been an influence, or whose work or approach chimes with his. 90% of the group are female. They are based in the UK, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal and the US and represent 11 nationalities/bi-nationalities. The project seeks a coming-together of voices and ideas that are receptive, broad-minded and open-ended; that offer new analyses of and routes into Shinohara's work, and that bring his architecture, and discussions around it, to new audiences.

ENCOUNTERS will be a beautiful and tactile book that communicates through its form notable aspects of Umbrella House's structure and materiality, and the ways in which it reinterprets traditional Japanese design. The work is aimed at general adult audiences as well as those interested more specifically in the visual arts, architecture, creative writing, post-war Japanese culture, and female experiences of domesticity.

As the first ever UK publication on Shinohara, and the first artist-led enquiry into his work internationally, the project will have considerable cultural impact. With interest in Shinohara's work currently burgeoning in Continental Europe, this is a timely moment to be initiating the project.



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Setting in motion a gender displacement necessitates [a] repositioning of 'dwelling': No longer the spatial antithesis of travel, the house must be theoretically reconstructed.

As we look at the notion of home with traveling eyes, we must roam about the house architecturally – Giuliana Bruno

ジェンダーの置き換えを開始するには、「住居」の位置を変更する必要があります。もはや旅行の空間的アンチテーゼではなく、家は理論的に再構築されなければなりません。旅の目で家の概念を見つめるとき、私たちは建築的に家の中を歩き回らなければなりません

RELEVANCE & ACCESSIBILITY

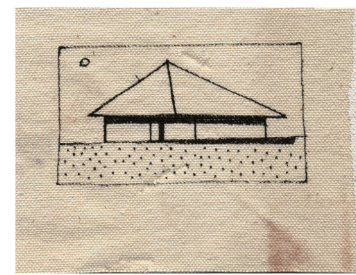
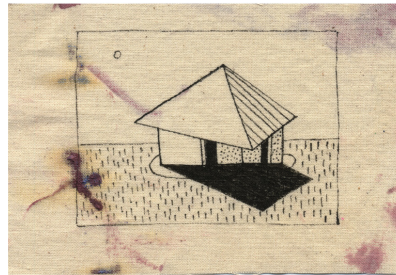
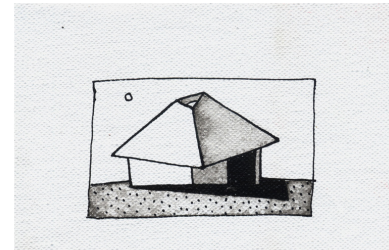
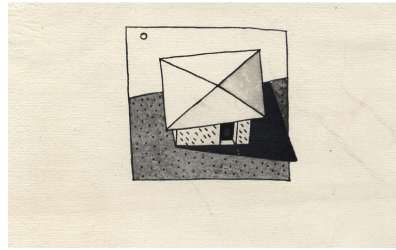
Almost all existing scholarship on Shinohara has been by male architects or historians and is for the most part very technical. The project aims to redress this imbalance by presenting diverse, artistic responses to his work that are accessible beyond, while also valuable within, architectural and academic circles. Additionally, the work will be inclusive and relevant to women, and be bold enough to address issues of domesticity, dwelling and gender that tend to be sidelined in architectural commentary in favour of more abstract or theoretical concerns.

An informal roundtable will generate the book's central text – an open, nonhierarchical forum that will allow us to share knowledge, crystallise salient themes and establish points of resonance across the group. Importantly, the transcript aims to be at once information-rich and enjoyable to read for broad (non-academic) audiences.

As a white British person, the lead artist is mindful of the risks of misrepresentation and orientalism in a project of this kind. She aims to mitigate these risks by working with a diverse international team whose native knowledge and experience encompasses both Japanese and non-Japanese cultures. Most of the non-Japanese artists in the group have lived, studied or worked in Japan. Award-winning Japanese-English translator Polly Barton will help liaise with

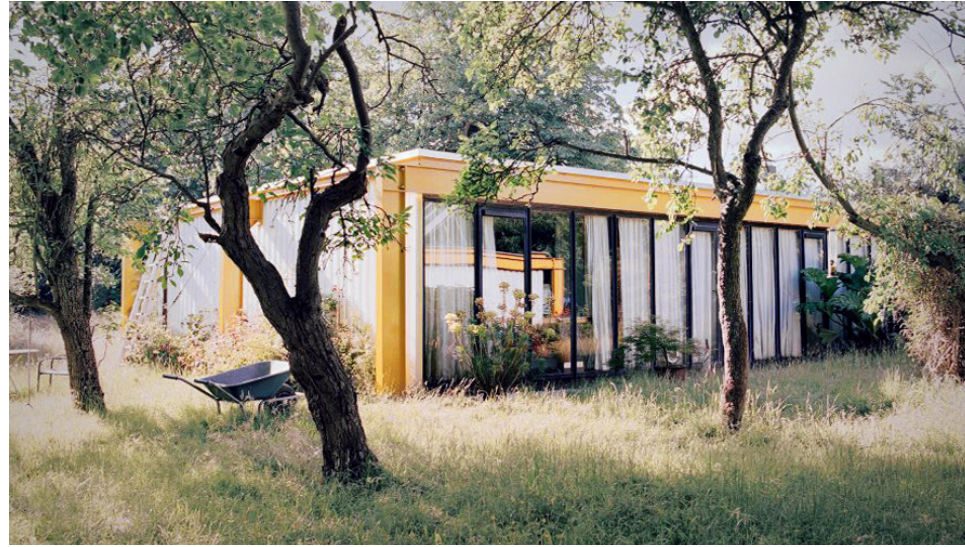
and translate the writing of Osaka-based Tomoka Shibasaki, and Shibasaki's original text will be published alongside its translation. London-based architect Takeshi Hayatsu brings valuable knowledge of vernacular architecture, and experience of incorporating traditional Japanese crafts into a contemporary design process. US-based artists Naomi Nakazato and Sawako Nakayasu explore the complexities of biracial experience through their work, challenging notions of authenticity and questioning the reliability of translation. This becomes relevant in a study of Shinohara, whose published work (both built and written) is widely considered difficult to translate. Questions of translatability – of materials and built form as well as language and syntax – are central to the project and as such strive to make it relevant, critical and aware.

By publishing in digital as well as physical form, and with copies in public libraries and high street stores as well as academic institutions, the book will be accessible to many people in many countries: the lead artist's previous book, 'Less a building: Interactions with the London Zoo Aviary', has been bought by individuals and stocked in bookstores in the UK, Spain, Italy, Australia, Switzerland, the US and Canada, and has been read online by many others. Social media will play a crucial role in reaching these broad communities and inviting them to be part of our conversation. Part of the launch event will be live-streamed so that as many people in as many countries as possible can hear the readings and contribute their comments and questions.



Work in development: Michaela Nettell, *Fictional spaces*, 35mm photo; Ana Ruepp, *Umbrella House sketches*, ink on canvas; Lera Samovich, *Elements of architecture*, digital sketch; Michaela Nettell, *Sliding screens*, inkjet print and acetate; Michaela Nettell, *Anti-space (greens)*, photo-collage; Michaela Nettell, *Umbrella House sketch*, inkjet-print and acetate

'Poetic structures organize, energize, and color the content, and they also hold meaning. Poetic forms are like the beams in a house, and like a puppeteer in a bunraku play.' – Annie-B Parson
詩的な構造は内容を整理し、活力を与え、色付けするだけでなく、意味も保持します。詩的な形式は家の梁のようなものであり、文楽の人形遣いのようなものです



Previous work: Estefania Araujo, *Ideas for shelter*, 2020; Emily Richardson, *Spender House*, 2018; Leigh Wells, *Versos collage*, 2010; Takeshi Hayatsu, *1:20 study model for a small barn*, 2023; Emily Speed, *Fossa*, 2023; Naomi Nakazato, *Drag Me Along*, 2019; Julie Hill, *Cave*, 2023

An architectural emotion, which Shinohara calls an 'anti-space' is created through [the] contrasted encounter between the organic ground floor and the man-made geometrical space' – Benoît Jacquet
篠原が「反空間」と呼ぶ建築的感情は、有機的な地上階と人工の幾何学的な空間との対照的な出会いによって生み出されます



Previous work: 'Less a building' launch at Passengers, 4 September 2021

Photographs by Nick Andrews showing audience, exhibition displays, a press cutting, event streaming and live readings