

After the Earthquake

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The Kumamoto Earthquakes and the Museum

Takeshi Sakurai

Director, Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto

The Disaster, What We Learned, and Looking Forward to Creative Revival

Two years have passed since the Kumamoto Earthquakes, and many regions still have yet to see restoration or reconstruction efforts. Kumamoto Castle is among the structures damaged – it will be another twenty years until we will be able to see the fully restored structure including its stone walls. The disaster saw two intense earthquakes strike the region, running a maximum of a 7.0 on the Richter scale; but we see many disparities between this incident in comparison to the Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster and the Great Hanshin Earthquake. The first of those differences is the noticeable lack of reported fires or explosions as a result of the tremors. This can be attributed to earthquake-resistance measures taken in Kumamoto following the Kobe Earthquake Disaster; Kumamoto worked to reinforce gas pipelines in preparation for the event of an earthquake, while additionally installing sensors to automatically halt the supply of gas through pipelines in the event of any detected seismic activity registering over a 5 on the Richter scale. Said efforts helped prevent the occurrence of fires or explosions by way of a gas leak. Another particular fact made apparent in reports states that fires by way of electricity were few. In essence, we see that Kumamoto learned much from the lessons brought about by these disasters in East Japan and Kobe and have utilized those findings in the improvement and reinforcement of our infrastructure and our lifelines. In looking at the shopping district located within the heart of Kumamoto City itself, one notices the remarkable speed in which restoration efforts are progressing there. Located within this district is Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto, which had similarly entered into a period of chaos with the damages suffered from the aftermath. At first, we dedicated our efforts to collecting as much information as possible as to get an accurate grasp of the situation at hand. We then focused our powers on utilizing this information for the betterment of these recovery efforts.

Unknowable Tremors from Deep Beneath the Earth

During the foreshocks on April the 14th and the several thousand aftershocks followed after the main tremors on the 16th, many Kumamoto residents came to know a sense of dread, and trepidation; it was the sense that they had begun cohabitating with some unknowable “beast.” Perhaps it’s fair to say we were made painfully aware that human beings have not truly subjugated nature – that it remains out of the dominion of our control.

In the pitch-black darkness of midnight on the 14th of April, a great flock of crows convened at Kumamoto Castle, cawing shrill cries into the dark. By the morning of the next day, they were gone. One could infer that perhaps the crows had an awareness of things that differs from humans and that they had accurately foreseen the tremors that were to come. The main quake would hit in the late of night the next day. As

many know already, Kumamoto Castle had retained its form following the foreshocks: but would suffer a devastating blow through the greatest tremors to come.

The Museum and the Escher Exhibition: Hit by Disaster

Prior to the earthquake disaster, the exhibition for *The King of Illusion M.C. Escher and his Challengers: From Dali, Magritte and Fukuda Shigeo to the Contemporary Illusionists* – an exhibition centering around the painter M.C. Escher from the Netherlands, had just begun at our museum. The project was vast in scale, bringing together over 150 works together for display. For its opening night, we saw an unusually high turnout – 600 visitors – with 800 visitors then visiting the next day. But with the foreshocks on the 5th day of the event, and we were left with no choice but to cancel the exhibition partway – despite how smoothly things had been moving along so far.

When I made my way to the museum early the next morning, a terrible sight was awaiting me; things small and large, including books, had fallen from the ceilings and shelves and had been strewn about the vicinity. The ceiling itself had fortunately not caved in, but we saw paneling, together with extremely intricate components, had plummeted to the ground in one fell swoop. The Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto first opened its doors in 2002; over 10 years had passed since its foundation, and that meant that over ten years' worth of dust that had accumulated since then had all descended to the ground in a single stroke. Suspended ceilings, concealed lighting, and all manner of stylish interior design affects showed just how fragile they were in comparison to structures of a simpler design. Despite this, the architectural integrity of the museum itself was sound.

Aside from those damages, we found a rupture in the ceiling of the Home Gallery – a center where nearby citizens could enter freely, serving as a sort of area of relaxation. Fortunately, the James Turrell work that had been affixed onto the ceiling – a work of light — was unscathed. Pieces by Yayoi Kusama, Tatsuo Miyajima, and other permanent installation works also remained unharmed. We began emergency construction and engaged in safety confirmations and checks, weaving in and out of aftershocks that would continue on afterward.

Two vital elements in all of this were the close relationships we maintained with restoration workers on a day to day basis, together with our emergency fund – one we would only have access to the event of any dire crisis. The period of pandemonium that ensues after an earthquake disaster of this kind makes it difficult to immediately arrange for construction efforts; one may have trouble finding a contractor willing for the task for quite a while if you miss your chance. And on top of that, one often has trouble in pulling together the funds which are needed in abundance in times of such crisis. In our case, we took measures to divert our pre-existing capital fund for restoration efforts – and were able to complete most necessary construction within two weeks' time.

Reopening as a Museum

The museum, since its closing from the time of the initial foreshocks on April the 14th, opened its doors again to its Home Gallery, free spaces, museum shop, Kids Salon, and other spaces on May 11th after a

successful safety inspection of the complex. In reopening these spaces, we were able to resume our Kids Salon, where we provided counsel regarding childcare, as well as making the reading room, a room replete with literature in the Home Gallery, accessible to the public again. The piano concerts we would host every night prior the earthquake resumed as well – and many museum-comers found themselves moved by the music as it rang out within the halls of the complex. We became aware that many in town had waited for the doors to open again, a fact that helped us regain our own spirits and courage. One could say that the people, thrown into the darkness, had been waiting for a light of hope.

On the 18th, one week afterward, we reopened the smaller exhibition room, Gallery III, and the Nobumichi Ide Memorial Gallery with a re-tailored curation of the *Escher* exhibition. We saw a line of people waiting to enter on the day of its reopening. This was a sight that caused us to awaken us to a new reality: many of citizens of both the city and Kumamoto Prefecture at large had waited for this museum in the heart of their town to open its doors again.

Our reopening in itself served as hopeful news, especially considering that we an art museum nestled in the midst of an area hollowed into a ghost town for a time. We hosted this special exhibition, open to the public free of charge, for a little less than one month – and yet during that time we welcomed nearly 10,000 visitors altogether. All members of our staff were made poignantly aware of the art museum’s power as a source of comfort, respite, and enjoyment for so many.

A Hall of the Muses: A Banquet of Music, Theater, Art, and Videography

The earthquake brought damage to the most of public halls, the citizen’s community centers, and other fixtures – meaning that many Kumamoto artists lost places allowing for their creative expression. In their absence, our art museum functioned as a center for their artistic endeavors – it was no longer simply a place of visual art; it had instead evolved into a nexus of creation. Distinguished artists gathered at the museum one after the other, and many locals soon came to experience the sounds of beautiful music resonating throughout the halls of the museum. An art museum is, in its essence, a center of artistic expression – while also serving as a center of education for all, regardless of age. It is our hope that through those cultural activities, we are able to raise up, assist, and inspire the community – going on to enrich both the local community and the city of Kumamoto in its entirety.

Outstanding artistic talent would come to visit and perform at the museum following the earthquakes. Concerts and performances included “Yamakazu Presents: A Concert in CAMK” by Kazuki Yamada (pianist & conductor) and Yukiko Nishida (flutist); a piano concert by Yulianna Avdeeva, the Moscow pianist and winner of the International Chopin Piano Competition; a performance by the string quartet *El Sistema*, based in Venezuela and world-renowned for their contribution in the creation of a new form of music education; the *Superkids Orchestra*, led by Yutaka Sado; and many others. The performances continued one after another and were buoyant and ebullient in spirit. In summer, we hosted the “Kamitoori Theater Festival,” the “Summer Children’s Film Festival,” the “Jazz Festival.” Essentially, we saw a close, collaborative effort that transcended boundaries between local and prefectural governments. Through that, we were able to realize a truly rich variety of events and endeavors.

Within the premises of the museum, we saw the boundaries between music, art, theater, and dance dissolve with ease. Music both vibrant and fluid rang through the halls, all while exchange and discourse unfolded between different fields of art. It was as if our facility had made a return to its purest, most intrinsic form – yes, it was as if the muses themselves had taken residence in our museum.

What the Kumamoto Earthquake Taught Us

Through this experience, we became poignantly aware that massive earthquakes can occur anywhere, and that an earthquake that occurs at a certain time is unlike any other that has come before it. I will list a couple of other lessons that these earthquakes have taught us here.

We realized that a certain myth had crumbled: the myth that Kumamoto Prefecture was not prone to earthquakes, and that a massive earthquake of this scale would not strike the region. We came to understand that throughout history, massive earthquakes of this scale had happened in Kumamoto – these facts came to light time and time again.

Water in use by factories and most households within Kumamoto is taken entirely from water underground, with the water itself filtered through natural processes. The earthquake caused murkiness and cloudiness to appear in the water itself, while water shortages were noted in the ponds. What had not known was that water, filtered clean by way of lava, was not something that mother nature would provide for us forever.

The greatest fortune found from these misfortunes was that the earthquakes occurred at a temperate time of year, neither hot nor cold: the temperature at around 20 degrees Celsius, the humidity at around 50%. No one was in a position to use fire, so fire-related incidences were few. If the quakes had happened in summer, a massive outbreak in disease would have been a possibility. And there were no injuries or casualties to any tourists – who come to visit Kumamoto Castle in the thousands during the daytime. Considering the collapse of the stone walls and the several thousand stones that had fallen within the castle itself, one could only call this a miracle.

Most stores had shut their doors, and day by day, one could see masses of people wandering to and fro in search for water or food in the city. A surprising sight that I encountered a few times amidst all of this was how the owners of these closed shops would line up stands outside of their doors, placing mineral water and distributing it for free to people walking by. In the midst of the chaos, people were collected and calm. When convenience stores, supermarkets, and other locally-run stores reopened their doors, I was surprised by the rich variety of the products available – of vegetables, fish, and meat. This seemed to be a certain indicator of the abundance of nature available in Kumamoto. Another thing I would like to make special note of is how there was no sudden jump in prices at the time. The fish market made use of a rock-paper-scissors technique in assuring that there was no competitive bidding and selling as to cause fluctuation in prices, as well as implementing methods that made sure one could get supplies for cheap. One could see the collective wisdom of these people, as well as their kindness.

Changes to the Kumamoto Prefecture Citizen's Literary Prize

I have been involved as a panelist for the Critique and Nonfiction section of the Kumamoto Prefecture

Citizen's Literary Prize for the past several years. Every autumn we receive masterpieces, thick and numbering over 50 sheets of paper, for our consideration. For the 2016 prize, we saw that there not a single essay that covered the subject of the earthquakes – there was not enough time for them to consider the content at the time. In 2017, a year later, we saw that four out of the total 10 essays centered around the theme of the earthquakes – and each of them was brilliant. Worthy of particular note was the essay by the third seat, Aako Ikuta – entitled “Kawarimono no Kumamoto Jishin Taikenki” (An Odd One's Account of the Kumamoto Earthquakes) – an incredible account, one worth passing on to the next generation. Many of those who had suffered the earthquakes describe it by saying, “I couldn't have imagined that a disaster like this could happen in Kumamoto. It transcended all prediction.” But this wasn't true for Ikuta – as a mother of two, she was actually under the assumption that an earthquake disaster of this scale would likely come. Every time that she moved by way of a new post at her husband's place of work, she would engage in thorough information collection and research into the town itself as well as the area's topography. It is an incredibly rare account, one that details a person through the years as she continues the process of preparation as if anticipating something like to happen. She was quoted as saying, “When a disaster like this strikes, one can't just rely on luck to save them. I made sure that I was prepared.”

The Lisbon Earthquake

This extraordinary essay, born from this Kumamoto Prefectural Citizen's Literary Prize, reminded me of the collected composure shown by the German philosopher Kant on the occasion of the Lisbon earthquake – an earthquake that had struck Portugal's capital on November 1st, 1755. In response, Kant performed a thorough and scientific evaluation of the event. The earthquake had sent tremors across the entirety of the European continent, and Kant, 31 years old at the time, had written three different essays on the earthquakes. Walter Benjamin views the essays that Kant published to be the genesis of the academic field of seismology. Kant made the firm statement that “Earthquakes can occur anywhere, and at any time,” and would go on to bring a shift in perception regarding the “ground” or the “earth”— a fixture that had been seen as solid and unwavering within the West at the time. The image of the earth as a symbol of certainty and reliability began to buckle and crumble during the era that followed the Lisbon earthquake.

The Lisbon earthquake had struck the metropolis on All Saints' Day, 1755 – and is estimated to have been around a magnitude 8.5 to 9.0. Casualties, when including those who had perished from resulting building collapses, fires, and tsunamis, had numbered around 60,000. The city offered little open space or marketplaces, forcing many to evacuate to the riverside nearby – where they perished by the following tsunamis.

In observation on earthquakes, tsunamis, and other powerful storms, Kant notes, “Natural phenomena that far transcend the powers of man instill in people a sense of terror. But human beings, with their powers of reasoning and conception, have the ability to understand these phenomena and to transcend above this fear. In such times, humans awake to a reverence to the powers of nature, and from such reverence, we see a further evolution of our own humanity.” These rare phenomena and occurrences have the power to effectively shift the flow of human history, as well as culture in particular.

What we know for sure is that in the past two years, we have seen the Kumamoto region combine its efforts and work towards sharing a plan and vision of revival, and reconstruction/revival efforts are proceeding along surely. In the midst of this, the Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto has, while focusing its activity mainly on art-related matters, also frequently operated outside of the realm of art. We have engaged in close cooperation with local citizens, with those within the prefecture, as well as with cultural facilities. All the while, we strive to function as a place where a variety of forms of art and activity can come together and help provide for a process of creative revitalization. Through this earthquake, we received a chance to rethink and rediscover the value and purpose of these public, cultural facilities and fixtures within the community.

CAMK Restoration Diary

A Record of the 70 Days spanning from the Earthquake to Reopening

Following the onset of two earthquakes on the 14th and 16th of April, 2016, the Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto reopened a portion of its facilities on May 11th – 24 days following the disaster. The Museum would resume operations for the entirety of its facility on June 25th, 70 days after the earthquakes.

In this section, we consider the days that followed the earthquake to be time dedicated towards the restoration to the museum; through these pages, we present a description of the 70 days that followed the earthquake as we went about our efforts. These accounts are tied together with our staff's accounts of the earthquake, a summary of damages suffered at the museum, and photographs of the disaster areas and scenes of the restoration work undertaken by Nishihara-mura's fire department – photographed by Masai Miyaki.

April 14, 2016: Foreshocks

At 9:26 PM, a massive 6.5-magnitude earthquake occurs with its epicenter in the Kumamoto region.

At the time of its occurrence, two staff members of the Contemporary Art Museum (below, "Museum") were present in the Museum office and reported feeling long, sideways swaying and swinging within. They would then evacuate to the front lobby of the adjoining Hotel Nikko Kumamoto (below, "Hotel,") where they would provide assistance to hotel guests and reach out to fellow Museum employees and confirm their safety.

April 15th, 2016: One Day After Foreshocks

At 1:00 AM, the Kumamoto City Government issued instructions for the Museum to open their free zone and to initiate processes to accept those with difficulty returning to their homes – to be performed by two representatives of the Kumamoto City Cultural Promotion Department (below, "Cultural Promotion Department") as well as a single representative of the Museum. (Until 8:30 AM: No evacuees reported)

Staff members reported to work as usual that morning, engaging in the task of assessing any damages to the facility, to equipment, and to *The King of Illusion M.C.Escher and his Challengers From Dali, Magritte and Fukuda Shigeo to the Contemporary Illusionists* exhibition (below, "King of Illusion exhibition") that had been on display at the time. They also alerted lenders regarding the status of said works. The Museum decides to tentatively close its doors until April 17th and informs related parties of said closure.

April 16th, 2016: Main Tremors

At 1:25 AM, another massive earthquake occurs with Kumamoto at its epicenter, reaching a magnitude of 7.3.

All staff members instructed to await contact regarding work at the office until April 17th. Air conditioning units throughout the entirety of the complex sustained damage, which rendered temperature control and

management infeasible. (Employees instructed not to open to maintain temperature and humidity).

April 17, 2016: One Day After Main Tremors

Only managerial staff reported to work on this day as to perform additional confirmation of damages to Museum and to contact lenders regarding their works. Staff members also held meeting regarding future of Museum and decided to suspend work operations for other staff members until April 22nd (staff members from outside of Kumamoto recommended to evacuate from the prefecture). Decision reached that the Museum would close for the time being (until when not determined), and staff then notified relevant parties of said decision.

April 18, 2016: Two Days After Main Tremors

Bipuresu Kumanichi Kaikan, the building complex serving as home to the Museum (below, “Kumanichi Kaikan”) conducted debriefing of damages done to structure. As of yet, no specific timeline offered regarding restoration to damaged air conditioning units.

April 19th, 2016: Three Days After Main Tremors

The Kumamoto Main Branch of Nippon Express Co., Ltd. (below, “Nippon Express”) contacted the Museum to inform that they were available to operate if we were going to engage in work. Considering that aftershocks continued at this time and that there was no set timeline as to the restoration of the air conditioning units, the administrators made the decision to prioritize the safety of the works themselves and to proceed with removing the works of the *King of Illusion* exhibition and the *Yodogawa Technic* exhibition, requesting that Nippon Express assist them in that endeavor.

Our Employees at the Time of the Earthquake

- My mother had lived in her car at first, but couldn't take it anymore and made her way back home. Afterwards, she made her way to a nearby elementary school to get some water supplies but had been turned away; they said they can't distribute water to those who hadn't evacuated.
- I had essentially been living out my life at evacuation centers, sleeping in my car at night. My grandmother had passed away prior to the earthquake, but we unfortunately had no time to commit her ashes at the gravesite – I had to carry her remains with me as I evacuated.
- My father had been admitted into the hospital prior to the earthquake. I focused on work, cleaning up the house, and taking care of my father...those were very hectic days. Having reduced work hours was a saving grace for me. I simply did what I was told at work; it was like I had lost much of my power to think.
- A little while after the earthquake, I felt both fatigue and tension building up both within myself and within my family. Sudden moments of anxiety would come over me both at home and at work. The voices of customers and visitors were something I never minded before, but afterwards I felt that they tired me out much more easily.
- I would talk to people I didn't know. We would talk about how scary the earthquake was, and then how beautiful the

flowers are. We seemed to have a heightened sensitivity to the beauty of nature... It was intriguing how so many voices seemed to share a point in common: that we all longed to see something beautiful.

- There was a glaring, horrifying difference between the art museum and my parents' home in Mashiki. There were elderly couples whose homes' first floors had completely caved in, but those living there still had not moved to the evacuation centers. Work at the Mashiki area was a daunting, depressing effort.

- I felt fortunate to not have been directly affected, but also guilty at the same time. (Lived outside of the prefecture at the time)

- After the main tremors, the tiles had slanted, the walls had collapsed, and our home was demolished. I had been working in Fukuoka at the time and at the office it was like everyone was walking on eggshells around me. I returned to Kumamoto because of the earthquake. My parents may have been emotionally unstable at the time, too. (Lived outside of the prefecture at the time)

*Excerpts taken from interviews with staff members at the Museum, dated May 11th and May 18th, 2017.

April 24–April 20, 2018

Removed works on display and stored/affixed them within repository (a portion of the works transported to warehouse located outside of the prefecture).

April 22nd, 2016: Six Days After Main Tremors

We decide to set the temporary closure of the Museum to continue until April 28th at an internal meeting. Made decision to resume work for workers who are able to return work beginning from April 23rd and informed staff members as such. Additionally, issued a request to Kumanichi Kaikan to perform an assessment of damages within the interior of the Museum.

April 26th, 2016: 10 Days After Main Tremors

Kumanichi Kaikan, in addition to the construction company Kajima Corporation, the Cultural Promotion Department, as well as the manufacturers of various machinery and equipment (architectural, interior design, electricity, air conditioning, hygienic equipment, fittings and fixtures, etc.) simultaneously engage in the task of confirming the state of affairs at the site.

At an internal staff meeting, the Museum makes the decision to extend the period of our temporary closure until May 9th. Inquiries regarding the reopening of the Museum drastically increase in volume beginning from this time.

April 28th, 2016: 12 Days After Main Tremors

After discussion with Kumanichi Kaikan, the Cultural Promotion Department, as well as a meeting amongst administrators, we decide to make a request for repair work and construction with the Foundation bearing the costs of construction. This time saw a serious lack number of those qualified to perform repair work,

which meant that if the Museum did not take this chance immediately, we would be unable to perform the required construction for several months.

April 29th, 2016: 13 Days After Main Tremors

Repair work on damaged areas within the Museum begins.

May 2nd, 2016: 15 Days After Main Tremors

Timeline for completion of repair work and restoration efforts for damaged areas within Museum becomes apparent, and the Museum makes decision to reopen only the free zones within the Museum as of May 11th. Upon such a decision, the Museum staff begins preparations to arrange the space in consideration of improved visitor comfort as well as future events.

May 11th, 2016: 24 Days After Main Tremors

The Museum reopens its doors, despite the reopened space being isolated only to the Free Zone area – where repairs and safety assessments had concluded. Within this space, we had prepared movie showings, a corner for coloring books and folding origami, together with a manga corner featuring the works of manga artists connected with Kumamoto Prefecture. We saw 214 visitors on the first day of reopening.

The Museum also engages in discussion as to consider display methods that would be well adapted to the possibility of further aftershocks and earthquakes with the Kyushu National Museum, the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, the Japanese Council of Art Museums, and Takiya Co., Ltd.

May 13th, 2016: 26 Days After Main Tremors

The Huis Ten Bosch Museum kindly agrees to the prospect of reopening our *King of Illusion* exhibition with the Escher works the Museum had received on loan from them which were currently stored outside of the Museum for their safety. The Museum decides to reopen the *King of Illusion* “special exhibition” as of May 18th, open to the public free of charge, with changes made to both the contents of the exhibition as well as the display space.

May 18th, 2016: 32 Days After Main Tremors

Museum reopens the *King of Illusion* exhibition in an adjusted format. The Museum welcomes 195 visitors on the first day of its reopening, and receives much positive feedback expressing satisfaction regarding the reopening of the space.

May 25th, 2016: 39 Days After Main Tremors

Repairs and inspection of the movable wall fixture within the main exhibition room is completed. Safety checks also conclude without a problem. As such, the administration decides that *Kaettekita! Maho no Bijutsukan-ten* (English translation: “It’s Back! Magical Art Museum Exhibition,” noted below as “Maho no Bijutsukan exhibition”) slated to begin that summer will continue on the timeline originally scheduled. The

Museum attaches a sub-header title to the exhibition, “Shine Bright, the Smiling Faces of Kumamoto” with the hope that Kumamoto City citizens will regain their spirits following the earthquake.

June 25th, 2016: 70 Days After Main Tremors

The *Maho no Bijutsukan* exhibition opens within the Museum’s main exhibition room, and all sections of Museum that had been previously closed are reopened.

Record of Damages to Museum Interior and Restoration Efforts

Action Taken	Place of Damage/Restoration, Status
April 26 th (Tue)	
Evaluation and Confirmation of Damages to Museum (Visual Confirmation)	<p>(1) Damages to Walls, Ceilings throughout Whole Complex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Checks any damage, dislodging, and distortion that render doors unable to be opened throughout entire complex. · Damages and short circuiting of light fixtures due to damage, dislodging, fallen detritus, etc. · Dislodged vents and damages to ducts relating to air conditioning throughout entire complex. · Dislodging of sprinklers throughout entire complex. · Home Gallery ceiling (Cracks). · Nursing Room ceiling (Water leakage due to damaged water heater on 5th floor).
April 29 th (Fri) – May 25 th (Wed)	
Repair Work (Ceiling) Safety checks, check for loosening, metal fastenings, etc. of hanging bolts.	<p>(1) Safety check and confirmation of damaged areas, tightening, of bolts, switching out of metal fixtures: All</p> <p>(2) Removal of fallen ceiling fixtures, recovering, painting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Entrance 2. Home Gallery 3. Gallery II 4. Gallery III 5. Nursing Room
Repair Work (Wall) Safety checks, mending of cracks, painting	<p>(1) Safety check and confirmation of damaged areas: All</p> <p>(2) Repair and painting of cracks, chipped wall surfaces</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Entrance, Home Gallery, Gallery III, Nobumichi Ide Memorial Gallery 2. Backyard Hallway: Repair of unstable wall structures (1 spot) 3. Backyard Hallway: Cross-stripping (3 spots)
Repair Work (Air Conditioning) Check for damage in internal workings in ceiling, repairs of damaged areas.	<p>(1) Safety check and confirmation of damaged areas: All</p> <p>(2) Repair to damaged areas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repair to damaged duct in Meeting and Training Room/Machinery Room ceiling 2. Repair to Janitorial Waiting Room air vent 3. Restoration of air vent in Nursing Room

<p>Repair Work (Electrical Equipment) Check for short circuits, damage, fallen equipment, and perform mending, repairs, and cleaning.</p>	<p>(1) Safety check and confirmation of damaged areas: All (2) Restoration, repair, cleaning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repair of nearly-dislodged lighting apparatuses (Throughout whole <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Electrical leakage repair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance Down Light • Meeting and Training Room Writing Rail 3. Confirmation and cleaning of lighting apparatuses (Gallery I, II) 4. Removal of apparatuses for safety purposes (Entrance pendant light) 5. Art loft ceiling safety confirmation (Restoration of fallen structures, etc.) 6. Restoration of indirect lighting in Home Gallery
<p>Repair Work (Water Supply/Drainage) Check for damage and fallen equipment, perform repairs.</p>	<p>(1) Sprinkler Check: Full (2) Restoration of Fallen Equipment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nursing Room 2. Gallery III *Work performed after Golden Week period
<p>Repair Work (Door Restoration) Restoration of dislodged doors, distortion and warping, doors lodged shut, etc.</p>	<p>(1) Safety checks and fitting checks: Full (2) Repair and Restoration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Front door to Gallery I and II 2. Back door to Gallery I 3. Gallery I emergency exit (1 spot) 4. Gallery III emergency exit (1 spot) 5. PS(Pipe Shaft) Room Door (1 spot) 6. Art Loft Storage (1 spot) 7. Meeting/Training Room door (1 spot) 8. Repository Room door (1 spot) *Work performed after Golden Week 9. Volunteer Room door (1 spot) *Work performed after Golden Week 10. Staff Room door (1 spot) *Work performed after Golden Week
<p>Other Safety Checks, Tests, Maintenance (Safety check and repair of movable walls inside gallery)</p>	<p>(1) Safety checks and fitting checks: All (2) Repair and Restoration</p>

Interview with Kazushi Oonishi, Kumamoto City Mayor

Introducing the Kumamoto City mayor, Kazufumi Onishi. Following the Kumamoto Earthquake Disaster, Mr. Onishi has stood on the front lines, working tirelessly towards restoration and revival efforts within the city up into the present day. Boasting a follower count of 94,000 on his Twitter account (@K_Onishi), Mr. Onishi continues to deliver encouragement and hope to many citizens through his daily posts and his “Today’s Song of Awakening.” Our staff had an interview with the mayor to get an idea of what the concept of “restoration by culture” means to him.

The interview was conducted on the afternoon of Tuesday, December 5th, 2017. Four of our staff members performed the interview at the Mayor’s reception room, which boasts views over Kumamoto Castle: a structure undergoing restoration efforts every day up into the present.

Ambitions for a Post-Revival Kumamoto City

-First, would you tell us about what the City of Kumamoto ultimately aims to achieve in terms of revival and reconstruction efforts?

Mayor Onishi: In going about reconstruction, many think the central idea is to return the affected areas to the state they were in prior to the disaster. Despite that, it’s not as if we can go right back to the things were then. Nature unleashed its power, and we were wounded in the process of that. But from the point of view of Mother Nature, human beings built Kumamoto to what it is on top of the natural world. So, I believe that the importance lies not on simply restoring Kumamoto to its former state through manpower alone, but rather to move towards the realization of rebirth. Because of this Kumamoto Earthquake disaster, I think we came to the realization that our ways of life are built upon the great, awe-inspiring powers of nature. Those are powers we have no ability to fight against. Even if we can’t fight, though, we can keep on living our lives regardless. I realized that we can’t do that alone, not solely with our power as individuals. Maybe the process of revival comes about when people connect, interact with one another, and combine their efforts. When we work to further heal and to resurrect. Perhaps the fixation should be less on the state of physical buildings themselves, but rather revival of the spirit: a reclamation of hope and a rejuvenation of the heart. And it’s about changing your state of mind, too – I think these things mark the essence of Kumamoto’s revival.

The Mayor’s realization of art’s power to encourage and inspire

-Directly following the Kumamoto Earthquake, we saw you dedicate all of your efforts into organizing revival efforts in Kumamoto by way of Twitter: something that helped inspire us, too.

In the midst of unimaginably tiring duties, were there any moments that you felt the importance of culture (art), or when you felt that culture (art) worked to inspire you, or heal you? If there were,

would you recount them for us?

Mayor Onishi: Directly following the first quakes, I saw clouds of dust that had been kicked up from the tremors surrounding Kumamoto Castle. The lighting structures that illuminated the dust colored them red: it all looked to be burning brightly. The imagery in that moment, the colors, and the overall scene of that moment was unforgettable. I remember thinking: something really terrible has happened. When the main tremors hit afterwards, Kumamoto Castle was completely shrouded – enveloped in black, and in darkness. With the dizzying slew of tasks that would follow afterwards, it felt as if I had lost the ability to see color, to hear, and to smell.

I think that art is experienced through all of those senses; it requires an ability to truly feel what artist wishes to express, or to be receptive to what the artist is portraying. But right after the disaster, I don't think I had the capacity to do that. I had fallen into a state of numbness. As time gradually comes to pass on, though, I feel that people come back to their senses over time, slowly reawakening to color, or sound, or smell. I think what came back to me first was sound. It was less about "art" itself, but I remember when I heard the sound of the trains running, I remember thinking, Oh, the train's running. It felt like my senses had begun to come back. That story is more about sound than it is about art, though.

CAMK: When was that?

Mayor Onishi: It was a few days after the disaster.

Afterwards, I had gotten on a plane bound for Tokyo in an effort to make some requests to the national government. I put my headphones in, and that was the first time I had heard music in a long time. When Ulfus's "Eenen (No problem)" came on, there was no end to my tears. I had been very unforgiving with myself at the time, haranguing myself again and again about whether or not the response to disaster would be enough or not. In the midst of that, I heard a song that an artist had made for the first time, and I felt like I reconnected with my heart, like I had felt something important.

Another thing that was particularly memorable was when I saw that all of the pictures that had been hung on the wall of the Mayor's Office after they had all fallen to the ground due to the earthquake. These paintings and works were pieces that I had always looked at without much thought, but seeing that these pieces had suddenly disappeared, I realized – art, even pieces that you're not actively conscious of, had provided me with energy and inspiration throughout my every day. To see that the earthquake had knocked those fixtures out of where they used to be was something that was very saddening. Afterwards, I would make my way to the 3.11->4.14-16: *Tohoku and Kumamoto, Connected by Art, Architecture, and Design* exhibition held at the Contemporary Art Museum. I remember feeling: Here are all these pieces that I never would have even been aware of if it hadn't been for the earthquake. I think that the harsh experience of the earthquake made me want to take in something, or to absorb something, from art. I think the experience of viewing a painting or a piece of art changed for me personally. In going to the art museum, I felt replenished.

I think that's why when I saw the *Misawa Atsuhiko: Animals in Kumamoto* exhibition that I found myself thinking, Man, this is awesome. I felt that I had awakened to feelings that I had never felt before. Maybe I had become more visually sensitive, or maybe I had become more keenly aware of sound and smell. The earthquake, a negative experience, had worked to provide a positive effect; my sensations underwent change, and I felt like I gained the ability to sense what the artists hoped to portray. As a result, I found myself with a much greater urge to visit the art museum, which is still a feeling I have to this day. From July onward, I began listening to music every day as well.

I think I felt encouraged throughout the process of taking in the message of the artist. The art itself wasn't necessarily made for those who had suffered the effects of the earthquake, but regardless of that I was able to subjectively look at the work and feel inspired from that. I recently began to understand how amazing art really is. In this way, I think that many people harbor doubts about art and its role as an essential element for life when compared to food or sleep, but through this earthquake I've come to understand how major a presence it has in our life – how human beings actually need bliss or mental respite even more than simply eating. I think I came to understand the sacred nature of art.

What the Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto can do for citizens and for restoration efforts

-Around 10 days after the earthquake, the art museum began to receive inquiries and words of encouragement regarding the reopening of the facility.

Many guests made their way to the museum after its reopening, which got us thinking: Could it be that humans need the power of culture (art) to live out our lives fully and in touch with ourselves? Could it be that these cultural facilities including art museums serve as necessary sanctuaries for those affected by these disasters?

Over the past year and a half, we ourselves have also searched for ways to help engage in the process of "revival through culture." What are your expectations and hopes for the Contemporary Art Museum in this capacity?

Please tell us your thoughts about how you view and expect the role of culture (art) to be as we work to attain a state of complete revival.

Mayor Onishi: I had heard stories that people were emotionally moved and fulfilled by songs that played on the radio at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake, and that was something I had forgotten about until I found myself put in the same position. I was impressed to know that the Kumamoto City FM broadcast continued to play the alma maters of local schools on air. One's able to reclaim a sense of the everyday, of normality through coming into touch with musical or artistic power that artists channel into their works. "Normal" takes a new form and is redefined through that process. So in that way, I think that listening to music after the disaster allows you to hear the sounds in a different way, and the process of viewing a work of art becomes so much more pleasant. Not only does it give contentment, but it helps inspire people to begin anew, to start moving again. Those of us in the government feel like we're distantly removed from the world of art, but I think that art is actually an embodiment of our power of human beings.

In that way, I came to understand that we need places that help exhibit and project the powers of these people, and I think I truly came to rediscover the value of those places after the earthquake in particular. My wish for the art museum is for you to use those words of encouragement that you've received and to continue your efforts as you have been doing. There is nothing that you do that fails to be of service to people.

What we (as extra-governmental organizations) can do to assist in post-earthquake revival efforts for Kumamoto City

-We are an extra-governmental organization in Kumamoto City, entrusted with the task of management of the Contemporary Art Museum. Because we engaged in efforts in bringing daily and regular concerts prior to the earthquake, we began to accept more concerts and performances post-earthquake as well. It was in those times that we really understood how art makes a direct impact on the heart or mind of a person. The audience that came to listen to the performances began shedding tears at the sound of the music, and it felt as if everyone underwent a sort of emotional purification or baptism. In the position of being in a foundation entrusted with managing a place that takes on such a role, it's our hope that Kumamoto City makes active use of our resources.

Mayor Onishi: I think that the power of the public is a necessary thing for bodies and projects that we're not really able to assess based solely on their economic rationalization or their economic impact, such as art museums or art in general. That's why I think that it's important that the Foundations that are managing these museums maintain a sense of stability. And there are also the government and the designated administrator, value as a cultural assets and tourism... etc. There are a lot of polarized sides to this, but I think the truth is that actually these two sides rarely collide with one another. I feel like we're in a world where we're able to switch out opposing concepts for each other at will, but truthfully speaking, I feel a sort of disgust towards that trend. Art museums are difficult to figure out, I think. But when I saw the *Animals* exhibition, I remember thinking, *How is it that I'm gaining so much from this?*

Freedom doesn't necessarily mean that everything you might do is a good idea, and of course there are financial restrictions as well. But I think within those limitations, whether or not one is able to act freely is a matter of importance. I hope for the museum to operate according to their own choices, too.

CAMK: We think that the city of Kumamoto and the Foundation are both aiming to achieve the same goals; what we'd like to discuss is how we can use culture and art to make a bigger difference. We at the museum hope to play some part in bringing happiness into the lives of citizens, as well as assisting with what you hope to achieve into the future.

Mayor Onishi: I think that everyone has their own role. We're not able to play the roles taken on by the curators, while interest coordination and budget assignment are things handled by the government. But I think that there are points of connection between one another within those roles, and I hope to discern

those points and work in moving towards the same direction. Of course, we need stay on our toes and to focus on being professional, but engaging in conversation is an important process. In that way, unifying the goals of revival and art can give way to positive changes and results. In order to transform these hard times into a positive experience, we need a place where we can all pool together our efforts and put our heads together about this; to not refute or put down others; to accept and be open to a variety of options and diversity – and I feel that these are the central principles of art.

CAMK: Whether it be in regard to the disaster or to the times themselves, what we need is always in flux. The Foundation believes it's vital to have a clear idea as to what those things are and to act in providing them. We hope that you will allow us to continue with this dialogue about the future of Kumamoto City. Thank you for your time today.

Revival through Culture

The Role of “Culture” Following the Earthquake

If we could consider the full reopening of the Museum taking place 70 days after the earthquake to be a period of *restoration*, we could refer to the time following afterward as a period of *revival*. Following the disaster, the Museum served as an essential *sanctuary* of the heart and a repository of local culture – within that capacity, the museum focused its efforts in responding to the needs of the community and the local residents. We worked in coalition with various organizations in hosting a number of activities at the museum. It was from this time that we manifested all of our intentions into a single phrase: “Revival through Culture.” Our museum has survived this calamity, and our new moniker seemed to reflect the new layer of identity that we had taken on. With this new identity, we went about the process of planning new, self-initiated endeavors and ventures: including exhibitions and more.

In this section, we will present the contents of projects held within Galleries I, II, and III – projects with connection to the Kumamoto Earthquake itself – in pursuit of the question: *What is the role of “culture” in the events following the earthquake?* As we do so, here we retrace the paths that we have travelled in this process of discovery.

An Exhibition Underway, and Response Post-Earthquake

At the time of the Kumamoto Earthquake, the *King of Illusion M. C. Escher and his Challengers* exhibition had been underway at our museum’s Main Gallery space (Gallery I and II). I had been in charge of this exhibition. From my point of view as the head of this exhibition, I briefly compose my thoughts here regarding both the response following the Kumamoto Earthquake, and what came afterward.

At the time of the foreshocks on the 14th of April, I was at my home in the Kumamoto City area; I immediately evacuated to the nearby elementary school after the tremors first set in. After we made our way to the open school yard there and I made sure both myself and my family were all unharmed, the next thing I thought of was the works on display. Regardless, at the time there was no way for me to check what had happened at the exhibition site. Despite these worries, all I could do was try my best in helping with rescue efforts and evacuee response while aftershocks continued on. That took the entire night.

On the following day, the 15th, all of the staff members at the museum reported into work. Centering around the curators, we all began confirming the statuses of the exhibition areas. The moveable wall shifted out of place due to the shaking from the night before, and on a few of the works we saw portions that appeared to have taken some weight; fortunately, though, there was no large-scale damage, and none of the works were fully or even partially-destroyed. We split the work amongst ourselves and began photographing both the exhibition spaces and the works themselves to record their statuses they were in. The small-size Escher works easily moveable by manpower alone, such as the two-dimensional pieces, were taken off of the wall and placed on the floor in the event of any further aftershocks. At this point, we needed to put away all of the displayed works in order to restore the exhibition space back to its former state, figuring we would be

able to re-display the works and reopen the exhibition a little while after the aftershocks died down. This became the museum's plan.

On this day, we got in touch with museums who had lent their works, as well as other related personnel, to report to them the condition of the works on loan. We also informed them of the fact that the museum would be temporarily closed. Incidentally, many of the loaners had already sent us their well-wishes, together with inquiries about the status of their pieces. Another who reached out to us on this day was the supervisor from the Nippon Express's Kumamoto Branch, who had handled our day-to-day transportation needs; he informed us that he could mobilize a few workers and asked if there were any works that needed to be transported right away. From there, we underwent the careful process of storing both temporary displays as well as a number of sculptural pieces. Both time and manpower were incredibly limited – but considering the larger tremors that would come soon afterwards, I think it would be fair to say these efforts were effective in minimizing damages.

It was on that night (before dawn on the 16th) that we saw the onset of the main tremors. Upon this news, the museum issued instructions to staff members to evacuate the prefecture, for those originally from outside of Kumamoto to return to their families' homes, and for those who had a place to go outside of the prefecture to make their way there. With that, I found myself evacuating to my own family's home nearby in Fukuoka. Other staff members confirmed the state of the exhibition space after the onset of the main tremors the next morning, which I was informed of by telephone. I learned that there were some works on loan that had fallen and suffered frame damage, but that the works themselves were mostly unharmed. However, one of the works in the museum's collection had plummeted to the ground after the support wire had been severed. The frame suffered substantial damage and was in need of repair.

We began reporting the state of both the works on display and the museum itself post-earthquake to those involved in the exhibitions. It was unclear when the tremors would stop, and we found ourselves unable to even begin considering whether or not to reopen the exhibition. In the midst of continuous, high-magnitude aftershocks, I remember having doubts that the shaking would ever cease.

Afterwards, we were fortunate enough to have a few workers from Nippon Express come together – despite the fact that each of them had their own damages to look after. We worked together to remove all works of art from the museum by April 24th and store them within our repository. The earthquake had damaged the air conditioning equipment within the museum complex, meaning that we could no longer control the temperature and humidity of the pieces by air conditioning fixtures alone. We attempted to adjust and manage these conditions by way of ventilation, letting air from outside pass through. The staff members remaining in Kumamoto reported specific calculations and figures regarding temperature and humidity to those involved. In reply, many of them gifted us with words of sympathy and encouragement.

I myself returned to Kumamoto on April 21st, returning to work the next day on the 22nd. While I was anxious to get back to work and do what I could, I also remember a sense of anxiety and tension coming back to Kumamoto – as large-scale aftershocks were still rumbling on at the time. I returned home with many safety supplies in hand, such as emergency rations and a helmet.

With the aftershocks continuing on, we entered into talks about when and how we should reopen the

museum and the exhibition. What we decided to do was to temporarily close the museum for up to a month after the onset of the earthquake, as we needed to perform safety checks of the museum itself as well as repairs and restoration efforts – however, with maintenance completed in the Free Space, we decided to open only that portion of the complex beginning from the 11th of May. In the main hall, originally home to the *Damashi-e* exhibition, we saw that safety checks of relevant equipment (such as the rails for the moveable wall) would take some time, and together with the ongoing aftershocks, we were left with no choice but to abandon the idea of reopening the exhibition in its original format. (The exhibition had focused on works by Escher, while also consecutively displaying related works both classic and contemporary by nearly 30 different artists.)

We received permission from the Huis Ten Bosch Museum – whose collection it belonged to – regarding the re-exhibition of the Escher works. We were now able to rehouse and exhibit them within Gallery III and the Nobumichi Ide Memorial Gallery – two small-scale gallery spaces where equipment preparations had been completed. We then made a selection of approximately 40 pieces from the overall number of Escher pieces we had for the main exhibition and recomposed the new displays to be a solo-exhibition of his works – reopening free of charge from May 18th until June 22nd. Despite the exhibition’s small size and its limited exhibition period – less than one month – we saw over 10,000 visitors come to view the exhibition. “I feel like I’ve regained a sense of normalcy coming to see the exhibit,” the visitors had said. It was a joy to know that the show had worked in encouraging the citizens back into good spirits – and it was their kind words that served to greatly encourage the staff members of the museum as well, myself included.

On the other hand, the fact that we were rendered unable to show the exhibition in its original form – despite the fact that the circumstances made that an unavoidable measure – was incredibly disappointing in my position as project organizer. In informing the related parties (especially those who had prepared new works specially for this occasion) of the fact that we had to forgo reopening the exhibition in its original form, I could not help but feel a deep sense of powerlessness and remorse. With all the things that had happened after the onset of the earthquake and all the effort required to stay focused on the tasks ahead, there was no time to despair. The *Escher* exhibition in the smaller exhibition rooms came to a close, we had returned the works to their owners. As the workload began to lessen, I was poignantly reminded that all of the efforts made by both myself and other related parties leading up to the exhibition had come to nothing because of this earthquake. The realization left me hopeless and lethargic for a time.

I regained my mental composure as time passed, but even now I feel a sense of dread with each new exhibition – what if another earthquake brings it to an early end? Regardless, even if another earthquake were to come around, all we can do is make sure that both the visitors and the pieces themselves are unharmed – by paying attention to every detail, checking that the works and their relevant fixtures have been reinforced, and to pray that everything works out.

(Gentaro Sasaki / Curator, Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto)

Visitors' Voices and Comments

When considering the state of affairs of both the affected region and its inhabitants after the disaster, we had trouble remaining positive – we were unsure whether to reopen our doors early.

In the midst of these conditions, we came to hear the voices of customers and became aware of their hopes to see the museum reopened. Candidly speaking, it is true that we were very much uncertain of whether or not we should open our doors again. But after reopening part of the museum on the 11th of May, we were fortunate enough to receive many comments and words of encouragement from visitors who had come to the museum. In hearing these voices, slowly but surely the fog of doubt began to lift.

All of our staff came to understand just how much everyone has supported us – how great and how warm of a presence our customers have been for us. Here, we would like to share a few of the comments that our visitors have been kind enough to leave us.

-Thank you so much for continuing to host exhibitions even after the earthquake!

-Let's keep moving forward together! I am so thankful that the Contemporary Art Museum has brought joy and energy not just to Kumamoto City but to the whole prefecture!!! Don't give up, keep fighting – that's our Kumamoto!

-After the earthquake, the thing I was concerned most about was the museum. I was surprised by the article, but I felt immensely relieved at the same time. I'm rooting for you as always!!

-I am so happy that you continued on with the *Escher* exhibition despite the earthquake. I made my way to the city for the first time after all of that just to see it.

-I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to the efforts all of the staff members at the Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto who have allowed us to see all of these wonderful works, and for free no less. Although it's not much, I continue to root for your revival efforts in hopes that all will be restored soon. Thank you so very much.

-I was worried what would happen with the Kumamoto Earthquake, but I'm glad that I was able to see everything. Such an interesting collection of works.

-I was so relieved to know that there wasn't any significant damage due to the disaster. I'll be sure to stop by whenever I find myself in the central Kumamoto city area.

-Thank you for all of your revival efforts following the disaster. After making my way here, I found it striking how much effort you had taken to reopen the museum: even rushing to get the lobby ready.

-The museum is back after a break. What a relief... I love contemporary art. Kumamoto has taken some serious damage in all of this – let's work to get her back to life one step at a time. Thank you to all the staff and your efforts, despite the fact that you were hit by this time. Stay calm and carry on – let's put our all into each and every day.

-A breath of fresh air from working day in and day out to clean up after the earthquake. (I felt more at peace

to see works of art that had nothing to do with the earthquake, it was refreshing.)

-It was my first time heading outside (and into the city) since the earthquake happened. I made my way to see the art here – my first time at an exhibition (and art museum) after the disaster.

-I am in awe at all of the efforts that everyone has taken here towards revival, despite the grueling conditions of the earthquake. Everyone's hard work seems to shine, and to heal – I felt revitalized.

I'm Glad We Did It!: Museum IPM

Our museum first began implementing Museum IPM (Integrated Pest Management) in 2010 after an unfortunate fumigation accident, and we have continued these efforts for the past seven years (two of our staff members are officially certified as IPM Coordinators of Cultural Property). In this text, I dive into further detail about how such activities played an important role in securing the safety of both the pieces themselves as well as the workers involved at the time of the Kumamoto Earthquake.

Museum IPM refers to a style of preventing harmful pest and insect damage through thorough and continuous day-to-day maintenance while avoiding the use of chemicals or pesticides out of consideration of their possible negative effects to both the environment and to the human body. The method “logically combines techniques thought to be effective and suitable within museums, art museums, resource centers, libraries, document repositories. Within exhibition rooms, repositories, storage centers for literature, and other locations where such storage places for such resources, the method aims to eliminate harmful pests to cultural property as well as removing any possibility visible damage by way of mold to works. does this by controlling and managing harmful organisms and maintaining said standards.”*1 In accordance with this method, one maintains a state of cleanliness and hygiene through the entirety of the museum – including around the works, repositories, exhibition rooms, entrance areas, etc. All museum staff and related parties also collectively and actively engage in prevention efforts: installing trap mechanisms as to get a grasp on continuously-changing environmental circumstances, as well as going about day-to-day efforts in search for possible areas of vulnerability. The Kyushu National Museum serves as the forerunner for Museum IPM within the Kyushu area – many of our staff members participated in the Museum IPM training sessions held at the Kyushu National Museum, where they further deepened their knowledge and would come to implement the methods here.

IPM maintenance and more

Although it had only been centered around the central room of the repository, the IPM maintenance work (one we had planned for years and requested the specialist firm, Tact Inc. to perform) we had implemented just prior to the disaster was consequently helpful in reducing damage to the inside of the repository. It also assisted in lightening the load of those working to restore the repository to its original state.

We made a request to Tact to perform IPM maintenance, entailing IPM cleaning on the floors, walls, and shelves, as well as performing analysis on collected dust in the vicinity.

As we went about this maintenance, the curator overseeing the repository (myself) engaged in the task of removing works (mainly paintings) located within the vicinity and setting them on the floor, as well as clearing away the folding-cases (boxes for use in storing works). In returning them to the inside of the repository, we re-packaged them by size – together with giving instructions on the placement of works as to guarantee better airflow throughout the space (we paid special attention to maintaining a clean environment within the space, as well as maintenance of an air environment that can be adjusted for

temperature suited for the works themselves). What is interesting about the placement of works that we organized on this occasion is that after the disaster, this setup allowed for a safe exit and entrance pathway for the workers who would help restore the repository later on – a surprising development. The route we had originally made for the sake of air flow had worked out to be an effective passageway for safety purposes as well.

Additionally, another analysis that we requested as part of the IPM maintenance process was the “Swiping test for mold” for within the repository. The results for that analysis showed an absence of mold – meaning that even after the air conditioning units had failed post-disaster, we were able to determine that there was a low likelihood of a mold outbreak within the area. This hopeful development helped clear away another element of uncertainty.

I believe that the IPM cleaning measures (vacuuming, removal of folding box containers) we took every month in other repository areas were instrumental in preventing the sudden degradation of the environment the works were stored in. Despite this, the damage from the earthquake has made it so we have had to postpone any plans to implement full IPM cleaning measures – a pressing problem we continue to face.

Daily management by analog thermometer/hygrometer

Directly following the earthquake disaster on April 16th, many of the air conditioning units throughout the complex in which we were located – including those within the museum itself – fell out of operation. We got into close-knit contact with building management and operation staff, and thankfully, the pleasant weather characteristic of that time of year made it possible ventilate outside air into the repositories; we were able to repair the air conditioning units within nine days’ time. Through recording both the temperature and humidity through an analog thermometer and hygrometer, we were able to track any changes in regard to those values throughout the repositories and the exhibition space (the digital, automatic measurement devices in use by the building management organizer did not have a full record of these values due to the onset of the earthquake). It is not as if we didn’t insert them into all rooms of the repository simply because we could not guarantee their safety; there were places where we fell behind in the process of switching out record sheets that noted the temperature and humidity. But because the instrument was battery-powered and functioned automatically, we were able to get a sense of the measurement results to a certain extent.

The placement of analog thermometers/hygrometers is strongly recommended as part of danger prevention and risk management methods within the methodology of Museum IPM. At our museum, our staff went about the task of switching out record sheets on a rotating schedule. The measurement findings recorded by analog thermometers/hygrometers are difficult to tamper with – making them a valuable commodity in negotiating with other museums on account of their credibility.

The air conditioning units that faced the greatest damage were located in the anteroom of the repository. For the three and half days that followed directly after the earthquake disaster, we determined that temperatures remained fixed at within a range of 30°C to 33°C, with a humidity of 78%. Through those findings, we inferred that conditions may lead to a mold outbreak on works that had been temporarily

placed there, and prioritized condition-checks on said pieces.

Continuation and cancellation of exhibitions, returning of works to lending museums, and damage reports

We returned the works lent to us for the *Rinko Kawauchi: The river embraced me* exhibition held the previous fiscal year in mid-May. Similarly, we canceled the *Yodogawa Technique* exhibition that had been underway within the Nobumichi Ide Memorial Gallery/G3 as of April 15th, returning said works by mid-May. The project exhibition *The King of Illusion, M.C. Escher and his Challengers* closed on the 15th of April – but reopened in a smaller version using only the works we had on loan from the collection of Huis Ten Bosch Museum (until June 18th). All other works were returned in the period spanning from the end of May and into the beginning of June.

From the onset of the disaster until the return of the works themselves, we were in touch with the loaning museums and the artists whose works were on display – swiftly and closely sharing information with them: the temperature and humidity management conditions for the exhibitions and repositories at the time of the earthquake, the conditions of the works themselves, as well as the storage environments of works post-wrapping. These efforts were conducive in building firmer relationships of trust with the parties involved.

Restoring the repository

The repository's main chamber is home to a vast number of larger works (contained within folding boxes), organized by size and placed on the floor while set against the wall. However, the loosening and packaging degradation that we had noticed on the 15th of April had only worsened by the 16th at the onset of the main quakes. As aftershocks continued on from April into May, we were fearful of beginning work within the repository itself. Unable to summon the energy to get started on that, the weight of the works continued to degrade the packaging surrounding them.

The interior doors in the repository had also suffered damage, rendering it unable to be opened or closed – we responded by removing everything below the door handle. The airtightness and the safety of the conditions were not ideal, and arranging for the proper equipment to fix the problem was a process that took quite some time.

We made a proposal for a plan to clean up the repository space in May, then making arrangements to perform work within. Undertaken by a team of three curators in combination with three workers specializing in the packaging and handling of works of art, we executed the planned tasks in the middle of June. The members involved worked to repackage the works placed on the repository floor, while collecting and performing a condition-check on works that had fallen from painting racks inside.

Although we had just performed IPM maintenance, we had put off performing said maintenance on the ceiling and the hanger racks hanging from the ceiling due to their height. It was apparent that the dust that had accumulated in such places had all fallen to the ground and onto the works. As such, we went about the task of wiping down the boxes, cleaning the floors, and cleaning off the racks – undergoing IPM cleaning

tasks as we went along.

The damage to works that had been hung on painting racks is as follows.

- The vibrations had dislodged metal fittings on the frames themselves, causing works to fall – possibly due to the dilapidation of the frame.
- Damage to frames due to vibration – possibly due to degradation of frame
- Stretching of small S-pipes due to vibrations, leading to works falling to ground
- Broken glass from damaged frame damaged the surface of other work
- Fittings dislodged from moved work, frame damages surface of another work

On the other hand, because they had been enclosed in folding boxes, we did not note any damage to the frames or the artwork themselves in works where we had noticed load shifting (even for those crushed underneath other works – though we did notice very slight indentation on the back side of one of the frames). From these results, it became policy that we make efforts to package nearly all works – even those stored on painting racks.

In order to return the repository to its former state, we went about the work of neatly repackaging works whose load-bearing status was manageable. Works set up against the wall were secured with a strip of tape. We reinforced works stored on painting racks by using bleached cloth and twilled tape to more sturdily affix them to the rack fixtures.

We also performed adjustments to the temperature and humidity when the air conditioning units had fallen into disrepair, but this led to fears that acidity and alkaline levels in the air would fall out of balance as a result – leading us to perform a “passive indicator test.” But the test results showed no problems, and we decided to continue using the air purification filter that we had used up until that point.

Confirming conditions of damaged works and sharing of information with citizens

As we went through the process of changing schedules for the smaller exhibition rooms post-earthquake, we also opened a “public condition check exhibition” (details on p. 48); during which we confirmed exhibition methods that were resistant to earthquakes. During the period of this exhibition, we also went through a full sweep through all of the works that had been crushed under objects, those which were in folding boxes, and other works that grabbed our attention (58 in total), where we got a grasp on the condition of each of them.

The exhibition that would follow at the end of that fiscal year (planned since the beginning of that fiscal year) – *CAMK Collection vol.5 / You know? It's said that Kumamoto-local-treasures have unveiled!* (From February 18, 2017 until March 26, 32 days in length) was an exhibition that we had advertised as centering entirely around works that had been affected by the disaster in some way, together with the fact that condition checks performed on the works served as an important objective of the event. A collective of 62 works was assembled (works that served as parts of each other were also included, so in reality there were over 130 available). But we had only confirmed around 200 works during the 2016 fiscal year. There is a total of 1,400 pieces in our collection, meaning that even at a rate of 100 works per year it would still take 14 years to complete the process.

The fact that we were able to take the first step and elected to take suitable action – notably the decision to begin, continued, and implemented museum-IPM measures, the restoration of repository works and their storage environments – could be summed up into one phrase: “I’m glad we were doing museum IPM!” It is my intention to continue forward with these endeavors – calmly and assuredly – on into the future.

(Haruko Tomizawa / Chief Examiner, Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto Curatorial Division)

*Mitsuko Honda, *“Onshitsudo Sokuteiki no Shurui to Tokucho – Bunkazai IPM no Genba kara –.” Heisei 27 nen do dai 37 kai bunka zai no chuukingai / hozontaisaku kenshuu kai. Koekizaidan hojinbunkazaichuukinngaikennyujo*” p. 19. June, 2015.

Reopening the Art Museum, As an Art Museum?

On the 14th and 16th of April, 2016, a succession of earthquakes struck Kumamoto with Kumamoto situated directly above their points of origin – one at magnitude 6.4, one at magnitude 7.3, and epicenters 10 kilometers in depth. It felt as if something was thrashing wildly beneath our very houses.

Fortunately, both the foreshocks and the main tremors occurred at night, meaning that there were no casualties or injuries in the popular tourist sights or shopping malls. Their origin points were inland, so no resultant tsunamis ensued. As a result, far fewer were affected when compared to other cities which had endured disasters of a similar scale.

But regardless, over 3,000 aftershocks continued to rumble on until the end of April. It was as if they might never end, like we could be tossed upwards at any moment – a sentiment that was a source of stress for all of the locals.

If one was to describe the characteristics of the Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto as far its location, what one probably first note is that it is located in a building complex situated within the central portion of Kumamoto city – an area with the highest concentration of traffic in the prefecture. It's also open until 8 PM every day, and half of the space is open to the public: free of charge.

One is able to read several thousands of books for free (though we do not lend out books) within the Home Gallery. Our Kids Salon is Japan's only regional child-care center within a museum structure – with a childcare advisor on staff every day from 10:00 AM to 15:00 PM. The museum also features a smattering of sofas located all around the facility, allowing for people to sit when and when they please. Essentially, there are many who make their way to the facility for reasons other than for viewing art – the museum's most central purpose. Each day, people use the museum as a gathering area (at the entrance), as a rest area, a study area for students, a meeting area, and an area for couples to meet. Mothers and fathers pushing along strollers often head to our Kids Salon. Frequent visitors and customers are not bothered in the slightest by the sound of crying children echoing out in the halls; this is the kind of place that we manage.

This account documents how a museum, functioning in the capacities listed above, should think, should work, and should operate within a city that has faced such a disaster.

A town, when hit by an earthquake of this scale, is thrown into an inexplicable state. Water, gas, electricity, and other lifelines so ingrained into our lives as modern human beings are disrupted. Circulation ceases. Food disappears from convenience stores, and it can be difficult to even use the toilet or take a bath. We face pressure under conditions that would seem unthinkable in modern-day Japan.

From the day after the earthquake, the Self-Defense Force and various repair workers for buildings and other utilities began to make their way en masse into the city. Traffic swamped the city roads.

On television, information on earthquakes aired day after day. On the blue news ticker, we see the names of evacuation centers, water provision centers, along with information on further resultant tremors in an endless loop. Aftershocks continue. 24 hours a day, all five of our senses are laid bare to the earthquake.

In the midst of it all, we see people in government and local government areas work tirelessly to ensure our safety and ways of life: despite the fact that they, too, are victims of the quake themselves. In watching such scenes, I cannot forget the helplessness I felt: the irritation that one is unable to provide help, the impatience, and the desolation.

“We should *reopen the art museum as an art museum*: not only to enliven and revitalize the town, but because our museum is where it is.”

From the outset of this museum disaster, the head of our museum maintained this position.

We entered into specific arguments regarding the timing for reopening the museum around 10 days after the initial quakes. Though the scale of damage varied by building, electricity had been restored and water had been partially restored. Gas was still unavailable. No specific timeline was available for restoration for children’s facilities and malls, and schools remained in a state of closure. On the other hand, we saw the shopping mall (where most of the stores that had shut their doors following the main quakes) slowly regain signs of life. Shop doors were steadily beginning to open again.

And although not everyone had necessarily been on board with the idea of reviving the art museum as a place of art – or to *reopen the art museum as an art museum* -- everyone was uniform in their desire to take action for the sake of the citizens nearby.

With that, we decided to first resume operation for the spaces ingrained in the daily lives of our citizens – essentially, the free spaces including the Home Gallery and the Kids Salon.

Most encouraging of all were the warm voices of support and the inquiries we had received from so many people in the city. “When are you going to reopen?” “When will the exhibitions come back?” We received many questions like these – and when we told them that we had no definite timeline in place, they would respond reassuringly: “We’re rooting for you!” More and more calls like this poured in each day, and we began to worry about how to respond.

Is there any meaning in reopening the museum as it once was? What can art do, anyway? Wouldn’t it just make the victims feel even worse? We agonized over such things. But even after we decided to reopen the museum, we discussed amongst ourselves about what stance we should take in welcoming in our visitors. Our staff had suffered the effects of the disaster as well, and many were living in evacuation centers or out of their own cars. People were not allowed to return to their housing complexes and were forced to commute from faraway distances. People’s homes were damaged, liquefied, and scarred. Regardless, it was very much because of these circumstances that everyone began to carefully consider what sort of “place/space” and what kind of “time /experience” was really necessary at a time like this.

People need a place to feel relief, somewhere they just can drop by when they feel like it. Where they don’t have to think too much. I think that parents have it tough when their children don’t have a place like this they can go to. And so, with our families and those close to us in mind, we went about the task of cleaning up the museum and preparing it for reopening, little by little. On the first day of reopening, many mothers pushing strollers were among those in line. *How good it is to be open again* ... I found myself getting emotional.

As noted earlier, the museum reopened its free spaces on May 11th. Visitors on the first day numbered

over 200 – a figure which increased greatly upon reopening the exhibition spaces. We received a variety of messages and comments: “After the earthquake, I was worried to exhaustion, but now I feel at ease again.” “A breath of fresh air from the everyday tasks of cleaning up after the earthquake.” “It feels like I was able to step out of my daily routine for a bit. A calming experience.” “Thank you for reopening again.” The words of the locals gave us the energy to keep moving forward, every day.

A little while after we had reopened the museum, we also began to receive a flurry of proposals for collaborative events or ventures. The museum had begun to function as a unique “place”: a receptacle for these sentiments from people, both within the prefecture and from beyond, who wanted to support or give hope to those affected. While we accepted many of these proposals and requests, there were a good number that we had to turn down as well – as they may not have been in line with the feelings or wishes of the citizens. The guiding principle for all of our activities at the time was the desire to fulfill the desires of the affected: to give them happiness, to give them respite, and to give them the energy to go on. This was our source of motivation.

One year passed. In looking back, we realized we had actually broken our record for the number of guests to the museum.

I wonder if there are any cities at present that cite the reopening and management of cultural facilities as a central priority within the BCP (Business Continuity Plan) for public and private organizations in local areas.

Speaking frankly, most people likely think that the revival of art and cultural activities is an endeavor that can wait other efforts have settled down first. Many don’t give a single thought to art or culture when devising such disaster-preparedness plans in the first place.

As a museum that survived such an earthquake, however, it became clear to us just how desperately so many citizens sought out a place to forget about the aftermath not long after the disaster.

Many were afraid to be home alone, but being under so many sets of eyes with so many people in an evacuation center is a tiring endeavor in itself. Of course, one can find solace in the midst of such a vast number of people. But I think what people needed for the stability of their own minds was a “*place/space*” where one did not have to fret over their behavior, a place with anonymity, as well as a “*time/experience*” where one did not have to think about the earthquake -- or to simply let it slip from the mind for the while. The lives of the locals continue on and on, even after the disaster. A common problem following catastrophes like these is the mental trauma that lingers afterwards. But in creating a place that helps act as an essential evacuation zone for the soul, one may find that they are better equipped to nurse their own wounds in the long run. Maybe it gives them a better place to start off.

Is the revitalization of culture and the reopening of cultural facilities really something to put off until all emergency work and all related tasks have been completed?

Please, take the time to turn your ears to the voices of the people in these accounts: their movements, and their voices.

Aside from the Kumamoto Earthquake, a number of stronger earthquakes rocked the world in the last fiscal year. As I write this, I am told that over 400 are dead due to an earthquake that took place in Iran and Iraq.

It was a magnitude 7.3 – the same scale as the one that struck Kumamoto. I am painfully reminded of my own powerlessness do to anything to help.

Perhaps it's unavoidable that earthquakes will continue to occur in the future, and that there will be towns and communities that will be affected. In such a time, what one can do is to make sure that your community is well-prepared as to minimize damage, to make sure the necessary lifelines for habitation and the lifestyles of citizens are well-supported, to rebuild the economy, and to help people reclaim their spirits. In essence, there is much to be done. Kumamoto Prefecture and all of cities, towns, and villages within are taking their own measures to engage in revitalization.

When a disaster like this strikes, though, every person is, at the same time, a victim. We came to understand that no matter the scale of the damage to an individual's possessions, everyone has suffered their own wounds. It is in such a time that citizens truly need a "place/space" and "time/experience" where they can temporarily free themselves from the tension. Could we not say that many locals subconsciously desire an essential "sanctuary for the heart"?

Cultural facilities and art were not able to be of any help in post-earthquake response. But tensions continued to grow and mental fatigue began to accumulate; and it is precisely because of these conditions that we wanted to open our doors to visitors. We wished our space to be a place of respite, where visitors can feel free to drop by whatever they want. We want our viewers to reclaim the power they need to face their every day, to feel refreshed, and for their experiences here to serve as a catalyst for them to face their own lives with more optimism. I feel this strongly.

There has never been a year where I have thought more deeply about what the purpose of a museum of art is, or about the mission such a place has to carry out.

And, even if another disaster of this kind were to strike again, I would want the Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto to open its doors again as it once was -- as the Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto.

Aftershocks continue in Tohoku and in Kumamoto even up into this day. At the time that I write this, September 2017, there have been over 4,400 aftershocks since the onset of the disaster. There are many who sink into fear each time one of those quakes come.

It is our hope that what we have experienced and what we have felt will assist future victims of such disasters in finding "their own sanctuary of the heart", even it's just a little bit sooner.

(Chika Iwasaki / Assistant Manager, Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto Administration Office)

Kumamoto Earthquake: Document
Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto

After the Earthquake

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