

Shinshoji Temple: Kohte

The Kohte, designed by sculptor Kohei Nawa and his creative platform Sandwich, seems to rise up out of the ground. Unlike any other building at Shinshoji Temple, the Kohte is both an impressive piece of architecture and an art installation.

The Kohte is shaped like a ship, raised high on pylons over a sea of scattered rocks. The building is solid concrete, but looks light enough to set sail, covered in nearly 590,000 Sawara cypress planks that seem to ripple with the building's soft curves. The roof is covered in Sawara cypress, too, but its planks have darkened over time, while its underside remains light.

Walking up a winding path, visitors eventually find themselves at a wooden walkway leading directly into the Kohte. Inside is an installation created by Sandwich designed to mimic the experience of Zen meditation. During peak times, there can be a queue for the Kohte, but Nawa's art is the perfect antidote to the frustration of waiting in line.