

## Toyo Ito Museum of Architecture, Imabari

Opened in 2011, the Toyo Ito Museum of Architecture is a unique venue on the island of Omishima in Ehime Prefecture. Celebrated architect Ito Toyo designed the museum in two parts. The first building, named Steel Hut, is made up of a collection of polyhedrons joined together, like building blocks. It is based on an Ito design for the Deichman Library in Oslo. Inside the Steel Hut are five separate spaces housing rotating exhibitions, chosen by Ito. Walking through the surprisingly large space can be disorienting—there are almost no purely vertical walls, and windows and doorways open from unexpected places.

The second building, Silver Hut, is a replica of Ito's former home in Tokyo, which he designed in 1984. Covered with a thin, vaulted roof, Silver Hut is an open space with abundant natural light that looks like it was made to sit on the Seto Inland Sea. Known as one of his early masterpieces, the original Silver Hut was not open to visitors, so Ito created the replica for everyone to enjoy.

Inside, Silver Hut has brightly-colored, triangular skylights and furniture designed by Ohashi Akira, along with a library filled with project documents from a selection of Ito's previous buildings. A running theme of the Toyo Ito Museum of Architecture is the way architecture and design can help local communities. This is a subject close to Ito's heart, as he worked with different groups on Omishima to find new uses for old buildings to maintain the island's heritage.

For those who wish to seek out more of Ito's designs, the Ken Iwata Mother and Child Museum is just a short drive from the Toyo Ito Museum of Architecture. The spiral-shaped building housing Iwata's sculptures was also designed by Ito.