

Third Floor Exhibit

This exhibit covers the history of tile-making in and around Tajimi, including the evolution of both tile manufacturing and methods of tile application. Occasionally, temporary exhibitions are held in a separate gallery annex across from the permanent exhibit.

The permanent exhibit traces the development of the tile industry and its connections to local geography and pottery-making traditions, spanning the period from the introduction of ceramic building materials in the sixth century all the way to the modern day. Yamauchi Itsuzō (1908–1992) was a key figure in this development. Yamauchi was a driving force in the industrialization of local ceramics and is considered the inventor of glazed porcelain mosaic tiles in Japan. At a time when many ceramicists guarded their methods, Yamauchi openly shared his techniques in order to promote a shift from large, ornately decorated tiles to small, single-color tiles that were easier to make in large quantities. Smaller tiles also have a wider range of applications and are easier to apply to irregularly shaped items, such as the bathtubs displayed on the third and fourth floors. Industrially produced tiles are simpler in design and uniform in shape, but they can be assembled in diverse colors to create elaborate mosaics.

The exhibit also contains a variety of tools and equipment used in tile manufacturing, including an antique hand press, an early glaze-sprayer made from repurposed agricultural equipment, and a large collection of the *hari-ban* mounting boards that tilemakers use to assemble complex tile patterns before applying them.