

### **Entryway**

The museum's design is the work of celebrated architect Fujimori Terunobu, who drew inspiration from Tajimi's tile industry and the earth that sustains it. The building's atypical sloping shape resembles the face of a clay quarry, and there are pine trees growing along the outer contour of the roof and earthen walls. Shards of tea bowls and tiles donated by local residents are embedded in the building's earth-colored façade.

An alcove near the museum's entryway displays a single piece of artwork: a contemporary ceramic piece by local artist Itō Keiji titled *Soku*, or "foot." A similar piece by Itō inspired Fujimori's concept for the museum building. In viewing the piece, Itō said he imagined a foot descending from the heavens, leaving a depression in the earth like the clay quarries that dot Tajimi. The alcove is illuminated by natural light flowing down from a shaft in the roof. The shadow cast by the artwork represents Fujimori's imagined footprint.

A two-story staircase leads from the alcove to the main exhibition rooms. The walls alongside the staircase are plastered with earth, and the staircase itself is dimly lit, evoking the gentle rise of a *noborigama* climbing kiln. The passage gradually narrows to create a forced sense of perspective, then ends in an explosion of light from the oculus on the fourth floor. The overall effect is of traveling through a long underground tunnel and emerging into the bright world of mosaic tile.