

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA OPENS AN EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO THE 50-YEAR LIFESPAN OF THE NAKAGIN CAPSULE TOWER ON JULY 10, 2025

The Many Lives of The Nakagin Capsule Tower Showcases a Fully Restored Capsule from MoMA's Collection

NEW YORK, MAY 8, 2025 [Updated July 8, 2025]—The Museum of Modern Art presents a focused exhibition dedicated to the 50-year lifespan of the Nakagin Capsule Tower, a groundbreaking project by Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa (1934–2007) that was located in Tokyo's Ginza District from 1972 until 2022. ***The Many Lives of the Nakagin Capsule Tower***, on view from July 10, 2025, through July 12, 2026, in MoMA's street-level galleries, presents capsule A1305 alongside nearly 45 pieces of contextual material that showcase the evolving and unexpected uses of the building. These materials include the project's only surviving model from 1970–72; original drawings, photographs, and promotional ephemera; an archival film and audio recordings; interviews with former tenants; and an interactive virtual tour of the entire building. Marketed as micro-dwellings for commuting businessmen, the building was composed of two interconnected concrete-and-steel towers that hosted 140 single-occupancy “capsules,” each fully equipped with prefabricated fixtures and a Sony color TV. Once located on the highest floor of the building, capsule A1305 is fully restored with the maximum number of original fittings salvaged from other rescued capsules, including the full array of audio electronics that were offered as add-on features. The capsule, one of only 14 restored in their original condition after the building was dismantled in 2022, was acquired by MoMA in 2023. MoMA members have the opportunity to enter the capsule during a number of special activation events. *The Many Lives of Nakagin Capsule Tower* is organized by Evangelos Kotsioris, Assistant Curator, with Paula Vilaplana de Miguel, Curatorial Associate, Department of Architecture and Design.

The Nakagin Capsule Tower is one of Kurokawa's most emblematic projects and one of the few realizations of Metabolism—a Japanese movement of the 1960s whose members, some influenced by biology, conceived cities and buildings that could adapt over time. Kurokawa envisioned architecture capable of growth, adaptation, and transformation through what he called “metabolic cycles.” In the case of the Nakagin Capsule Tower, the cores of the building were originally intended to remain intact while capsules would be replaced every 25 to 35 years in response to changing needs—yet that vision was never realized. Instead, over five decades, the capsules remained, but their functions changed dramatically as they were repurposed into second homes, offices, student rooms, or even tea rooms, libraries, galleries, and DJ booths, among other uses. This exhibition invites visitors to reconsider how cities confront aging buildings and rapid urbanization—and to imagine how architecture might endure by taking on new roles, functions, and meanings beyond what its designers ever imagined.

The exhibition is accompanied by a new publication in the MoMA One on One series, *Kisho Kurokawa: Nakagin Capsule Tower*, featuring a richly illustrated text by Evangelos Kotsioris. The book delves into the groundbreaking design, construction, transformation, demolition, and legacy of this unprecedented experiment in urban living and includes previously unpublished material and multiple testimonies from some of the last residents of the building. 48 pages, 45 color illustrations. Paperback with flaps, \$14.95. ISBN: 978-1-63345-173-5. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and available at the MoMA Design Stores. Distributed to the trade through ARTBOOK|D.A.P. in the United States and Canada, and through Thames & Hudson in the rest of the world.

A series of public events will be organized with Japan Society in New York throughout the course of the exhibition. More information will be available on moma.org.

SPONSORSHIP:

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