

Liminality in Motion

An installation that explores new possibilities for architecture through embodied experience.



How Can We Perceive the Liminality of Boundaries?

Liminality in Motion explores how the Japanese notion of ma—the space in-between—can be experienced through the body. Inspired by Noh theatre, which has long portrayed thresholds between different worlds, the work draws on its distinctive sense of body, sound, and time to reveal invisible presences and boundaries.

By combining architectural space with an immersive sound environment, the installation invites visitors to physically experience a liminal condition where interior and exterior, self and other, overlap and intertwine.

Boundary as a Space of Transmission

Our world is composed of various boundaries, ranging from social systems to the realm of inner consciousness. Yet boundaries are not fixed lines. Rather, they are relational spaces where people and things encounter one another and where emotions, bodies, and perceptions intersect.

In this project, boundaries are understood not as rigid divisions but as fluctuating conditions that continuously emerge through relationships with others. Through light, shadow, and bodily movement, we reinterpret the “traditional place” that appears in the spaces between existence and absence, and explore new forms of boundary-making.



Stone and Boundary

Stone is not merely a material object. Across cultures and histories, it has been closely associated with the body, memory, belief, and ritual. People touch stones, worship them, pray to them, and through such acts project meaning onto them. Stone has long functioned as a medium connecting the body and landscape, reality and imagination.

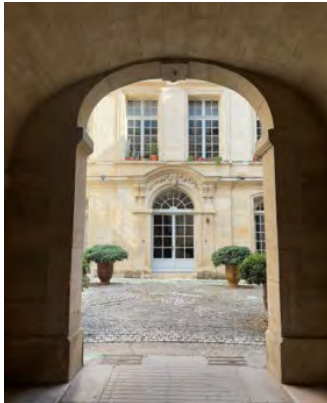
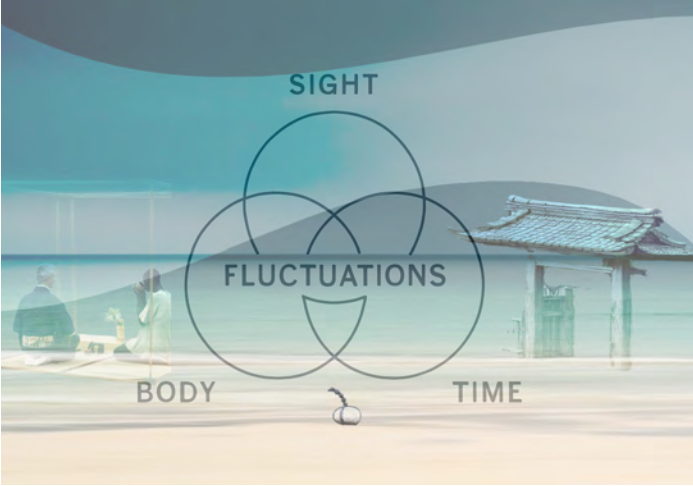
In this project, stone is understood not as an isolated entity but as something that reveals relationships generated through encounters with other beings. Through stone, boundaries become dynamic spaces where people and the world establish new connections.



The Multilayered Nature of Boundary Experience

Boundaries are not fixed lines. They emerge through vision, the body, and time, taking on multiple forms according to perception and experience.

They become visible when light appears or disappears, through bodily movement, or through actions that alter one’s surroundings. In FAV, such boundaries naturally arise within the process of creation itself. Here, boundaries are experienced not as clear-cut divisions but as continuously shifting and interconnected conditions.

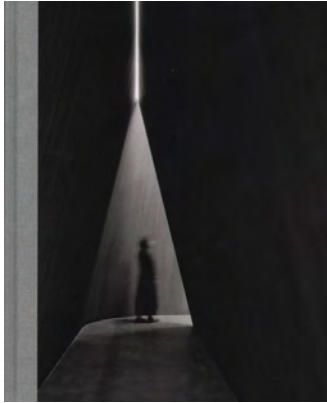
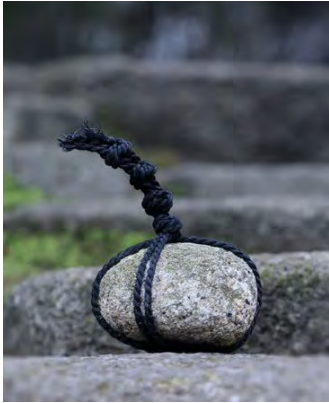


Urban Memory Embedded in the Traces of Stone

Textures collected from buildings and courtyards across Montpellier are transformed into clay reliefs and transferred onto translucent materials such as resin.

Suspended in space, these fragments preserve traces of stone while evoking memories of places, people, and the city itself.

Gathered from different locations, they converge in a single space to reconstruct an urban memory. Through movement and perception, visitors connect their own memories with those embedded in the city.



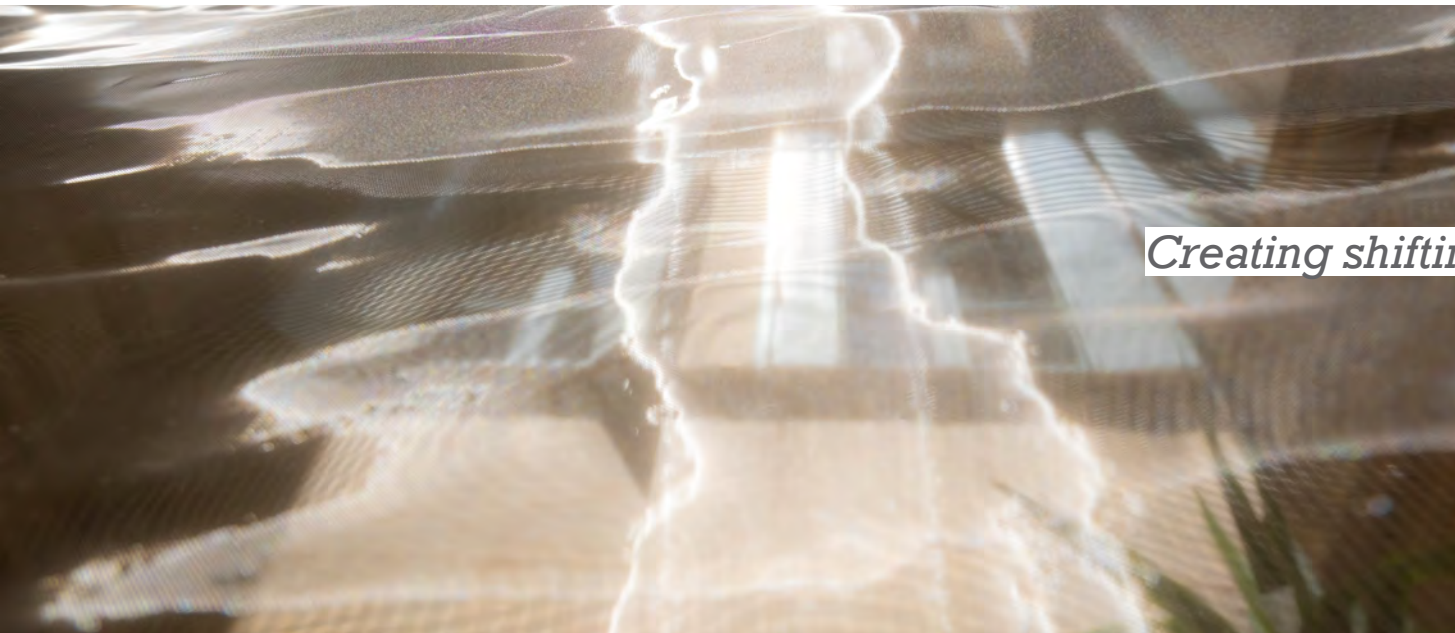
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What is a boundary?



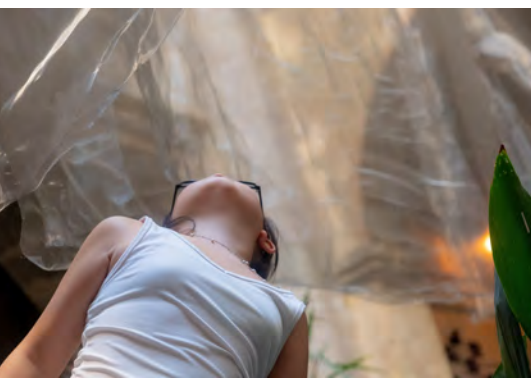
Connected to urban memory, changing over time.



Creating shifting relationships between body and presence.



Exploring transmission across body and architecture.



Perceiving boundaries through the body.





Traces of Earth/Osaka EXPO 2025



Stones quarried 400 years ago for Osaka Castle's stone walls—*Zannen-ishi** —are now brought once again to Yumeshima. Although carefully shaped, they never reached the castle, and the local community eventually watched over them with affection, giving them the name "*Zannen-ishi*."* *Zannen-ishi* (lit. unfortunate stone): Stones quarried for the reconstruction of Osaka Castle but left unused for a long time for various reasons As they were once carried toward Osaka in a festive procession, we now convey them again to the Expo site. This act shines new light on Japan's ishiku (stone masonry) culture, linking the traces of those who shaped the stones, the quiet presence of the stones themselves, and contemporary architecture. Through this, we hope to encourage reflection on how architecture can coexist with nature and inspire new ways of imagining that future.

The competition that led to our participation

Three years ago, I applied for a competition held as part of Expo 2025 Osaka-Kansai, which invited architects under the age of 40 to design small but essential facilities—such as toilets, rest areas, and stages—within the Expo grounds. I was fortunate to be selected. The jury included Sou Fujimoto, who is designing the central ring structure for the Expo, along with Akihisa Hirata and Yasutaka Yoshimura. Our team is most youngest team in 20 units.



What is our mission for this Expo2025 in Osaka?

Through this Expo architecture, what we hoped to achieve was to re-enact — like a festival — the journey of the stones that were quarried 400 years ago to build the stone walls of Osaka Castle. But this time, across four centuries, we aimed to build not just architecture, but also relationships with many people along the way.



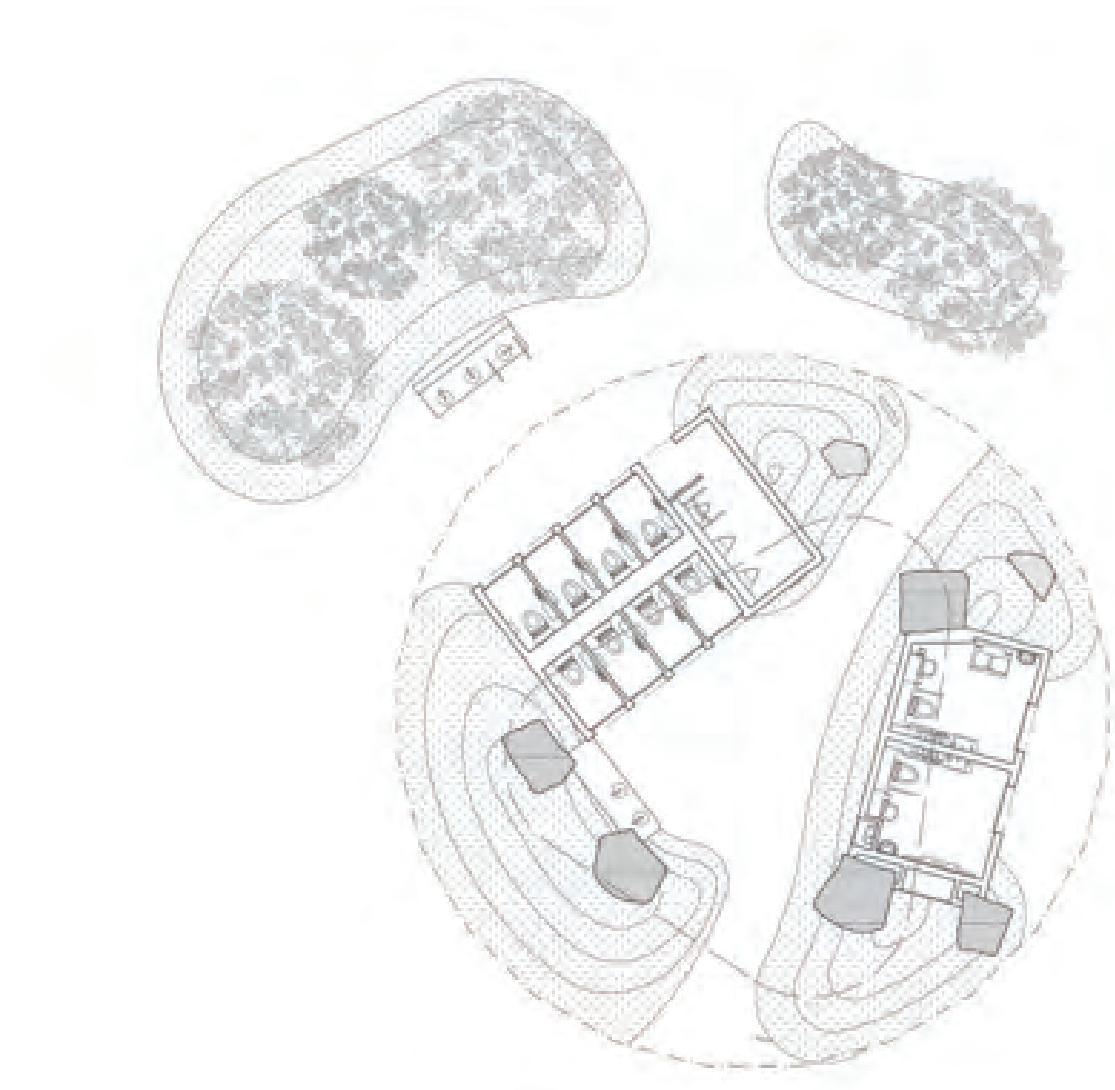
About These stones : Zannen-ishi Stones

The stones are known as *Zannen-ishi* .They were quarried during the Tokugawa period, about 400 years ago, to expand the stone walls of Osaka Castle beyond the existing structure. However, due to various circumstances—such as being dropped during transport—they were never used, and for a long time, many of them remained scattered across different parts of the Kansai region. In Japanese, the word Zan-nen conveys a feeling of pity or sympathetic sorrow. These stones were laboriously quarried from the mountains but never reached Osaka Castle. Moved by their unrealized purpose, people came to call them *Zannen-ishi*—'Pity Stones'—with a sense of affection and empathy. We sought to reinterpret this negative context and meaning, using our architecture and the unique opportunity of the Expo to transform it into something positive.



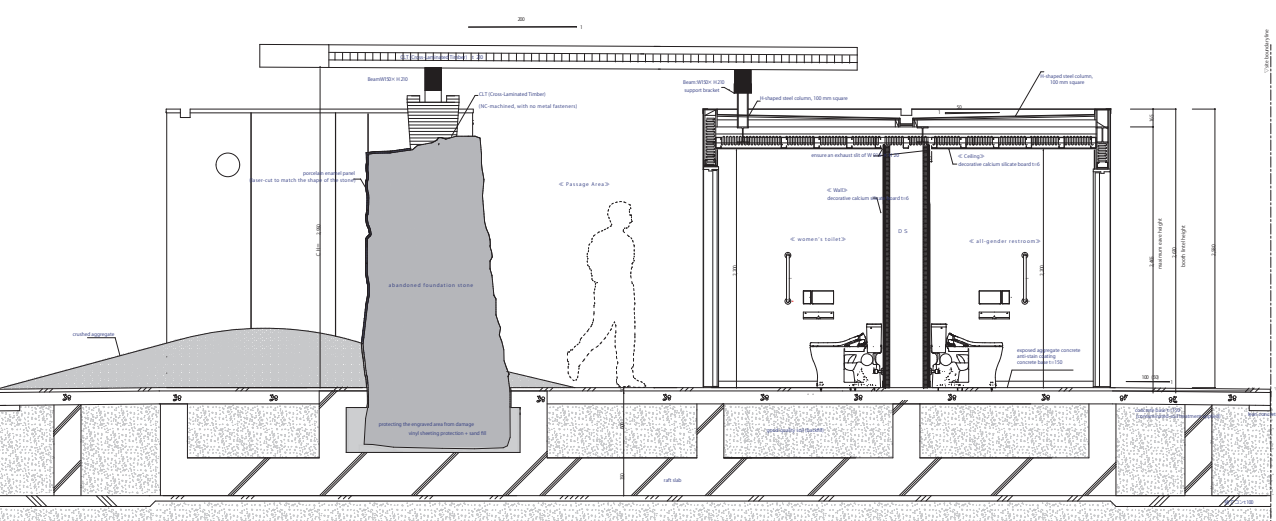
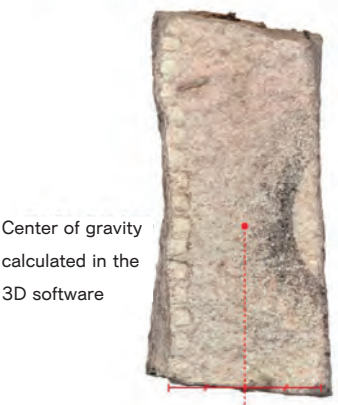
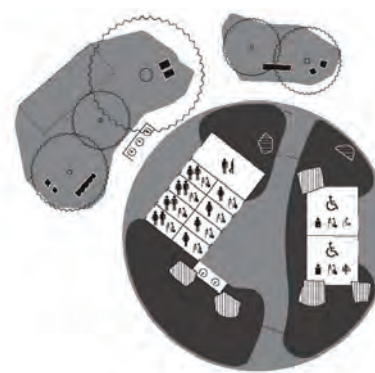
Planning-Zoning

The stones face the plaza, and the layout allows for through-access across the site. Toilet numbers were predetermined by the Expo Association. We zoned the circular site as a whole, integrating nearby landscape features. Accessible toilets are placed up front, with women's inside and all-gender/men's along the exterior. We chose each stone by observing its character and presence, then decided its orientation in relation to the building's function and layout. This process, inspired by Japanese garden design, accepts natural forms rather than imposing a fixed plan. The stones also serve structural roles, so their placement was adjusted with factors like roof span in mind.



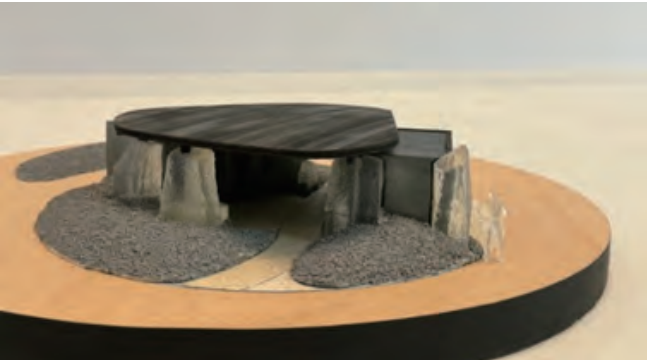
Tectonics and Structure

In this construction method, digital technology is used to reconstruct artificial elements in response to natural forms. This project reinterprets Ishibadate-construction method, a traditional Japanese stone-based construction method, by combining it with digital technologies to create a new approach. The left diagram shows the traditional technique of hand-carving wood to match each stone. The right diagram updates this process using 3D scanning and five-axis machining to achieve the same precision. After the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, stricter building codes made such stone methods difficult to use. We hope this fusion of tradition and technology can help bring stone back into everyday architecture.



Activity with EXPO 2025

During the Expo period (April 13–October 13, 2025) and in the months surrounding it, we sought to open this publicly commissioned building to a broad audience. Architectural exhibitions were held in central Tokyo and between major architecture galleries in Japan. These exhibitions presented not only the design and construction process, but also the diverse perspectives surrounding the project—including both supportive and critical voices. Because this architecture, built using historically forgotten stones, is entirely assembled through dry-fitting, elements such as the roof and posts are simply placed without mechanical fastening. To communicate this unique construction method, we also created mock-ups that allowed visitors to experience the assembly process firsthand.



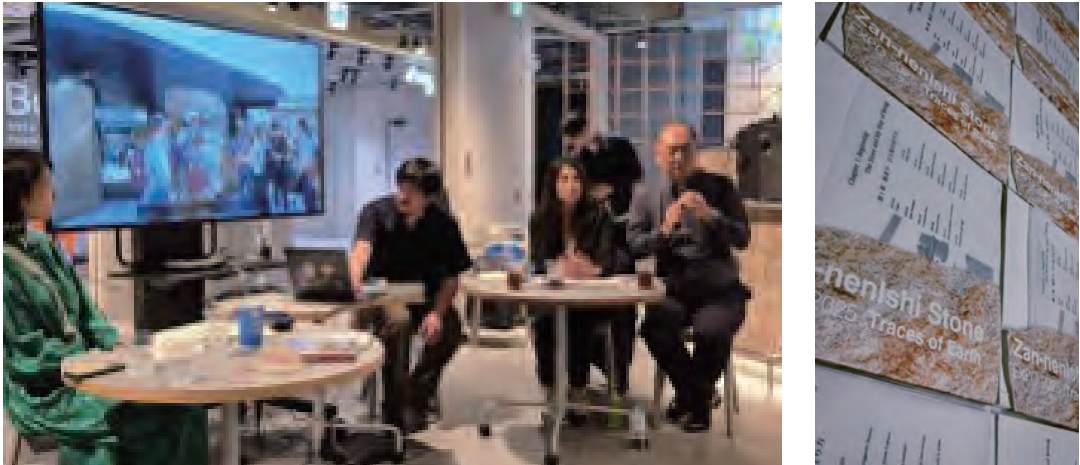
Architectural Memory Stamp

Because the Expo building would be dismantled after six months, I created unofficial “stone stamps” using actual stones engraved with the project’s icon. Their resistant stamping action allowed visitors to feel the project’s theme—the tension between nature and humans. Born from public demand rather than planning, the stamps became evidence of the building’s popularity, which received the highest rating among all public facilities at the Expo.



Creating Futures with Archaeologists

The Expo became an opportunity to expand beyond the field of architecture and create numerous occasions for dialogue with archaeologists. Together, we discussed how cultural assets—once threatened by modern road construction—can be preserved and carried into the future as part of the city’s identity. I plan to continue this collaboration by compiling these discussions and insights into publications.



Yurica Takemura

Principal of Yurica Design & Architecture / First-Class Architect (Japan)
Based in both Nara and San Francisco, engaging in architectural design across regions.

- 1991 Born in Nara, Japan
- 2010 Graduated from Nara Gakuen Junior and Senior High School
- 2015 B.A. in Architecture, Department of Environmental Urban Design, Kinki University
- 2016 Completed the Ritsumeikan University–Monash University (Australia) Joint Studio Design Program
- 2017 M.A. in Environmental Urban Design, Graduate School of Ritsumeikan University
- (2017–2022) At KAJIMA DESIGN, engaged in the design of residences, student housing, luxury hotels, and commercial facilities, contributing to numerous international projects.
- 2022 Founded Yurica Design & Architecture
- 2025 Established Yurica Design First-Class Architect Office, Inc.

- Awards
Selected as one of the “Top 20 Emerging Architects” for the Osaka–Kansai Expo (2022)
Outstanding Award, Architectural Institute of Japan Competition;
Grand Prize, Ogo Honjin Renovation Design Competition (2017); and multiple others.
- Jury Roles
Judge, National Federation of Young Woodworkers – Wood Utilization Competition
Judge, Kenchiku Shinjin-sen (Newcomer Architects Competition)
- Teaching
Lecturer at Ritsumeikan University and Kinki University.
Responsible for the annual design studio and research program at the Koyasan Studio, 2025–2035.

Invisible Cities: Koyasan, 2025–2035

—An Architectural Installation Studio Exploring Space through Material, Memory, and the Body—

A ten-year joint project between the Urai Laboratory and Yurica Design & Architecture, reinterpreting Koyasan’s 1,200-year heritage through contemporary research. The project explores the site’s renewed relevance and ultimately seeks to envision a new model of shukubō (temple lodging).



Shimogamo Rondo 2023–2033

—A Dynamic Architecture that Evolves While Inheriting and Unfolding Its Stories—

An over-90-year-old Western-style house, long left vacant, is now shared by twenty researchers who collectively repair and inhabit it. I am responsible for the renovation of one room, exploring how architecture can function as a dynamic, commons-oriented practice—one that continues to evolve by inheriting and opening the stories of those who live with it.



Architectural Philosophy :
OPEN NOSTALGIA

I view architecture as an act of reweaving relationships between people and place, past and future—drawing out the voices held in memory and material. Under the idea of Open Nostalgia, I design architecture not as a fixed outcome but as something continually cultivated through the ongoing interplay of people and time.

