

Two Houses
Contribution to the European Award for Architecture Intervention AADIPA
Category D — Disclosure
March 2021

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»The stills produce a series of emotions about architecture, but also represent a bigger issue about these houses as homes. We witness the decay, we feel the energy of the inhabitants and we empathise with the ways people change the houses they live in.« Helena Čapková

The Two Houses research project at the Chair of Design and Housing at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar focuses on the interaction between the Bauhaus and Japan, based on two houses in the suburbs of Tokyo — Migishi Atelier and Bunzo Yamaguchi House. Both houses were designed in the 1930s and 40s by Japanese architect Iwao Yamawaki (1898-1987), a student at the Bauhaus in Dessau, and Bunzo Yamaguchi (1902-1978), who worked in Walter Gropius' practice at that time, and are still privately owned today.

The Bunzo Yamaguchi House appears autonomous and timeless with its windowless facade made of light brick, only interrupted by another entrance to the upper floor, a garage door, an anterior area, which is truncated on one side, meeting a flush, shallow roof slope. The wood-clad side view looks like a rural farmhouse and reveals the traditional Japanese Minka joinery. The Janus-faced architecture combines European and Japanese influences that extend to original and contemporary uses in the garden and the outbuildings as well as to the interior of the building, where extensions and fixtures were added in the 1970s. The owners live on the upper floor of Bunzo Yamaguchi House, while the ground floor and the garden are sometimes used for photo shoots and salon concerts.

The Migishi Atelier features a light and sculptural steel spiral staircase immediately behind a large, ceiling-high, south-facing studio window; it leads to a Tatami room on the gallery level. The influence of the Bauhaus in Dessau is unmistakable. The studio is partly furnished and contains some personal objects, but it is unoccupied. Some walls show signs of settlement; the paint is peeling off others. The Migishi Atelier was converted after Kotaro Migishi died at an early age and his wife, the painter Setsuko Migishi, needed more rooms for herself and her family. Long abandoned, since the family had moved to an apartment house it had built at the back of the property after returning from an extended stay in Europe, it is now open to the public, used for temporary exhibitions and let as a photo studio.

The film [Two Houses \(2019\)](#) documents the buildings' architecture and tells the story of their inhabitants, providing glimpses of life in and with the buildings. It is accompanied by the publication [Two Houses — Texts](#) which includes interviews with Helena Čapková, Terunobu Fujimori, Taishi Watanabe and Yoshiharu Tsukamoto as well as texts and images from the film and drawings of the houses in different stages.

The Two Houses project was selected by the Future Architecture Platform and has been presented at the 2021 Creative Exchange: Landscapes of Care.

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar
Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism
Chair of Design and Housing
Prof. Verena von Beckerath

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Stills from the film

Two Houses (2019)

38 min

Director: Verena von Beckerath

Assistant directors: Niklas Fanelsa, Momoko Yasaka, Maximilian von Zepelin

Camera, Sound, Editing: Jens Franke

Produced by: Bauhaus-Universität Weimar

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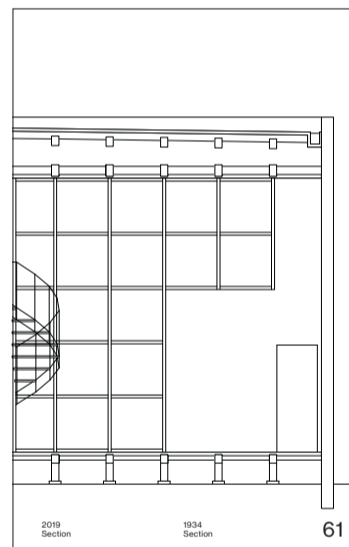
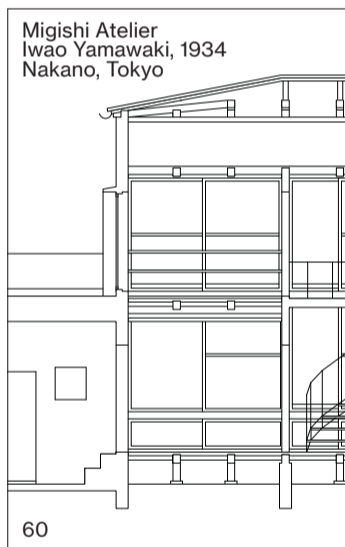
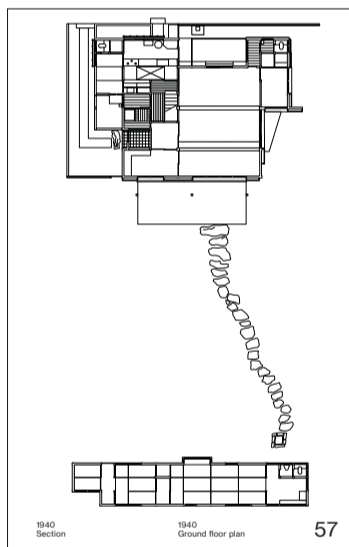
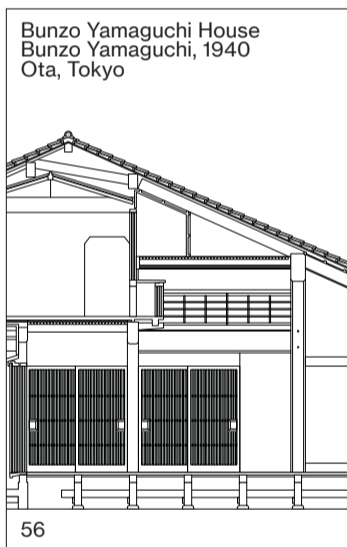
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Introduction

The *Two Houses* research project was conceived subsequent to an excursion to Japan in September 2017. It focuses on the interaction between the Bauhaus and Japan, based on two houses in the suburbs of Tokyo – Migishi Atelier and Bunzo Yamaguchi House. The houses were designed in the 1930s and 40s by Japanese architect Iwao Yamawaki (1898–1987), a student at the Bauhaus in Dessau, and Bunzo Yamaguchi (1902–1978), who worked in Walter Gropius' practice at that time, and are still privately owned today.

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 Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism
 Chair of Design and Housing

Verena von Beckerath
 Niklas Fanelisa
 Momoko Yasaka
 Maximilian von Zepelin

Film stills
 Two Houses
 38 min
 Director: Verena von Beckerath
 Assistant directors: Niklas Fanelisa,
 Momoko Yasaka, Maximilian von Zepelin
 Camera: Sound, Editing: Jens Franke
 2019

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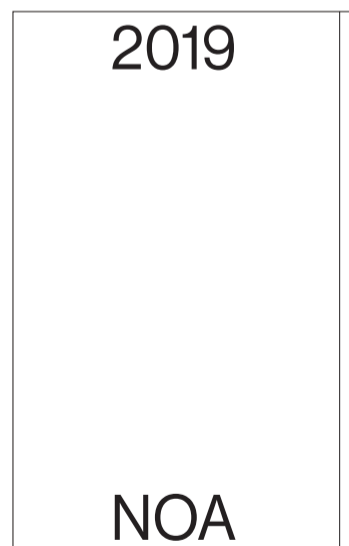
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Pages from the book
 Two Houses — Texts

A publication by Verena von Beckerath with Niklas Fanelisa, Momoko Yasaka and Maximilian von Zepelin as part of the series Notes on Architecture

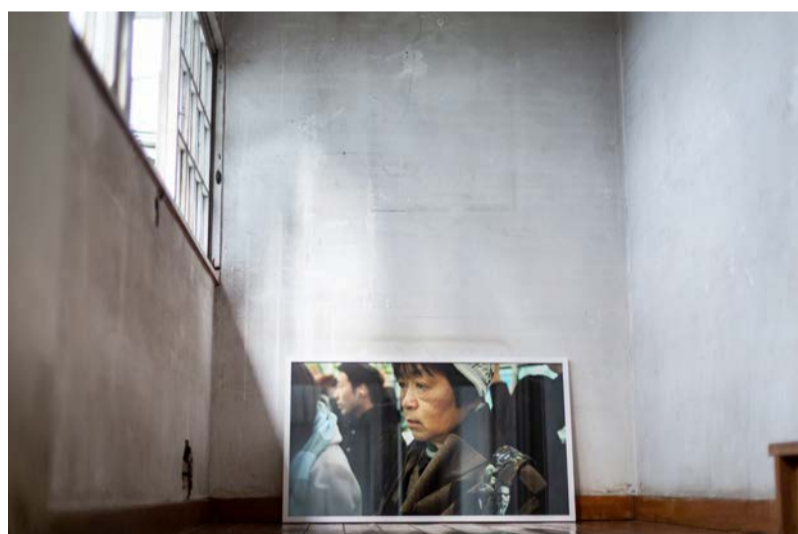
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Photographs from the exhibition
Two Houses — Images
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6.10.–4.11.2019
Photography: Christoph von Zepelin