
90th Anniversary of Mitsui Main Building, an Officially Designated Important Cultural Property

Mitsui Fudosan Co., Ltd., a leading global real estate company headquartered in Tokyo, recently announced that it will be commemorating the 90th anniversary of Mitsui Main Building, an officially designated Important Cultural Property in Tokyo's Nihonbashi district, on Saturday, June 15, 2019. Mitsui Main Building was built in 1929 to serve as the base of operations for the Mitsui conglomerate (Mitsui Zaibatsu), housing the headquarters of its principal companies, including Mitsui Company, which was the conglomerate's holding company, Mitsui Bank (present-day: Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation), The Mitsui Trust Company (present-day: Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Bank), and Mitsui Mining (present-day: Nippon Coke & Engineering Co., Ltd.). In December 1998, it became the first large-scale, multi-tenant office building to be officially designated an Important Cultural Property by the Japanese government.

Mitsui Fudosan is currently promoting the Nihonbashi Revitalization Plan, a joint public-private-community initiative on the concept of "Proceeding to Create While Retaining and Reviving." Nihonbashi Mitsui Tower and COREDO Muromachi had already opened, the plan's new flagship project, Nihonbashi Muromachi Mitsui Tower, was completed in March of this year, and another project, COREDO Muromachi Terrance, will open in September. Alongside these "Proceeding to Create" projects, Mitsui Main Building is an energy-resilient building even in disasters by means of receiving its electricity from the energy center within Nihonbashi Muromachi Mitsui Tower, thereby embodying the "Retaining and Reviving" aspect of the plan's concept. On the occasion of the building's 90th anniversary, Mitsui Fudosan is relocating business divisions currently housed in Ginza 6-chome-SQUARE and other buildings to Nihonbashi Muromachi Mitsui Tower and conducting other new district-development initiatives together with the local community.

To commemorate Mitsui Main Building's 90th anniversary, a photography exhibition by world-renowned photographer Takashi Homma, "Mitsui Main Building TOKYO 1929–2019: Photography by Takashi Homma," is being held from Saturday, June 8 to Sunday, July 21; the building's exterior is also being decorated as a part of the celebration. The exhibition is free and can be viewed in the office entrance of Mitsui Main Building which is called "Gomei Genkan" and the 1st floor atrium of Nihonbashi Mitsui Tower adjacent to the building. Visitors can experience the history of Mitsui Main Building through photos and video. The office entrance "Gomei Genkan" facing NichiGin Street, with its stately marble interior, retains the original building's appearance, and visitors have the opportunity to see the inside during the event. The exhibition includes 4 large panels of unprecedented size for Homma, approximately 3 meters high and 2 meters wide, and is set up for the enjoyment of Homma's ambitious works throughout Mitsui Main Building.

During the event, there will also be two enormous, 8.4-square-meter photographs by Homma on the outside wall of the building. He has reshot past photos from that time as the building appeared 90 years ago from his unique perspective. At the base of the work, flowers of various colors will decorate the building's perimeter in celebration of its 90th anniversary to provide Nihonbashi with beautiful color from the rainy season into the summer. From sunset until 11:00 p.m., the building will be illuminated with a light installation designed by Kyota Takahashi, an artist who works in light, allowing people to enjoy this Important Cultural Property during nighttime hours.



Rendering of Mitsui Main Building exterior

Mitsui Fudosan and Nihon Sekkei, Inc. have received the AIJ Prize (Special Contributions Divisions) for approaches to both the preservation and development of Mitsui Main Building from the Architectural Institute of Japan. Along with maintenance and preservation of Mitsui Main Building, based on the concept of the Nihonbashi Revitalization Plan, Mitsui Fudosan will continue working to create people-centric neighborhoods for the prosperity of many different stakeholders through mixed-use multi-faceted area development that fuses both tangible and intangible aspects based on the four key goals of industry creation, neighborhood creation, community cohesion and renewal of an aqua metropolis.

■Information on “Mitsui Main Building TOKYO 1929–2019: Photography by Takashi Homma”

Period	Saturday, June 8 to Sunday, July 21, 2019
Time	Venue 1: Nihonbashi Mitsui Tower 1st Floor Atrium: 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Venue 2: Mitsui Main Building Office Entrance: 11:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. * Admission is free on all days.

■Information on the Light Installation

Period	Saturday, June 8–Sunday, July 21, 2019
Time	Sunset–11:00 p.m.

Website: Information on the events can also be found at <https://mitsuimainbuilding.jp/event>.

■Architecture website opened to commemorate 90th anniversary of Mitsui Main Building

This website introduces ways to enjoy and appreciate architecture in general, architecture in this new Reiwa era, and Mitsui Main Building specifically. It is supervised by architectural historian Shunsuke Kurakata. There are no other websites even in Japan dedicated entirely to a single Important Cultural Property.

The “10 Fragments” of Mitsui Main Building explains the importance of the building in a way that is fun and easy to understand. Ten characteristics of the building are discussed by architectural historian Shunsuke Kurakata (Associate Professor at Osaka City University), and there are photographs by Takashi Homma that further add to the building’s appreciation.

Mitsui Main Building 90th anniversary website

<https://mitsuimainbuilding.jp/>



■Mitsui Main Building 90th anniversary initiative with Takashi Homma

Takashi Homma, who had photographed numerous architectural masterpieces by such architects as Le Corbusier and Kenzo Tange, approached Mitsui Main Building with sincerity. With social media and digital photography at its height, the event provides the opportunity to experience the fascination of photography.

Homma’s efforts include going back to the roots of photography and using the camera obscura technique for some of the shots. Photos are exhibited that reproduce the Mitsui Main Building of 2019 in today’s light. The works include 4 panels (8 front and back) approximately 3 meters high and 2 meters wide lined up side by side—an incredible work that ranks among the largest Homma has produced. The exhibition is curated with invaluable archival photos from when the building was built (photos from 90 years ago) and photos from today, which together reveal the unchanging strength of Mitsui Main Building. It is an opportunity to appreciate the essence of the building through Homma’s artistic lens; that is, in a way not possible via typical photos and viewing.

■Profile of Takashi Homma

Photographer

Received the 24th Kimura Ihei Photography Award for his photography collection Tokyo Suburbia (published by Korin-sha) in 1999.

Solo exhibition “New Documentary” held at three museums around Japan from 2011 to 2012.

Author of *Fun Photography*. His recent photography collection is *The Narcissistic City* (Mack). Also, in 2018, published *Takashi Homma's Adaptation: I Got It When I Tried: Introduction to the Latest in Image Literacy* (Shinchosha).



■Profile of Kyota Takahashi (Designer of Light Installation)

Artist

Born in Kyoto in 1970. Received master's degree in sculpture from Kyoto City University of Arts Graduate School in 1995.

Conducts a wide range of activities in Japan and abroad using light and images, including public projections, installations and performances.

His light installations for large-scale buildings, including Tokyo Station for its 100th anniversary, Nijo Castle in Kyoto, and Towada Art Center, create dynamic, figurative presentations with light and images. He also conducts numerous large-scale participatory art projects and workshops with large groups of people, including “Dream Seed Project,” Shining Smile Fruit,” “Shining Field of Flowers” and “Glow with City Project.”

■Profile of Shunsuke Kurakata (Project Supervision)

Architectural historian

Born in Tokyo in 1971. Received a bachelor's degree in architecture from Waseda University's Faculty of Science and Engineering and a doctorate degree from its Graduate School of Science and Engineering; his dissertation was on Chuta Ito. Associate Professor of Faculty of Engineering at Osaka City University since 2011.

Author of *Modern Building Tokyo*, *Dokonomon*, *Takamasa Yoshizaka and Le Corbusier*, and other works.

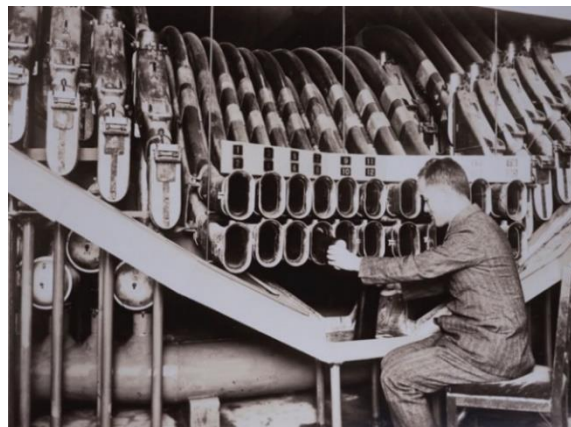


■Information on Mitsui Main Building When Built

Location	1-1, Nihonbashi-Muromachi 2-chome, Chuo-ku, Tokyo
Site area	Approx. 60,300 ft ² (Approx. 5,610 m ²)
Total floor space	Approx. 347,000 ft ² (Approx. 32,245 m ²)
Floors	7 above ground, 2 below ground
Main structure	Reinforced concrete construction
Architectural style	American Beaux-Arts' classical revival
Design architect	Trowbridge & Livingston
Contractor	James Stewart & Co.
Construction period	Total construction days: 964 (2 years and 8 months)



Mitsui Main Building when it first opened



Pneumatic tubes, an advanced technology at the time, send documents throughout the building