



Tadashi Kawamata: Tree Huts in Bruges – Beguinage **“Collaboration between Japanese artist Kawamata and Bruges students for Triennial artwork”**

On the occasion of the Bruges Contemporary Art and Architecture Triennial 2015, the Japanese artist Tadashi Kawamata installs a dozen of his iconic tree houses in the Beguinage with the help of pupils from the Bruges Academie Kunsthumaniora.

Tree Huts in Bruges

The tree houses in the Beguinage garden are poetic sculptures that explore the boundaries between art, architecture and nature. To this ancient setting that radiates an otherworldly silence, Tadashi Kawamata brings something timeless and universal that appeals to all city dwellers alike: places of seclusion and contemplation high above the noise and bustle of the city.

During his visit to Bruges, Kawamata was charmed by the atmosphere of solitude and tranquillity that permeates the Beguinage courtyard. Tall trees grow from a central lawn surrounded by ancient houses and the Beguinage church: the perfect place to install tree houses but also a surprising venue for the installation.

The childlike, playful and adventurous spirit of a tree house is placed within a context of spirituality, peace and formality, which only emphasises the role of the structures as places to dream. High up in the trees, they appear as charming watchers, as though protectors of all who pass beneath. The tree houses also recall modest places of retreat, if only in the imagination.

The unreachable sculptures make one long for a private, quiet place all to oneself. Kawamata thus contributes a vital element to the Triennial theme of the megapolis, one that is essential to all city dwellers whether of provincial cities like Bruges or metropolises like Tokyo: peace and seclusion far from the madding crowd.

Collaboration with Bruges pupils

Kawamata has previously installed his poetic sculptures and tree houses in other cities, including New York, Florence and Paris. His works are intended to become a part of the environment in which they are placed and to open up a dialogue with the setting. His practice employs an organic and improvisational work-in-progress method and uses found and repurposed materials. He also works closely with local technicians and art school students. In Bruges, he collaborated with **pupils from the Academie Kunsthumaniora**, who contributed to the construction of the tree houses in the Beguinage. Students of Architectural and Interior Design also designed their own scale models of tree houses, which can be viewed in the Beguinage church during the Triennial.



Bio Tadashi Kawamata

Tadashi Kawamata (°1953, Hokkaido, Japan) lives and works in Paris and Tokyo. He is one of the most remarkable Japanese artists of our time. Since 1980, he has been building large-scale structures in urban public spaces that reference real civil planning but that are actually useless and unrealistic. Kawamata's installations of wooden planks and furniture reveal the chaos behind urban design. Simple construction materials create a sense of the familiar only to become confrontational when the public realises the true irony of the redundant structures.

Kawamata's work is not limited to the architectural: he is also concerned with the social context in which it is presented. Kawamata interfaces the past and present and the public and the private space. Local community participation is another important aspect of his artistic practice.

Tadashi Kawamata's installations were exhibited at the 1982 Venice Biennial. In 1987 and 1992, his work was shown at Documenta, Kassel. For the contemporary art trail TRACK (Ghent, 2012), he built a slum in the middle of the busy Dampoort intersection. The artist's website: www.tk-onthetable.com

Practical information for visitors

Tadashi Kawamata, Tree Huts in Bruges

20.05 - 18.10.2015

Ten Wijngaerde Beguinage

Begijnhof 3-7, 8000 Bruges

Open 6.30 am-6.30 pm

Press info

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Bruges Contemporary Art and Architecture Triennial 2015

20 May - 18 October 2015

What if the five million tourists who visit Bruges annually were to stay? What if a small, preserved, historic city should suddenly become a megapolis? This is the premise for the Bruges Contemporary Art and Architecture Triennial 2015. Eighteen international artists create new works that form an art trail through the city centre. Three indoor exhibitions provide the opportunity to further explore and contextualise the topics. Bruges will be transformed into Egg Urb: the Triennial cracks the egg of Bruges in order to reinvent the city from the inside out.

Information and programme: www.triennalebrugge.be

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