

## **Higashikawa – the Cultural Capital of Photography and the “Town of Photography”- Hokkaido**

### **The Fourth Annual “Kengo Kuma & Higashikawa” KAGU Design Competition**

- Introduction:

We are entering a time in which the value and potential of rural areas are being reconsidered. Higashikawa, the "Town of Photography," and the "Cultural Capital of Photography," is a beautiful town in Hokkaido, Japan. Located in a beautiful rural setting, surrounded by the Daisetsusan mountains, it is also blessed with pure groundwater. With the aim of communicating the richness of life through architecture and furniture, our town has promoted a new initiative in collaboration with architect Kengo Kuma, who has a strong interest in the use of architecture and design in rural settings.

Higashikawa, with its small size and thriving furniture industry, has long implemented programs that would only be possible here: It starts with the “Your Chair” project, which gives the children a sense of safety and belonging from a young age. In Elementary School, the children learn while surrounded by wooden furniture. When they graduate Junior High School, as a graduation present, they take home their wooden chairs that they have used and cared for over three years. It is now time to start a new project and train the young people who will be the leaders of the next generation.

Architect Kengo Kuma has joined us in supporting our town and our region. He is an early advocate of promoting the appeal of regional communities through architecture, with a strong interest in expanding the use of local resources and educating the next generation of young people. In a sense, Kengo Kuma, who is working on regional revitalization through the world of architecture, and Higashikawa, a sparsely populated town blessed with a rich environment and a thriving furniture industry, have been working together to propose a new way of life.

- Purpose:

The town of Higashikawa is a major producer of Asahikawa furniture. We are calling for designs that embody KAGU, a new, mindful way of life for the young people who will shoulder the responsibilities of the future.

KAGU is an extension of the conventional concept of furniture that aims to connect people to the world. We use a variety of objects in our daily lives, but it is difficult to see the context in which they are made and used. We realized that in the current way of life, we handle objects without care and treat them poorly, all in the name of saving time and effort; people rush to get results, and don't take the time to think deeply about the items they are using. This can have many harmful effects.

Our hope is that the upcoming KAGU design competition will provide an opportunity for your ideas, which have a lot of potential, to take shape and be used for a long time, so that a path towards mindful living can be realized little by little.

- Contest Details:

Theme: 「Furniture to Co-Exist with Animals」

- The work must be designed by applicant themselves in strict accordance with these guidelines, the law and competition rules.
- The work must be applicant's original work and be previously unpublished except for class work or graduation displays.

A Message from Kengo Kuma, Head Judge

Many different animals inhabit the nature-rich environment of Higashikawa. And with Asahiya Zoo and its world-renowned ethological exhibits nearby, we have many opportunities here to learn about co-existing with animals.

I believe that some things are not only for humans, but are also essential for animals as well.

I'd like you to think freely, and propose some novel and unique furniture.

Kengo Kuma

Head Judge of the “Kengo Kuma & Higashikawa”

KAGU Design Competition

- Eligibility:

Students who are no older than 30 years of age and are enrolled in an educational institution at the time of application are eligible to participate.

Group entries are also accepted. In which case, all members of the group must meet these requirements.

- Number of Entries:

One per applicant or one per group.

※Each individual may only be involved in the submission of one work, whether as an individual or in a group: multiple entries by one person, such as submitting an individual entry and a group entry or participating in more than one group entry will not be accepted.

- Application Fee: none

- Submission:

The title, main idea of the design, explanation of the work, as well as a sketch, drawing, CG model, or model photo of the work should fit onto a single A3-size sheet (single-sided, landscape layout). The submission should be a PDF file. Only English or Japanese may be used.

- Inquiries:

To make an inquiry, please send your name and contact information to the following email address. The organizer will contact you as soon as possible.

Email address to contact: [official@kagu-higashikawa.jp](mailto:official@kagu-higashikawa.jp)

● Application Period and How to Apply:

Submission period: Friday, November, 1st, 2024 to Monday, December 30th, 2024 at noon (JST)

Please submit the following items during the application period using the application form on our website.

Submissions that are not submitted through the form, that contain inappropriate or false information, or that do not meet the requirements may be invalidated.

① Submission **【File Format: PDF】** :

- The title, main idea of the design, explanation of the work, as well as a sketch, drawing, CG model, or model photo of the work should fit onto a single A3-size sheet (single-sided, landscape layout). The minimum font size is 10 points.
- Only English or Japanese may be used.
- The work should not include any expressions, symbols, or characters that may identify the entrant.
- The submission should be an A3 PDF file.
- The file size must be 3MB or less.

② A document certifying that you are a student enrolled in an educational institution. In the case of a group entry, please submit one for all members. **【File Format: PDF, jpeg or GIF】** :

- This document can be an enrollment certificate or student ID card, etc. showing that you are a student enrolled in an educational institution. It should be PDF, jpeg, or GIF format.
- The file size must be 1MB or less per file.

● Important Notes:

- Please use an e-mail address that can receive e-mails from the organizer when you apply.  
**【Domains that cannot be received from the organizer: @mail.ru, @bk.ru, @list.ru, @inbox.ru】**
- An email will be sent to you upon completion of your application. If you do not receive the e-mail, please check your spam mailbox or reconfirm your registration information.
- After the application period is over, no changes or corrections can be made to the entry, nor can the entry be cancelled.
- The applicant is responsible for all costs associated with the production of the work.
- If the images or illustrations used in the work may infringe on the rights of a third party, it is the responsibility of the entrant to obtain the necessary permissions before using them.
- If a work is deemed to infringe on another's rights such as copyright, the entry or prize will be cancelled. If there is a lawsuit or objection from a third party regarding the work, such as a lawsuit for infringement of rights or compensation for damages, the applicant shall be responsible for resolving the matter at their own risk and expense, and neither the organizer nor the sponsors will bear any responsibility.
- If an entry is found to be identical or similar to a previously published design, or if it is judged to infringe on another's rights, the entry or prize will be cancelled. In addition, the organizer will not be responsible for any trouble caused by infringement of a third party's rights.

- Judging:

- 10 works will be selected as finalists by the judges in mid-February 2025.
- The selected applicants and their works will be announced on the competition official website, as well as by individual correspondence.
- Final judging will be conducted from the 10 selected works to determine the winners of each award.
- The applicants selected as finalists will be asked to submit the following by the date specified by the organizer prior to the final judging. ※The details will be notified separately to the selected applicants.
  - a presentation script
  - a 1/5-1/1 scale model of their design (Any materials may be used in the model; please note that models will not be returned.)
- In the final judging, the judges will discuss and decide on each award based on the submitted works and the presentation.
- In principle, if you are selected as a finalist, you must attend the award ceremony to be held in Higashikawa, Hokkaido, Japan. (Scheduled to be March 29, 2025)
- In the event that there is any falsehood in the information entered on the application form, any violation of the application guidelines, or any other circumstances that are deemed inappropriate, the entry will not be judged and the prize may be withdrawn.
- We are unable to respond to enquiries about the judging process, criteria, results or other related matters.

- Final Judging and the Award Ceremony Date:

Saturday, March 29th, 2025. The planned location is Higashikawa, Hokkaido, Japan.

- Awards and Prizes:

- Grand prize (Kengo Kuma Award, 1 entry): 500,000 yen
- Excellence Award (3 entries): 100,000 yen
- Honorable mention (6 entries)

※ The ten winners will be invited to attend the final judging and the award ceremony.

※If you are from outside Japan, you will need a passport for you to be invited to Higashikawa. Please note that the period between the selection decision and the application procedure is very short, so please prepare your passport in advance.

※The ten winners will be provided with accommodations during their stay in the town, as well as transportation fees to and from the nearest airport to their place of residence. In that case of a group, in some cases, only the representative of the group may be invited.

※Prize-winning works may be commercialized. Details of commercialization will be discussed separately with the prizewinners.

- Judges:

- Head judge: Kengo Kuma (Architect, Professor at the University of Tokyo)
- Judges:
  - ◇ Eisuke Tachikawa (Design Strategist, Evolutionary Thinker, Representative of NOSIGNER)
  - ◇ Asao Tokolo (Artist)
  - ◇ Hiroshi Nakamura (Architect, NAP Architectural Design Office)
  - ◇ Masahiro Harada (Architect, Professor at Shibaura Institute of Technology)
  - ◇ Katsuhiko Hibino (Artist, President of Tokyo University of the Arts)
  - ◇ Teppei Fujiwara (Architect, Associate Professor at Yokohama National University)
  - ◇ Toshiko Mori (Professor at Harvard Graduate School of Design)
  - ◇ Noritsugu Oda (Chair Researcher and Design Advisor to the town of Higashikawa)

- Legal Matters:

- The submitted works (including samples) will become the property of the organizer and will not be returned.
- All copyright and design rights to the submitted works belong to the applicant(s).
- If your work is commercialized, we will discuss legal matters with you separately.
- The organizer will reserve the rights to display the work, to post it on printed matter, and to use it for publicity online and in magazines.
- The organizer or an organization designated by the organizer may freely use the submitted work for exhibition, announcement, editing, modification, reproduction, distribution, etc. without notice to the entrant, and the entrant shall not engage in any act that interferes with such free use.
- If the organizer or sponsors wish to use the submitted works for promotional purposes, they may do so freely, and in principle, no fees will be charged.
- The organizer will have the right of first refusal in the case of commercialization.

- Disclaimer:

- In no event will the organizer be liable for any loss or damage incurred by an entrant in connection with their participation in the Competition, except in cases of intentional misconduct or serious negligence.
- The schedule and contents of this competition are subject to change without prior notice.

- Organizer:

- “Kengo Kuma & Higashikawa” KAGU Design Competition Executive Committee
  - ◇ Composed of: The Town of Higashikawa, Higashikawa Chamber of Commerce, Higashikawa Tourism Association, Higashikawa Agricultural Cooperative, Higashikawa Construction Association, Higashikawa Forestry Association, Higashikawa Promotion Corporation, Asahikawa Furniture Cooperative, Higashikawa Town Council, and the Higashikawa Board of Education

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