

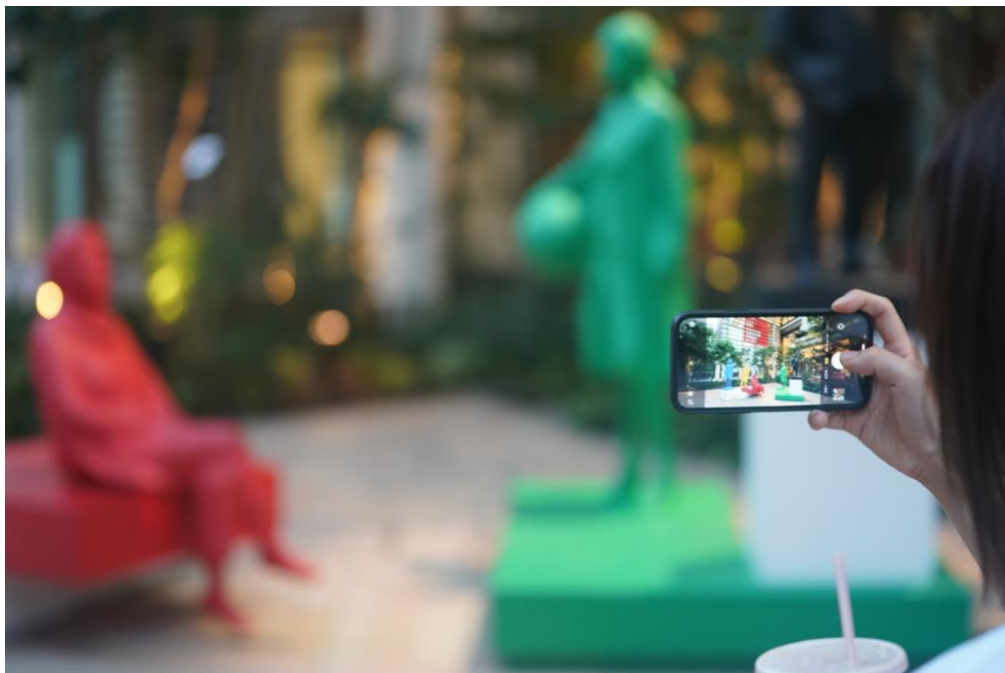


OLYMPIC
FOUNDATION
FOR CULTURE
AND HERITAGE

PRESS RELEASE

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Following success at Tokyo 2020, Olympic Agora, hub for arts and culture, looks ahead to Beijing 2022



Visitor at the site of *The Audience* by Xavier Veilhan at the Olympic Agora in Tokyo. © David Burnett / IOC.

As the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 came to an end, Tokyo residents bid them farewell with a final visit to the Olympic Agora, a cultural hub celebrating Olympism, which closed on Sunday 15 August. Spearheaded by the Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage (OFCH), the IOC's division for the arts, culture and heritage, the project featured a series of visual art installations, exhibitions and digital programmes on the Olympic spirit and values, including the landmark commission of a permanent, site-specific sculpture that will remain in Tokyo's central Nihonbashi district.

The Olympic Agora was adapted at the outset to ensure staff and visitor safety, in compliance with local and national COVID-19 rules and countermeasures. On-site visitor numbers were strictly controlled through an online pre-booking system.

Over the course of its six-week opening, the Olympic Agora welcomed thousands of local visitors – giving many unable to attend the Games’ sports competitions an opportunity to engage directly with Olympic culture – and even larger regional and international audiences via its digital programmes. The installations and activations were complemented by a robust digital programme, including virtual exhibitions available on the Olympic Agora [website](#) and The Olympic Museum’s social media channels for local and global audiences. The website remains accessible for global audiences until 15 October.

Following its initial success at Tokyo 2020, the OFCH is looking forward to implementing future iterations of the Olympic Agora - with plans for a hub at Beijing 2022 already in the works - to engage new audiences at the intersection of art, culture and sport during and beyond the period of the Olympic Games.

“There is a very close link between culture and sport, as these are the two languages that the whole world understands,” said International Olympic Committee (IOC) President **Thomas Bach** upon visiting the Olympic Agora. “I think something that touches all of us is the Olympic spirit; this is what the Olympic Games are all about. They are about excellence in athletic performance, but at the same time serve as a profound symbol to the world of global solidarity, peace and friendship.”

Resulting from Olympic Agenda 2020, the IOC’s strategic roadmap for the future of the Olympic Movement, the Olympic Agora realised a key recommendation to “further blend sport and culture” during and between editions of the Olympic Games.

“One of the most important things we have done through the Olympic Agora is to leave the legacy of the Olympic spirit in Tokyo,” said OFCH Director **Angelita Teo**. “Commemorating the history and enduring cultural impact of the Olympic Movement on the world, we hope the Olympic Agora will serve as an ongoing hub for the cultivation, exploration and cross-cultural promotion of the Olympic values.”

For Japanese artist and designer **Makoto Tojiki**, whose large-scale light sculpture ***Solidarity and Collaboration*** was conceived especially for the occasion, the Olympic Agora presented a unique opportunity to take part in the Olympic Games in Japan.

“It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity – I am delighted to create something of this scale for an event in my home country, to display my original artwork to people,” said Tojiki, whose installation at Fukutoku Plaza featured two monumental figures in illuminated steel mesh. Prompted by the global pandemic, *Solidarity and Collaboration* depicts two athletes in relay motion, in a timely exploration of collaboration, shared responsibility and human potential in team play.

Tojiki added: “It is easy to see that sport is an attempt to go beyond physical limits, and that physical limits can really be surpassed. I think that culture and art are also attempts to go as far beyond human limitations as possible.”



Visitors interact with the installation *Podium Memories* by Moment Factory at the Olympic Agora in Tokyo.
© David Burnett / IOC.

To inaugurate the seminal Olympic Agora in Tokyo, the OFCH commissioned French artist **Xavier Veilhan**, who represented France at the 57th Venice Art Biennale in 2017, to create a permanent installation interpreting the Olympic values. Known for his exhibitions challenging viewers' perceptions, Veilhan created a life-sized sculptural work entitled ***The Audience*** consisting of five human figures of various ages, genders and nationalities gathered in sport spectatorship.

Veilhan said of *The Audience*: “The sculpture is intentionally a tribute to the audience of the Olympic Games, going beyond the sporting feats that are usually celebrated and bringing the focus to non-heroic figures, to highlight the importance of the public. This year in particular, the public – the audience – was somewhat the missing star of the Olympic Games.” He continued: “*The Audience* is not only the title of my work, but is also the summary of the current situation that we are all undeniably living through.”

Additionally, the Olympic Agora featured a photography installation by Japanese artist **Rinko Kawauchi**; a series of new artworks by **Olympian and Paralympian Artists-in-Residence**; a multimedia installation by Canadian studio **Moment Factory**; and an exhibition celebrating some of the most iconic moments in the history of the Olympic Games, showcased through 145 artefacts from the collections of **The Olympic Museum**.

The OFCH also presented ***The Noren Curtains***, an exhibition of original works by five Olympian and one Paralympian artists: **Ciara Michel** (Great Britain, Volleyball, London 2012); **Slaven Dizdarević** (Slovak Republic, Track and Field, Beijing 2008); **Kelly Salchow MacArthur** (USA, Rowing, Athens 2004 and Sydney 2000); **Gregory Burns** (USA, Swimming, Sydney 2000, Atlanta 1996 and Barcelona 1992); **Roald Bradstock** (Great Britain, Track and Field, Seoul 1988 and Los Angeles 1984); and **Hannah Wilkinson** (New Zealand, Football, Tokyo 2020, Rio 2016 and London 2012). In a tribute to the Japanese *noren*, the traditional curtain-like fabric typically hung in shop entrances, each artist contributed a series of panel “curtains” on the Olympic spirit and values. The works were presented in each artist’s preferred medium, spanning photography, painting, graffiti and graphic design. Since their exhibition, several works have been entrusted to the Japan Olympic Museum, commemorating the spirit and cementing the legacy of the first Olympic Agora in Tokyo.

Additionally, residents and visitors to Nihonbashi had the opportunity to view iconic posters from the Olympic Games throughout the district, as well as a large-scale Olympic gold medal installation in the atrium at Mitsui Tower. As the Olympic Agora's Official Partner, Mitsui Fudosan delivered comprehensive support to the Olympic Agora complex in Nihonbashi.

Mitsui Fudosan President and CEO **Masanobu Komoda** said: "Mitsui Fudosan hopes to help advance the vision of the Olympic and Paralympic Movement, which aims to build a better, more peaceful world. We are greatly honoured to do our part as an official partner to the Olympic Agora cultural programme."

Teo added: "In this unprecedented moment, the Olympic Agora in Tokyo shone as a symbol of determination, overcoming challenges and international cooperation; of the power of sport and art to carry us in times of crisis."

Virtual tours of all the Olympic Agora presentations and related programming are available to local and international audiences free of charge until 15 October on www.olympics.com/olympic-agera.

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Notes to Editors

The Olympic Agora at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020

Organiser: The Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage in partnership with Mitsui Fudosan, Gold Partner Tokyo 2020

Location: Nihonbashi, Tokyo, Japan

Date: 1 July–15 August 2021

You can follow all Olympic Agora activities on The Olympic Museum's [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)!

Downloadable photos are available [here](#).

About the Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage

The Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage (OFCH) drives the International Olympic Committee (IOC)'s cultural and values-based educational activities. Dedicated to the international promotion and dissemination of Olympism, the OFCH fosters the creation and dissemination of Olympic knowledge. The Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage includes the IOC Heritage Unit; the IOC Olympic Studies Centre; The Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland; and the International Cultural Affairs Unit. Learn more here: olympic.org/the-olympic-foundation-for-culture-and-heritage.

About the International Olympic Committee

The International Olympic Committee is a not-for-profit, civil, non-governmental, international organisation made up of volunteers which is committed to building a better world through sport. It redistributes more than 90 per cent of its income to the wider sporting movement, which means that every day the equivalent of USD 3.4 million goes to help athletes and sports organisations at all levels around the world.

For more information, visit olympic.org/the-ioc and the IOC Newsroom at iocnewsroom.com.

For regular updates, follow the IOC on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

About Mitsui Fudosan

Mitsui Fudosan is one of Japan's largest global real estate companies. Based in Tokyo, the company is also engaged in urban development projects in locations including New York, London, Shanghai, Chinese Taipei, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok. As a Gold Partner of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 in the real estate development category, Mitsui Fudosan hopes to convey the values the company embraces in its urban development – sports, tradition, culture and the spirit of hospitality.

www.mitsuifudosan.co.jp/english/index.html



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