

# Why *Xover* (Crossover) ?

**Taishi Watanabe**

I define Xover as the form of existence of any object that transcends the boundaries of nation (group and folk), technology (field), function, and production systems. Here, object means anything having mass and weight, such as tools, parts, products, furniture, architecture, and even cities.

This exhibition' s purpose is to show that there are certain principles in the theory and practice of considering the recompilation of objects as a design approach. This is the case even though all natural and artificial resources on the earth return to their chaotic primitive state.

The question thus arises, "So, why am I exploring these principles?"

Let me explain.

As a Japanese person, I am now based in Tokyo, one of the largest megalopolises in the world, with a population of thirty million within its economic zone. The rate at which people consume here is increasing rapidly. Additionally, an American-style globalism is also taking place in Tokyo. On the other hand, traditionally, Japan did not have the concept of so-called "architecture." Of course, Japan has traditional buildings, but we did not call them "architecture" until the

modern era. In fact, in Japanese, the word, Kenchiku, which means architecture, was coined only a little over 100 years ago.

Berlin and Tokyo share a common history, in that they were both destroyed in the same summer of 1945. Their experiences, however, were different. Berlin was left in ruins, while Tokyo was completely burned to the ground. Because most private houses in Japan at that time were made of wood, the American army used incendiary bombs instead of conventional explosives.

After the war, the Japanese reconstructed Tokyo from the burnt ground up. In fact, post-war Tokyo looked very different; today' s Tokyo has little connection with the city before it was destroyed in the war. This is why there are no ruins left in Tokyo.

The modern word Kenchiku and the origin of post-war Tokyo did not foster a background in Japan that would have given rise to theories of preserving, restoring, and reutilizing contemporary architecture and cities. However, within this context, I have recently come to feel that there are possibilities for pursuing the next phase of



**Tokyo 1945.**

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modernity, which has seemingly reached a deadlock worldwide. The ongoing crises of the world, such as war and pathology, are enough to strain the consciousness of that deadlock. In other words, it inductively shows that the possibilities I have been feeling can now be shared with people all over the world, beyond the understanding and sense inherent to each nation or ethnicity.

What is more, the effects of global environmental changes have already begun disabling existing methods of classifying and grasping the world within conventional frameworks of individual countries, ethnicities, and religions.

Thus, it seems that the most effective way to get past these changes is to Xover (Crossover) the ready-made frameworks. In fact, having the theories and methods to overcome them in hand will help us find a new form of architecture in the same essence as the reality in Tokyo, where more than 80% of the buildings around Tokyo Station have been scraped and rebuilt, and in Berlin, where the city has been constructed on the ruins of a country divided into the East and the West. Making the theories and methods available could also lead us to adopt an

architectural theory that advocates for the necessity of preserving, restoring, and reusing contemporary architecture, rather than modern architecture, in the future. This has not yet been considered among the theories of architectural history or architecture itself until now.

Furthermore, I argue that it may also be effective in building a future in which values, such as sustainability, diversity, and resilience, are achieved in unique ways and without global abstraction; your comments on this would be greatly appreciated.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Jörg Gleiter and to all those who supported the exhibition despite its repeated postponement due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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**Berlin in 1947.**

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