

Symposium

“*Koganecho Bazaar: An Unbelievable True Story*” vol. 1

Date & Time: December 19, 2008, 19:00 to 20:30

Place: Kogane Studio D

Panelists: Taro Amano (Yokohama Museum of Art Chief Curator / Curator of the Bazaar)
Nobuharu Suzuki (Koganecho Bazaar Organizing Committee Chairman)
Shingo Yamano (Director, Koganecho Bazaar)
Masashi Sogabe (Professor, Kanagawa University, architect)

Moderator: Justin Jesty (The University of Chicago)

Jesty: The title of today’s symposium is “An Unbelievable True Story,” and to begin I’d like to ask about the details of the story that led up to the “*Koganecho Bazaar*” becoming a “True Story.” First, I’d like to hear from Mr. Suzuki.

Suzuki: Right after the beginning in 2005 of the “Bye-bye Operation,” in which the police were making a clean sweep of illegal activities, I happened to give a lecture in Yokohama, and Mitsumasa Kobayashi, the head of the neighborhood association at the time, asked me, “Do you have any idea?” I thought I’d have a look at the neighborhood that very day, and ended up being questioned to death by the police. That was the beginning.

After that, the Kanto Gakuin University where I was working received a request from a member of personnel at the Yokohama city government. Around that time I was interested in BankART and other urban creative movements that were happening near the ocean and proposed, “How about the possibility of bringing in some artists?” Only I didn’t fully grasp the reality of Koganecho at the time. If I had anything to do with urban development or had known the reality of the situation, I wouldn’t have said something like that so easily.

Thereafter, the urban planner Jun Sakurai said, “Let me use your idea.” in the written proposal for urban development in the area. I remember working with him on that. Looking back at the documents from that time, we suggested things such as “We’ll create an art event under the elevated tracks.” “We’ll create a new

Kogane/Hatsune/Hinode brand.” and, “We’ll take the opportunity created by the 2008 *Yokohama Triennale* to do an ‘art cruise.’” But at that time I was making these proposals as an outsider.

In fact, the story of the *Koganecho Bazaar* got going when the team at the Yokohama Creative City Project began actively concerning themselves in the area, and Masaharu Nakahara said he wanted to create a cultural art studio under the tracks, and while I was saying things like “wouldn’t that be nice,” he began negotiating with the Keihin Electric Railway Company, and that was the approximate time when the project design for studios was put together.

After that our talk about doing this event took on a bit of reality. The thing is, at the beginning we didn’t take into account the work needed to prepare the whole city for an art event. As we were thinking of the importance of tying the art event to urban development, we became involved in many debates.

Jesty: The shape the *Koganecho Bazaar* would take must have become apparent when construction finished. I’d like to hear what Mr. Sogabe has to tell us.

Sogabe: We moved the office of the architect office, Mikangumi, to Kanagawa prefecture in 2005 and I began as a lecturer at Kanagawa University in 2006. That’s the connection that brought BankART and me together as mutual advisors in 2005. BankART took up the 2006 Sakura-so Competition from Yokohama City. When talk about what should be done there came up, Osamu Ikeda asked me to propose plans for renovation of Sakura-so. I had a sinking feeling, because I couldn’t imagine the amount of labor that was needed. But I went back to my students and talked to them. They said, “That sounds interesting. Let’s do it,” and this is how the Kanagawa University’s Sobage Laboratory began to be involved in the projects in Koganecho. One of the core student members is Hirokazu Yaguchi, who created the Yaguchi Residence. After then, he continued his research on the use of space under the elevated railway tracks, and wrote his Master’s thesis on that.

The year after, Mr. Nakahara said, “There’s talk about building ‘something’ under the tracks. What do you think?” In the beginning, I didn’t think we’d be talking about constructing buildings. I had understood that we’d conduct research on how to use the space under the tracks, talk with local residents, and draw up a plan. When we’d had the meeting about how to use the Keihin land, there was no representative from Keihin Electric Railway Company, and the locals had kept debating about the possible use of the land. So, there was no one to fund the project, and I wondered if it would ever happen. For a year thereafter, I really didn’t think it would become a reality.

Around the end of 2007, Keihin made its appearance. For better or worse, Mr. Nakahara took over the situation and finished negotiations with them. I didn’t know Mr. Nakahara’s personality at the time, so as if bewitched by a fox, with three months left we were going to complete construction. Just like that, the relationship with local residents basically played a central role.

Jesty: Now, I’d like to ask Mr. Amano and Mr. Yamano about the sequence of events that led to realizing the “*Koganecho Bazaar*.”

Amano: I’m usually employed by the Yokohama Museum of Art, but with this local project, the museum foundation became directly involved, and I became involved as curator. First, talking with Mr. Yamano, we talked about taking the “art” out of “art festival,” and decided not to limit ourselves to just art. After that, of course we also had artists come, but beginning with a broad meaning of cultural activism in mind, we included business ventures, opening stores like Issey Miyake.

Yamano: I got a phone call from Mr. Nakahara and came here in October 2007. So, when I got here, figuratively speaking, the rails were laid out, but the question of what to place on them was still unanswered. At the beginning, there was no office, so Mr. Amano and I worked at the museum to put together a proposal. Three years before, when I’d come to the *Yokohama Triennale*, I hadn’t come to Koganecho, so at first I was

surprised this kind of place existed. The reason Mr. Amano and I got called up to collaborate on the curatorship was that at the *Yokohama Triennale*, we created an exhibition that wasn't straightforward but quite extraordinary. Someone must have thought that kind of thing would go over well in the town. That's why I think Mr. Amano and I were chosen.

Our catch phrase for the symposium is "An Unbelievable True Story," but when we were all thinking up a phrase for the event, I think Kazuki Saito said it first, but in the end we didn't use it. The "unbelievable" in "An Unbelievable True Story" refers to art for example, meaning fiction in the middle of the real world. This includes stores. The situation didn't lend itself at all to opening stores, but we opened them anyway, thinking perhaps it may become a reality. Although this catch phrase was rejected, I'm still using it.

Jesty: After talking with the local residents for about a week now, I've heard doubts like, "I don't know what urban development through art means" and "I wonder if this neighborhood can really be developed using art." So, why is art important in urban renewal, and also how can that importance be communicated? Furthermore, I'd like to hear from Mr. Amano about what kind of role art now plays in Koganecho. I think the relationship between society and art is approaching a major transformation, but how do you see it as someone who has been actually working in art?

Amano: I personally have been interested in this since before the Koganecho project. The word "art" refers to more than just Cezanne and van Gogh, but contemporary art as well. The problem is especially with that which we call contemporary art. Does it strike a balance with the citizens of society? Is it acknowledged? This time at the *Yokohama Triennale*, many of the art pieces are difficult to understand, but precisely with things that are difficult to approach these questions bear relevance.

One more thing on the issue of "offsite," in the case of putting on an exhibit at a museum, there's plenty of space, but in a place like Koganecho, there isn't necessarily

any space available from the beginning. That's what you call an "offsite project," and it's been developed mostly in the UK. Even the idea of a creative city is from the UK, and I've long been interested in projects like those of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery; since an extremely long time ago, they've been doing offsite projects in collaboration with shopping districts and neighborhood associations, and I went a number of times. If you ask them why they do this kind of thing, they say things like, "Contemporary art won't be acknowledged if no one comes to the museum. If you're quiet about it, they won't come." That's why I as a museum curator participated in the *Bazaar*. It was a learning experience to be involved in the negotiation process with the local residents to win understanding of art, in this case contemporary art. I don't have a clear idea of the answer from this experience, but I think there is no doubt that this is going to be one approach.

Jesty: I think the situation is different in architecture, so I'd like to ask Mr. Sogabe the same question.

Sogabe: I think there are many ways of looking at it, but for one thing a center of activism has appeared, and new kinds of activism will develop from it. "It's exciting." and "There's more to do." and so forth. A way to look at it is that this kind of activism will produce new variations. Such activism makes a statement with the construction of architecture that has a public personality. You can also look at the big change in our imaginations. There are locations that have never been seen before with unknown possibilities for architecture. In this project, we've listened to the personality and history of the neighborhood, the interests of the people in this area, their insecurities, and with those two things in mind, we've decided not to bring in something that hasn't been seen before, something that doesn't fit with people's preconceptions, but instead we decided to bring a new sense of place for new activities. Although I say new activities, in this case, the main characters are the people who are here, so the central issue is what they will do with the space.

In designing architecture, the site is originally there, and in interior design the interior of

the architecture is there, in renovations the original architecture is there, but there's always something preexistent. This time, the local people became our partners, and we considered how to make use of what's already here. For example, there's value to utilizing the problems of the area, the kind of space we had under the tracks, incorporating the historical situation. There are many resources here that were just asking to be recycled in the project. What I mean is that the basic process of working out how to incorporate what the neighborhood has to offer, be it the people, the space, the history, that basic process itself is the role of architecture related to artistic activism.

At Sakura-so, we were thinking of using the ground level area to let local people sit and have a place to talk, but they said, "It's unsettling having suspicious artists involved in suspicious activities." That kind of thing happened on a large scale. Our goal in letting people gather, and moreover in opening up the space to the street over a long period of time wasn't to expose the neighborhood to as many people as possible, instead we hoped to create a place like the earth-floored entryway or porch of a farm house, where people from the area would want to gather and let their guard down.

Jesty: Continuing with what Mr. Sogabe said, I'd like to hear from the director, Mr. Yamano, who was at the scene the length of the event.

Yamano: There's one point I'd like to bring up concerning art and urban development. When art or an artist enters the picture, the change at that time is incredibly slow. With "slow," I don't mean that time slows down or that things take a long time; what I mean is things don't happen all of a sudden without any difficulty, but they happen bit by bit. Things accumulate and before you know it the things have changed. That's the kind of process I'm talking about. There are the artists, who act like catalysts, and there's the product of their activities, their art, right? Through these things, for the people who have been living here until now, a different quality of air, a different atmosphere, a different role comes to life. Such small changes accumulate. And also, like Mr. Sogabe said, the role of location works in conjunction with the role of the art and the artists, and as a result things change little by little. Of course we're using new buildings, but we're also

using preexisting buildings. By working on these places that used to have a completely different purpose in the past - for example, once an artist uses one of these places, it becomes a new store. We're still doing this kind of activity now. In my opinion, this slow change that is continuing at a speed the local people can agree with is art.

Jesty: What kind of relationship does the importance of "story" you mentioned earlier have with art?

Yamano: I originally lived in Fukuoka, and I experienced a change in the city center of Fukuoka. A long time ago, there was an old department store at the center of Fukuoka and that store was the center of the city. It's like the Matsuzakaya Department Store in Isezakicho. But that department store in Fukuoka went bankrupt. After that, the center of the city slowly moved. In the past, the center was closer to the ocean, but now that it has moved inland, the area closer to the ocean has fallen into decline. That's because the people who later made the new commercial institutions thought only about the economic principles, not about the culture of the city. Before, the city's department store had thought up and created a culture and the place became a kind of symbol, so when that disappeared and the city began to move, only the location changed. Because the total buying power in the city doesn't change, when one place flourishes, another falls, but the flourishing place will begin to fall in a few years. That kind of thing happens. In that sense, a city needs a cultural set of values. The same goes for a district or community. The question of how that set of values is created is an incredibly large factor in the formation of the city.

Jesty: I'd like to hear from Mr. Suzuki about your ideas on city planning, with a focus on the *Koganecho Bazaar*. In the revitalization of Koganecho, what kind of roles do culture and art have?

Suzuki: Since before we started the Koganecho project, I helped with various development projects, and there were many art events, especially in rural cities and depopulated areas. Setting aside issues of quality, the people who take part have an

unusually great time, and in a sense, the communication that takes place in the process of the event gives the local people a good time. That's how I came to understand it. Be it the center of a large city or the countryside, there's not much of a difference in that the revitalization of an area has come about as a result of intermittent art events.

For example, there's the case of St. Paul in the USA. In the latter half of the 90s, a large mall was built in the suburbs of St. Paul and the downtown area died out and became only empty buildings, but the planner Wayming Lu, hoping artists would gather, created apartments, opened art events, and successfully revitalized downtown. I did a lot of research on that kind of phenomenon, and I came to understand that art has some sort of ability to revitalize a city.

Putting the spotlight on this district, the first thing I felt when I came here was, "There's no one here." There's a gaping hole here. If you go to a meeting, there's Yasutoshi Taniguchi and Mr. Kobayashi. Of course there are plenty of local people. However, on weekdays there's no one there; that's the point we needed to work on. It's as if there were a so-called air pocket in the middle of the city, this area had become a gaping cavity. One thing I expected of the *Koganecho Bazaar* was, therefore, that the image of this area would change, and another thing was that the mindset of the local people would change, so that conversations between local people would increase. That's the level of expectation I had. What was necessary to slowly revitalize the community was to increase the connections between people. That is to say, to change the image of the area, the people need to change how they value themselves, and then the value of the area in which they live will change.

Mr. Sogabe said earlier that there are resources, assets here, and I feel the same way. This is a great place with good things, but the local people don't quite acknowledge the fact. When I first came to the area, I thought there must be a way to put the old brothels to a more positive use. At the beginning, I thought it would be very inappropriate to say that in front of the local people. However once we started the preparations for the *Bazaar* and actually opened the event, Mr. Taniguchi and the rest began saying of

themselves, “it’s good they’re put to good use,” and the local residents began changing their minds. In other words, an inward change started happening, and in the change I felt the power of art.

Jesty: Thank you. The *Koganecho Bazaar* has for now come to a conclusion, and I would like to ask you all about future plans and directions. From now on I’d like to have you freely discuss the future. What should be done? How would you like things to develop?

Amano: In general at this time of year, Japanese newspapers take a look back at the year’s theater, movies, and all kind of genres. In this year’s art, it probably wasn’t prearranged, but all the major newspapers brought up the topic, “Art has come to the city.” The Asahi Newspaper reported over 50 projects all over the country. The background for this is of course the problem of an aging population. Also, social security, education, all the social problems we have to embrace now. In every respect, the factors are mixed and the various localities have different circumstances, so I may not be able to say this for all of them, but in this area, with the decreasing birthrate and the aging population and what have you, to be able to face the future I just described, what’s necessary for local residents to overcome these problems is a problem-solving infra-structure.

In whichever way you look at it, art isn’t mass produced. It may be more appropriate to say it’s like the slow food movement. As it matures, something within it slowly changes. Everyone goes along with that, but what’s being done isn’t simply creating a piece of art. Take current nursing shortage for example, it seems to me that there’s a possibility for culture and art to play a part. Because the considerations for making culture the focal point are different, the priorities for each location is different, but of all people, the people of Koganecho haven’t laid out their problem to someone else and asked them how to overcome it, but of their own initiative they’ve cooperated with each other, and in the process haven’t produced just a festival, but a seed of infrastructure.

Suzuki: As to what we're going to do from now on, we're petitioning to open a new NPO, and once we have the certificate, this organization will manage the studios and take over administration beginning in April of next year. Mr. Yamano will be a part of the NPO, but local people will also be in it. As to what we're going to do with the NPO, I don't think the contents of the work will change much. Becoming an NPO doesn't mean the direction will change. On the contrary, I think local interference should be held within bounds. Continuing to produce at the current level of quality is extremely important in improving the reputation of the district, and if this will change into a normal citizen's art gallery, I don't think people will come. Instead, I'd like to see the NPO do all kinds of experiments. For a long time now, I've personally wanted to do something.

In Nagahama in Shiga Prefecture, there's an urban development company called Kurokabe that's become famous throughout the country, and that company operates a place called Platina Plaza. It's quite a successful project, and with the extra profits, they let elderly people from the neighborhood open their own shops. If losses appear, they step in, but the place has a feeling of, "Make profits whatever way you wish." So, the elderly people come and drink their tea there and sell their homegrown vegetables. I'd like to create a project that so seamlessly merges with the local community. Only, I think there could be more variation in how it's done. How could artists work with that concept? They'd probably think up a completely different approach from what the city university students came up with. Since I see all kinds of opportunities for experimentation, I think all kinds of activities can be continued, involving all sorts of people as long as a high standard for submission is upheld.

Sogabe: Making the rules is the difficult part. Although we want to think up new things, at some point customs and common sense step in. Everyone says, "The artists are great! If students come, things will change," but actually nothing changes. What produces that feeling of change is that these guys lack common sense. They're not inhibited by customs. Some people say they try to intentionally create a shift. That's what's important probably. Until now, things had to produce profits, right? The possibility had to be seized. If you decide something has to be a certain way, things become

easier. If you see an egg, the only option is sunny side up. If you see a potato, the only option is curry rice. If you think like that, efficiency increases. You get faster profits. But things aren't meant to go that way. Mr. Yamano and Mr. Amano have both mentioned talk about time, and I think it is a very important point. As a matter of course, it takes time. Just because you saw a potato and didn't think of curry rice, maybe you'll invent potato butter. When you're in the moment, you don't think of the way things ought to be. You're probably thinking you want to think up a new way of doing things. Urban areas are just like that; the city holds various possibilities for its own development. There's a tendency to say, "We should do it like this." Since until recently the administration of subsidiary aid was strict, there was an implicit feeling of what would receive funding, but that's shifted. What's more important is, just as everyone has been saying, that everyone's involved. The local people have to do it. Of course, people from outside will come and take the opportunity to put in their two cents, but there's no responsibility with that, so really the people who know the area the best have to get down to it. In that sense, more than the students or artists, everyone has to be open not to making a mess of things, but to trying unconventional things. That's when things get better. You can't say an art event like this is going to change things all at once. But it can be used as the starting point from which you should get the material to change mindsets - in the spirit of "Why don't we change things. Things went well this way, so why not try it?"

Yamano: From the beginning when we were first brainstorming about Koganecho, the local residents kept focusing on asking the question, "What happens after it's finished?" Since it was such a big issue, the event took it into consideration. We did things, with the idea, "I think things should be like this afterwards. What do you think?" Nevertheless, there was a lot of risk in, for example, having shops do the impossible by coming, having artists do more than simply display their work, for example like a pottery shop - they might have had a shop before or maybe its a completely new shop - all that plus an exhibition. In that way, we made our plans as a kind of composite image. What I imagined was, the original Koganecho would make up the base, the location at which the *Bazaar* lands out of nowhere from the heavens, but rather than saying something completely unrelated came to the neighborhood, in reality there is a naturally connection,

and in the middle of it all are the artists. I didn't want the artists' existence to seem by any means as if they'd floated up out of nowhere. For example, various locations are gradually added or more new people come. When that happens, the side of the *Bazaar* becomes a little bigger in the balance of things, and what if the area is reorganized in the process? For example, "If we put this kind of store on the waterfront, and if the artists dovetail with that idea, the effect will probably be interesting," or along the busy Hiradosakuragi Road, there are a lot of places with closed shutters. I'd really like to open as many as we can, but what should be brought there to make that possible? "If you make this kind of store, then next to it we need this kind of store," or "the artists should use what little time they have left to do something." Keeping these things in mind during the organization process will probably be the most important work of the NPO taking over. And that will naturally connect to the city. There shouldn't be a gap, but we must continue with the idea "Our work needs to connect to the economic revitalization of the people who originally did business here."

Suzuki: In that case, the rent is a little high, I think.

Yamano: Exactly. If it's a little cheaper, it's easier to come. How about pushing prices down for a while and then letting them come up again? In a sense, you can't do anything about high prices in a popular neighborhood. Right now, though, the conditions are that rent is too high and people aren't coming. So, I think the prices must be lowered for a while.

Suzuki: Another thing is the two barriers that need to be brushed aside are that the people of this neighborhood are suspicious of renting to "bad people" and so they aren't leasing. Once that's done away with, all kinds of people will come to this neighborhood. Usually, if the rent is high, it says, "Only those who can pay may come." To be honest, if you want to rent a studio in Kannai, near the ocean, it's difficult. If you don't have the support of someone in government, you can't do it unless you're really famous. Young artists can pay maybe half or one third of what it costs in Kannai. There are some places in Koganecho that have rents not much different from Kannai, and I don't think

people will come if things stay that way.

Yamano: Of course, there's a risk in doing business here. If you look at the books of any of the real estate agencies here, it's tough to do this kind of thing with this kind of rent.

Suzuki: Because the NPO will make referrals, the NPO should be "proper" and credible.

Yamano: You're right. Because we actually had the support of Yokohama City, we were able to gain some credibility. Almost all of the places were completely empty. For some reason, that's unsettling and so the buildings aren't leasable. If someone frightening comes, there's not much to do about it, so people waited patiently until everyone had left. Then, for the first time Yokohama City said, "We're behind you, so don't worry," and these places were finally leased again. So, I think "If the NPO can work as a mediator, we're okay." Then, a trusting relationship will be built, and the situation will improve.

Jesty: Thank you. Now, I'd like to field questions and opinions from our audience members.

Audience 1: The newspapers introduced the project as highly successful, but could you give us some basic numbers about how many people were mobilized and how that number compares to your predictions?

Yamano: I think it was basically 100,000 people. At the beginning, we said, "it would be great if 100,000 people would come." There was a gap between weekdays and weekends. On weekdays, we wondered why there were so few people, but then on weekends we got a lot of visitors. The trend of daily visitors from outside the area has disappeared. It seems like it will take a lot of work to change that. That's why, at the end of the event, at the end of November, when people were finally working, all at once we saw an increase in numbers.

Audience 2: My name is Yoko Yamamoto, and I was involved as a photographer. In the past, I've taken pictures of the Kagurazaka area. When a neighborhood becomes famous, wherever it is, it changes very fast. What was once a jumbled neighborhood - which I liked in Hondayokocho - is repaved and suddenly the streetlights are changed. The locals ask, "What's this?" and are given the answer, "A local artist made those," to which they can only say, "Oh, is that so?" Somehow or other, art should be used to make the changes, but I think it's regrettable when the original atmosphere of an area, the laid-back feeling in the air goes away. That's why, I think it's good that this neighborhood is changing, but it seems as if the sidewalks the streetlights are like those in any other place. Considering city planning, what kind of image are you working with?

Suzuki: I'm very happy you asked that. The reason being - if I skip the details for a moment - that this place has a long way to go before it will change. On the surface, there's this studio and a number of stores, but the real problem is that there are still a lot of closed places. There are a number of reasons for this and a lot of things that need to be done. In that sense, there's recognition that people will not suddenly get excited and stores multiply. I would be happy if that happens, but the reality is that it will take a long time. That's why I'm happy you asked that.

As to changing the appearance of the city, this neighborhood isn't going to win or lose by adopting something from outside, but by drawing on its inherent interest. The Ookagawa Promenade was repaved for other reasons, but even if the streets are repaved the neighborhood itself won't change all that much. So, it's not the kind of neighborhood like Kannai, where the electricity poles will be taken out and the signs regulated. That kind of thing is done by people in government when there's really no urban planning to be done. I personally think that we should instead continue the free way things are being done now.

Yamano: I don't think the outer appearance of the city should change much. I think that's a strong tendency, but once you have empty lots, people forget what used to be there. That's why we should try to keep the appearance of the neighborhood the way it

is. Instead, the heart will steadily change. When you walk the streets, you think it's like the old Koganecho, but if you open a door and peep inside, it's a completely different world. There's also a sense of scale. Honestly, as we were doing the *Bazaar*, I expected people to walk along the Kogane Studio on the riverfront, but in reality the people walking the back streets were randomly more. It's a more intimate scale, something I could somehow easily understand. If there are few shops, cars don't pass by. I think that kind of place has its value. So, should this area be torn up and rebuilt, should it turn into apartment buildings, it would be an incredibly dull neighborhood.

Audience 3 (Mr. Ogushi): It has to do with what you were just talking about, but as you have been saying, this area has a lot of particular characteristics. That's why, as Mr. Amano said earlier, I think the idea that art comes flying out and goes flying into these places that used to be used by the sex industry is great. I think this thing will continue happening from now on as well. That kind of building isn't anywhere else; it's extremely unique. Using them productively, letting artists or related people into them is an interesting way to proceed. In other words, leaving them as they are is interesting, I think. It's not a characteristic flower, but it's not about using money either. When people come from other places and think, "Isn't this interesting," and they'll come here and appreciate it. With that kind of urban development, I have a feeling people from outside will gain interest and more people will come.

Audience 4: What do you mean with "that kind of building?"

Audience (Ogushi): Buildings formerly used by the sex industry.

Audience 4: They have a different architecture?

Audience (Ogushi): Completely different. Local people know very well, but it's basically a brothel. That kind of building.

Audience 4: What kind of person is the landlord of that kind of building? What kind of

preconceptions of the status quo do they have?

Audience (Ogushi): There are all kinds of people. On the one hand, there are people who have lived there and owned the places for a long time and there are also cases of foreigners owning them. On the other hand, there are cases of Yakuza owning some. There are all kinds of owners. In addition, the reality of some is that although somewhere there is an owner, they're not immediately findable.

Audience 4: Are there some who want to immediately participate?

Audience (Ogushi): They don't usually want to cooperate right away or they have a lot of things to consider. One important job is working to help them to understand.

Yamano: Since we have this opportunity, I'd like to hear from Mr. Taniguchi and the other local people.

Audience 5 (Taniguchi): About the time when the *Bazaar* was beginning, according to these four people, there was Nakahara, a swindler who deceived a lot of people. Even locals like myself said it from the beginning. At first, when we heard from him that they wanted to do contemporary art, we kept saying accepting something like that seemed completely impossible. Considering the outcome, there are many projects with this kind of participation, and - although it's difficult to say what normal is - there are many artists that normal people like us can understand. Almost all are like that, and "the unconventional element in art" seemed like a good fit. This area was at the lowest of the low of conventional. This event turned that into a new direction. Also, if you look at the history, this kind of condition had continued for 40 or 50 years, and as Mr. Yamano said before, in this case, suddenly changing everything would be a big mistake. If you didn't bring about change by building it up little by little, then it seems that it would only be a one-time event and would end there. Then, as the event was happening, the locals made a lot of complaints, but they seemed to be participating in a lot of things. There were doubts such as "It's not this or that," "Everyone's here, but why is that person

here?” How are people getting all this information, I wondered, and I didn’t know until the very end, but information wasn’t transmitted locally, but far off through the internet, and people with very different backgrounds came to have a look. We wanted people to see how the neighborhood had changed, but I came to understand that many people understood this place. Also, this place is downtown, the kind of place where you can borrow soy sauce from next door. We thought that was normal, but when a person from the newspaper came to help and was surprised when he heard someone from the neighborhood say, “I bought some thick fried tofu and am putting it here, okay?” This is that kind of place, and we can’t quite understand sudden changes. When we don’t understand, strangers step in, and then the friendly local feeling goes away. You have to do things in a way like going up the stairs slowly or climbing up a slope without anyone noticing. The *Bazaar* became an attractive force that did just that I think. In short, some people thought it went well and some wondered why, but I think in that way it was a good outcome.

Suzuki: As Mr. Taniguchi pointed out, a lot of the locals thought, “Why contemporary art?” Right up until we began, many people thought that way, but as things proceeded, they gradually changed their minds. Perhaps in other locations, there was a lot of this kind of protest that prevented things from happening. If you ask how we managed to do this scale of event in a short amount of time, it’s because the local people including Mr. Taniguchi and Mr. Kobayashi had a strong organization. They did the “Bye-bye Operation” against prostitution and after that assembled to discuss many kinds of urban development. That built a foundation, so that in response to, “Why don’t we try it and see?” they were magnanimous enough to accept the offer. Also, Yokohama City’s Creative City Project came up, but although it’s the city government, another section, the Urban Development Division became involved. People from that division stepped in and soberly made the necessary arrangements. It should probably be said that they held the shadows at bay. This project did not come about as simply an art event.

Yamano: Can we hear from Mr. Kobayashi too?

Audience 6 (Kobayashi): My name has come up a few times, but it really began when Mr. Ogushi said, “I want to move out of Hinodecho. I can’t live here.” I was the Hinodecho neighborhood association chair at the time, and I realized then that it is the neighborhood association chair’s role to keep all the residents safe. Mr. Ogushi’s mother said, “There are disturbances 24 hours a day. There’s noise next door and I can’t sleep at night.” Having heard that, the neighborhood association decided to act. At the beginning we did not trust the police at all, the reason being that we thought there’s not much the strength of the police can do against that kind of brothel. We didn’t know the law. What we first thought was that the Building Code Division must be responsible, because they approved buildings with such small frontages. I also thought there was a problem with the health care center that approved these places as restaurants. Another place I found fault with was the Immigration Office. The women working here were mostly foreigners. We made these four offices our target and hit every single one of them. The result was, the Building Code Division approves whatever designs are deemed honest, the meaning of honest being that the architectural requirements of the design are met. The public health department said that as long as the requirements for a restaurant such as toilet facilities etc. are met, they have to give approval. We also went to the Immigration Office. They said they know the situation, but they only have 50 rooms for detaining illegal overstayers. When I said, “if they put in bunks with three beds each, they can accommodate 150 people,” the answer was, “Amnesty [International] wouldn’t allow it. There would be a report almost instantly.” Wherever we went we met dead ends, but as we became active, the first place to help us was the police. Then Nakaku, in other words the district administration, began working with us. We are really indebted to Nakaku. It seems Nakaku was worrying about the situation. It goes to show that if the residents don’t become active, the administration won’t step in either. The administration working alone can only work within the law. We understood that only later. Without the police putting pressure on an area, they can’t catch anyone. The dangers of being caught by the law affects everyone, Nakaku, the Immigration Office, and the Building Code Division. In the middle of all of this, the question is who plays the main role. Of course, if the residents are active, the police will help. So as it stands now, we are all involved, but I think we have to do a bit more. The ratio of locals among the

participants today is small. Of any groups, it looks like students and researchers are the biggest. For urban development, if you don't have outsiders, idiots, and young people, it won't be successful. Us locals think, "We must be idiots." That's why in any case, the experts who came from elsewhere must be too. You are strangers, aren't you? We're borrowing the strength of strangers. When I said, "Let us do Noge street art in Minatomirai," in reality more than 90 percent of the people in the neighborhood were against it. "Why do we have to take our urban development project to MM (Minatomirai)? Even if MM is silent, people will come, won't they?" That time, because I was the chair, I decided. Okura Kusayanagi said this, but Yokohama's development from now on is in the symbiosis of invaders and the Yayoi people. We natives are the Yayoi people. Those who have stepped into the country of dreams are the invaders. Exchanging and effectively using the treasures of each party will let this neighborhood develop. That's what he said. We explained that to the executives at the executive meeting. One more thing, I said wherever you do it, it's still Noge street art. Once I explained these two things, we all reached a consensus of opinion and did it at Minatomirai. That's why I think there are a lot of impetuses.

At this point, there's one question I'd like to ask. In reality, "the three laws of community building" have been revised, and what kind of impact will that have on the old town areas as a result? I'd like to hear from the architect Mr. Sogabe and from Mr. Suzuki., Mr. Sogabe was published in the November 18th "Opinion" column of the Asahi Newspaper. You said, "Small neighborhood retail is in great danger. Sustainable policies that include suburban stores need to be developed." Have you thought of anything as of now?

Sogabe: I'm involved on the side of designing architecture, so I have a stance on the physical scene, but I don't think the three laws of community building should be one way or another. Instead, I think the law isn't completely bad. A little while ago, there was a bad situation and it was improved, but when the law was originally changed, it made the situation easier for local people to act. Moreover, considering the law and economy, large stores have less room to move. So, I really think that the situation allows residents

to easily be active. That's why this chance must be taken advantage of. Nevertheless, don't think about how things should physically be done, but - and this relates back to what we've been saying today - each place is different. The things the people here can come up with will be exhausted. We academics say, "It's a good idea to do this," but there's no real meaning to what we say. All we can say is "Now that common sense has been set aside, it's easier to think." We can also say, "Let's do this!"

Suzuki: To state it broadly, we said the location of Koganecho is incredibly good. This is fundamentally speaking a commercial area, where things are bought and sold. But, if you compare it to Motomachi or the area around Yokohama Station, the conditions are obviously not good at all. However, right now the problem facing the Yokohama Station area, Motomachi, and Isezaki is that they're being taken up by chain stores. Motomachi seems at first glance as if it's a shopping street of wonderful originality, but one Ginza diamond retailer has three stores with different names there. That's the situation. Then, the ratio of chain stores in Isezaki's first and second districts is more than 50 percent. It's obvious that wherever you go it's the same. Who's going to come to the Hatsunecho/Koganecho/Hinodecho area, with its disadvantaged location? Original things that you can't see anywhere else, of course. It wouldn't work any other way. Once that's gone and normal restaurants line the streets, then this place has nothing more to revitalize. If you don't make this place unusual or give it a reputation of originality, if it's not a place people want to come to in the least, then it won't be revitalized. That idea isn't limited to stores, it applies to art too. It's not, "I think I've seen something like that before," but "Please keep sponsoring new things."

Audience (Kobayashi): Really, the large street is lined with wholesale stores. Right after the war, the American military occupied the area, and the wholesale stores that were throughout didn't have anywhere to go, so they chose this street. That's why, soon after the end of the occupation, when the stores were to go back to their original places, they should have gone obsolete, but they didn't, because there was still business in wholesale. You surely know some stores sell products for business use and some sell wholesale items for general consumption. So, there are two kinds of wholesale stores.

Where I work, we sell bags and boxes, packaging for businesses. There's also Tsuchiya, which sells ware for soba stores. This place is dotted with wholesale stores that sell directly to merchants, small retail, and business people. General wholesale is impossible in small spaces with small capital strength. It's not something consumers do. Instead, I think it's much better to sell wholesale to businesses. In part, hardware for carpenters is sold in home centers, but the extremely specialized hardware you can't find in a home center you'll be able to find here. With that kind of thing, artists are going to be involved, I think. So, it would be great if we could broaden our outlook and think about test or trial shops. I would appreciate it if in particular these four people who are thinking of the fundamental things would take this kind of idea into consideration.

Jesty: Thank you.

Yamano: As we were preparing for the *Bazaar*, we received all kinds of cooperation from local people. I understood then, but materials are easily come by in this area. It's almost unbelievable what kind of things you can find here. Furthermore, there is an unusually large number of skilled people. There are a lot of craftsmen and mechanics. I talked with our staff about it today, but that kind of resource must be dug up again. For example, the reputation that, "There is so much technology and material in this area!" must be reintroduced and new things added. I think there must be that kind of urban development as well.

Jesty: Thank you for such a very interesting conversation.