



# *AFTER NATURE*



Conseil des arts    Canada Council  
du Canada         for the Arts

*We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.*

Film by Christopher Blackmore | With Nobuo Abe, Mikio Kurokawa, Tatsuyuki Maeda | *Cinematography* Yuji Moriwaki | *Translators* Megumi Furihata, Daniel González, Akio Kunisawa, Nami Kunisawa | *Editors* Josh Frank, Milo Reinhardt | *Special Thanks* James Goddard, Lena Sasakura Shockley

**Runtime:** 16:34

**Format:** 16:9 (1920x1080)

**Image:** Full HD

**Sound:** Stereo



## Synopsis

After World War II, Japan's cities needed to be reimagined. Dreamers like Kisho Kurokawa, the grand don of the Metabolist architecture movement, supplied visions that broke decisively with the past. Metabolism's outlandish, utopian buildings were intended to demonstrate the new "life age," evolving organically to keep pace with society. By the twenty-first century, however, most had vanished or fallen into disrepair.

Shot in Japan just before the pandemic, *After Nature* communes with this futurism now past, presenting a story of movement, decay, and hope for renewal. The short documentary revisits two then-surviving Metabolist projects: Capsule House K (1973) in the mountains near Nagano, and Nakagin Capsule Tower (1972) in Tokyo, which was ordered dismantled and demolished in spring of 2022.

The film is narrated by Kisho's son Mikio Kurokawa, Nakagin preservationist Tatsuyuki Maeda, and Metabolist architect Nobuo Abe, who oversaw the Nakagin project. Meditative and elegiac, *After Nature's* interviews and images tell a quiet and timely story. Metabolism bloomed in the afterglow of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics; will its legacy recede forever after 2020?

## Film Team

### *Director*

#### **Christopher Blackmore**

Canadian writer and filmmaker based in North America and Asia. His writing and editing credits include work with the Centre Pompidou and China's contemporary art magazine 艺术界 *LEAP*. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Film/History at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

### *Cinematographer*

#### **Yuji Moriwaki**

Japanese cinematographer and filmmaker based in Tokyo. In 2019, he directed two music videos for Minyo Cumberio, a collaboration between Japan's celebrated folk band Minyo Crusader and Frente Cumbiero, one of the biggest bands in Colombia's *cumbia nueva* scene.

### *Editors*

#### **Josh Frank**

Canadian documentary filmmaker and musician based between New York and Beijing. He has produced many stories for VICE News Tonight on HBO, Vice China, and Quartz News, and self-directed films such as *Collecting Insanity* (Asia Society/China File). He holds a News & Documentary MA from New York University. | [joshua-frank.com](http://joshua-frank.com)

#### **Milo Reinhardt**

Co-founder and technical director of the Montreal-based artistic collective [susy.technology](http://susy.technology), dedicated to interactive media, cyberculture, and extended reality. Reinhardt has produced ambitious sound and multimedia installations and performances for MUTEK digital arts festival (2015-2018) and Red Bull Music Academy (2014). He was video/sound production generalist for all of artist Jon Rafman's major video artworks from 2015 to 2018. | [susy.technology](http://susy.technology)

## FAQ

### **How did this film come about?**

Some friends of mine were living at Nakagin Capsule Tower a few years ago. I went there one night and got very interested. It's a dreamy place, especially in the dark, and the building activated something in my memory. I felt it would be possible to write the building, and later Capsule House K, into a frame to talk about big, philosophical ideas.

Fortunately, I had the support of some very good people in Japan and North America. And being an outsider can have advantages. Everyone interviewed in this film was eager to speak and generous with their time.

### **Metabolism and Nakagin have been treated in many books and a few documentary films, so what was the impetus behind doing this new film?**

I saw that there was a chance to do something poetic with Nakagin's current situation, somewhere between destruction and rebirth. There are many fine architecture monographs out there, like Rem Koolhaas's *Project Japan*. But nobody has made an "affecting" film about Metabolism, so I thought I would give it a try.

### **What is the continuing allure of Metabolism?**

Metabolism embodies a special, fleeting moment mid-century—a time of "big ideas" (perhaps even "oddball ideas"). There is something very pure about them. It's also intriguing how the movement's work is canonical, yet quite neglected in real life. The scarcity of Metabolism's buildings seems to help build their mystique.

### **What can *After Nature* do for architectural preservation?**

My entire ethos here was to play the outsider-amateur and see if I could do something new. I came to have a great appreciation for these timeworn buildings by visiting them, and by speaking with people deeply involved with them on a personal level. My hope is that these conversations and images, these ideas and emotions, can draw people in who might not naturally be interested in architecture.