

DESIGNING

JAPAN

A FUTURE BUILT ON AESTHETICS

KENYA HARA

TRANSLATED BY MAGGIE KINSER HOHLE AND YUKIKO NAITO

Designing Japan: A Future Built on Aesthetics presents renowned designer Kenya Hara's vision of how his industry can support Japan in crafting a future founded on a unique philosophy of beauty as well as crowd-sourced wisdom from around the world. The book spans history from the beginnings of professional Japanese design in the sixteenth century to the impact of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake, but Hara's focus is the future. A master collaborator, meticulous organizer, and globally conscious innovator, he draws on more than three decades of participation in design work and exhibition curating, as well as deep professional interaction with creators from many fields. *Designing Japan* serves as a foundation course on the essence of Japanese aesthetics while maintaining a practical approach to Japan's circumstances and future possibilities. Hara reveals the methods by which designers in Japan continue to work in tandem with government and industry to form publicly accessible aesthetic inquiries into how this island nation will proceed as its population ages, other nations take over manufacturing, and technology develops. Illustrations and examples recognize successful problem solving through design, proving that it is a living, changing industry that remains relevant not in spite of, but as a partner to, advancing technology.



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Kenya Hara (b. 1958) is an internationally acclaimed graphic designer and professor at Musashino Art University in Tokyo. He has been MUJI's Art Director since 2002. Hara creates design that elicits experiences, as well as designing objects. He developed *RE DESIGN: Daily Products of the 21st Century*, an exhibition that re-examined the meaning of the word "design." *RE DESIGN* toured internationally, receiving both the Icofrada Excellence Award and the Icsid Design Excellence Award at the 17th Biennial of Industrial Design and the Mainichi Design Award 2000. Hara went on to develop and tour *HAPTIC: Awakening the Senses* and *SENSEWARE*, through which he advocated for keywords that update existing value systems. He developed designs deeply rooted in Japanese culture for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics, and for the promotion of Expo 2005, held in Aichi prefecture. Hara handled product design for such corporations and designers as the beverage company AGF and KENZO, and visual identity campaigns for the renewal of the Matsuya Ginza department store, the MORI Building, the bookstore Tsutaya Shoten, and GINZA SIX. Since 2015 he has been the General Producer of the JAPAN HOUSE project, an initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Hara is the recipient of the Tokyo Art Directors Club Grand Prize (2003) for his MUJI advertising campaign, the Kodansha Publishing Culture Award, and the Japan Inter Design Forum Prize, among others. His book *Dezain no Dezain* (Iwanami Shoten, 2003) received the Suntory Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities. After being translated into Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese, it was expanded and published in English as *Designing Design* (Lars Müller Publishers, 2007), gaining a broad international readership. Hara's other books include *White* (Lars Müller Publishers, 2009) and *Architecture for Dogs* (TOTO Shuppan, 2013).