

## Review

# An experiment in urban regeneration using culture and art in Senba, Osaka's historic urban center, with a focus on the regeneration of urban space

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## ABSTRACT

Urban regeneration through the use of culture and art is attracting the attention of many cities throughout the world. In this article, the author, through his specialty of urban planning, considers the potential for utilizing culture and art from the perspective of investigating new directions in urban regeneration. A case study has been conducted regarding Senba, the historic urban center of Osaka, Japan that has basically maintained its district structure and, as the heart of Osaka, assumed its place as an economic center for over 400 years, its experiment in urban regeneration through culture and art, and its development and process. The results of this experiment clearly show that along with attempting to expand the sharing of the meaning and value of resources lying dormant in the historic urban center through the medium of the arts, there has also been a substantive advance in the kind of urban regeneration known as area management, in which there has been a revitalization and diversification of activities geared toward urban regeneration as well as an increase in participants. Furthermore, through such means, the article shows prospects on the future form of urban regeneration in the historic center.

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## Introduction

Currently, urban regeneration through the use of culture and art is attracting the attention of many cities throughout the world (Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993; Boyer, 1988; Harvey, 1989; Zukin, 1982). For example, local revitalization through artists' residences and the concentration of artist studios; revitalization through the renovation of historic buildings and the renovation and conversion of historic neighborhoods; and setting up urban spaces as if they were theaters or museums and using them as spaces for artistic expression, are all known as representative efforts (Civic Pride Research Association, 2008; Osaka City University Urban Research Plaza, 2008; Sasaki & Mizuuchi, 2009; The University of Tokyo cSUR-SSD Working Group, 2008).

Such approaches are often discussed as experiments in opening up new horizons aimed at the invigoration of culture and arts policies or as a means used in city branding and tourism policies that provide topics of popular interest, without being limited by the domain of existing policies.

However, from the standpoint of the author, who mainly studies urban planning, what merits attention in the approaches towards urban regeneration through culture and the arts (Griffiths, 1995; Sharp, Pollock & Paddison, 2005) is that, in order to bring about regeneration in cities facing the issues of stagnation and decline, culture and arts policies do not stand separate from urban planning but are developed mutually and are linked in a complex manner. This article will focus on undertakings in Senba, Osaka, the center of activity for the author, and will introduce a case of cooperative action by the university and the citizens as an example of urban regeneration through culture and the arts.

## Structure of the article

The article is structured as follows:

Section 3 gives an overview of Creative City theories as urban policies focused on culture and the arts and Section 4 touches on the problems harbored by urban planning in matured cities. Section 5 is the case study noted in this article about Senba, Osaka, one of the representative historic urban centers of Japan; after presenting the issues towards its regeneration, Sections 6–8 introduces the example of

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the Senba Art Café, a main agent of urban regeneration put in practice by the university focusing on culture and the arts, its chronologically developing program, and its process. Based on this, Section 9 touches on the meaning of regenerating the city through art and Section 10 gives a conclusion.

### The Creative City theory as an urban policy that focuses on culture and the arts

First of all, the Creative City was put forward by people such as Peter Hall, Charles Landry, Richard Florida, and Masayuki Sasaki (Florida, 2004; Hall, 1998; Landry, 2000).

There is recently an increasing trend towards illustrating urban strategies based on this Creative City Theory (Cameron, 2003; Monclús, 2003; Plaza, 1999; Vicario & Monje, 2003). Some representative examples are Bologna, Montreal, Bilbao, Newcastle-Gateshead, and Berlin. In Japan as well, cities such as Yokohama, Kobe and Kanazawa profess to be Creative Cities, and a number of cities make it a centerpiece of their policies. Osaka is also one of them. But, first of all, what is a Creative City? According to Sasaki's definition, it is a city whose culture and industry are rich in creativity, are based on the free expression of people's creative activities, and at the same time, are supplied with a progressive and flexible urban economic system that has moved away from mass production (Sasaki, 2001).

Masayuki Sasaki cites Jane Jacobs and Charles Landry as important individuals in the lineage that led to the emergence of the concept of the Creative City. Jacobs (1961, 1984), in her book *Cities and the Wealth of Nations: Principles of Economic Life*, emphasizes that, in order to achieve a creative urban economy, the existence of creative people and groups of enterprises – skilled in innovation and able to make flexible use of technology – as well as networks between them, are important, and it is necessary to achieve an urban milieu that accommodates the existence of such people and enterprises. Another of her representative works, known as a bestseller, is *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. In this book, she adopts a fundamental position of criticism against modern urban planning and offers alternatives for creating diversity in the city. For example, she cites the necessity for mixed zoning as opposed to single-use zoning in urban planning.

Charles Landry (Landry, 2000; Landry & Woods, 2008), on the other hand, in his book *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, highlights the importance of a creative milieu from the standpoint of solving urban problems. In seeking new directions in the development of exhausted and decaying cities, he focuses on experiments that utilize the creative power of culture and the arts to bring out dormant energy. And in his book, *The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage*, co-authored with Phil Woods, he discusses the importance of maintaining the diversity of a city and proposes a dialog with the past as an urban policy for the co-existence of multiple cultures and for cementing the identity of a city. At the same time, founded in these ideas, he writes on the directionality that the sustainable city should aim towards.

While both were interested in the how a city ought to be in the commonly held concept of the Creative City, it is no coincidence that both make note of fields that are closely

intertwined with urban planning – urban space and area management. In other words, behind the Creative City Theory is shown the implicit possibility that urban planning may be an effective tool, from the perspective of urban regeneration through culture and the arts.

### Issues faced by urban planning in mature cities

Next, I would like to consider the issues currently faced by urban planning. In those regions that were the first in the world to accomplish modernization, the city that had theretofore been the epitome of prosperity is now exhausted and coming face-to-face with the reality of decay (Couch, Fraser, & Percy, 2003). A representative urban strategy for such exhausted and decayed districts in which urban activity has dulled was commonly the redevelopment method called “scrap and build.”

However, it has already come to be understood that this method also involves many problems. Due to such problems as the uniformity of the established city, the eviction of existing residents through gentrification, and the increase in business risk of rebuilding a city from scratch, the application of only the “scrap and build” method in response to exhausted and decaying districts has already become difficult (Minohara, 2003).

Under such circumstances, it has become necessary for urban planning to rethink its basic attitudes established in the modern age, as represented by the uniformity of land use, the functionality of urban space, and the guarantee of safety. It is now the age for urban planning to finally shift its focus from quantity to quality, while working out revitalization strategies that make full use of even all non-spatial factors such as the people and community that live in the city, or the city's industry, economy and culture. Such trends will come to show its expansion in attempts at the enrichment of regulations aimed toward the improvement of urban landscapes or the qualitative progress of design (Japan Architectural Association, 2009; Nishimura & Machinami Research Association, 2000, 2009).

At the same time the perspective of utilizing existing things, instead of creating new things from scratch, is now coming to be demanded. And in response to this method of regenerating the city through repair and partial renovation, or using the city's inner strengths, which can perhaps be termed its self-healing powers, as opposed to resetting it completely, there is now a need to face the issue of how urban planning will respond (Frieden & Sagalyn, 1989). Thus the adoption of area management (Kobayashi, Uchiumi, Muraki, Ishikawa, & Lee, 2005; Lloyd, McCarthy, McGreal, & Berry, 2003; Morcol, Hoyt, Meek, & Zimmerman, 2002; Symes & Steel, 2003) as typified by main street programs or BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) is proceeding in various places, and proactive efforts are underway for rediscovering the particular charm of localities and initiating *machizukuri* (community development) that uses local resources in order to repair and rebuild communities (Hayden, 1997).

Furthermore, amidst the increasing severity of environmental problems on a global scale and the problem of resource depletion, it has become necessary for cities to deal with the issue of sustainability, and various proposals have been made towards the realization of environmental

cities beginning with the compact city (Farr, 2007; Rogers, 1998).

The domain of urban planning has already broken through the shell of its narrow definition, or the guarantee of the conditions of a city's spatial existence, and is moving towards the perspective of a comprehensive policy that includes linkages and coordination with other branches of policy within its scope.

### **The current state of the historic urban center of Senba and issues towards its regeneration**

In consideration of the abovementioned points, I would like to change the topic to Senba, Osaka. Senba is located in the Chuo Ward at the center of Osaka. Bounded by the Tosabori River and Nakanoshima to the north, Nagahori Road to the south and by high speed expressways to the east and west, it is a broad area of approximately 230 hectares. The history of the city of Osaka reaches far back; even within all the cities of Japan, it has constantly played a central role, as a trade port with China in ancient times and as a center of politics. While it lost its function as the center of politics after the early modern period, it continued to flourish as the hub of economy, trade and finance centering on the townspeople. And even after the early modern period, Osaka continued to remain in a central position throughout the various changes of the times. However, in recent times its decay has begun to increase in severity, and its regeneration has become an urgent task.

Here I organize the kinds of issues that the historic urban center of Senba is currently facing.

#### *How to dissolve the spatial distortions in the historic urban center*

To begin with, cities like Senba with a historic urban center are not places that sufficiently fulfill the functions or spatial conditions that would naturally be provided in cities built according to a city plan. It can be said that it is covered with subdivided plots of land, small to mid-sized buildings, and narrow streets.

Thus, since the modern period, the urban reconstruction has been implemented mostly in such historic urban centers. In the urban center of Osaka, matured over a long period of time with a logic different from the structural principles of modern urban spaces, "rebuilding" has been undertaken to realize functional allocations and public facilities suitable for a modern city (Kana, 2007).

Additionally, further changes can be seen recently in Senba, such as the adoption of "Special Urban Regeneration Zones" based on Special Measures Laws for Urban Regeneration and the construction of ultra high rise buildings on the few existing large plots of land in the historic center. There, in addition to the issue of dealing with the characteristics of the urban historic center's original narrowness and fragility, we find glimpses of the complexity of spaces that have succeeded in partially "modernizing," intertwined into it in a mosaic fashion (Tsubosaka, Kana, & Akasaki, 2005). The restructuring of this space is now being called for.

#### *How to reconstruct the order being lost in the historic urban center*

Under the process of rapid expansion and growth of the city and economy after the arrival of the modern period, the urban center of Senba, equipped with diverse and multifaceted functions, gradually changed into a monochromatic city of business and office districts. According to the national census, the Senba of 1925 (the 14th year of the Taisho era) with a resident population of over 60,000 had, by the year 2000, less than a population of 4000 for its 230 ha area. In contrast, it has a daytime population of 27,000. And its ratio of daytime to nighttime population has reached approximately 70–1. There is no other urban center to be found in the world with such an unequal ratio of day to nighttime population over such a vast area. Certainly, in recent years, with the construction of apartments due to the flow of people returning to the urban center (according to data from 2005), the resident population has become 6298 – on the way towards recovery. However, there is still a very distorted situation here, far from that to be found in a place for people living an urban lifestyle.

And the effect of this distortion will not simply stop at just losing the function of a city for people to live in. There has also arisen a situation in which there is no future leader to take over the role of supporting town planning in the city center. The issue is how to establish a regional community in the city center to link residents, corporations, and workers, and how to reconstruct the city into one with the charms to allow diversity such as people's lives, homes, and play.

#### *How to utilize the resources of a historic urban center*

The logic of urban planning since modern times has always demanded the creation of spaces in the urban center appropriate to the vanguard of the time. And its method of realization has depended on the scrap and build system, clearing out old structural principles and creating new ones. In urban centers based on such ideas, new urban spaces are continuously built from large-scale urban redevelopment. When such a trend is compared to the historic urban center, judged by the same value system, it is clear that the historic urban center has no chance of winning. However, if we take one step back to take a calm look at the world's cities, we will notice something. Many of these, such as London, Paris, Madrid or Milan, are cities that have a historic urban center at its heart. In fact, we can say that almost all well-known cities of the world are equipped with historic urban centers. While burdened with numerous handicaps seen as inefficiencies in the logic of modern urban planning, there is the reality that they preserve an unwavering aspect in the face of great cities (Tokyo University cSUR-SSD Research Association, 2008).

In other words, in the regeneration of historic urban centers, it is necessary to transition away from the curse of urban planning's structural logic emphasizing functionality and into a new way of thinking. And instead, it is necessary to stand in the viewpoint of fully utilizing the elements naturally found in the historic urban center and establish stimulation measures with originality.

## An experiment in urban regeneration through culture and art – the Senba ART Café

The activities of the Senba Art Café are an attempt at the realization of a practical experiment in the field of Senba, Osaka's historic urban center, with an awareness of the mutual relationship between urban regeneration and the regeneration of culture and art. The Senba Art Café, as the first of a number of field plazas established at various locales in Osaka by the Urban Research Plaza of Osaka City University, began its activities in January of 2006. This experiment was also a project comprising the global GOE program, "Rebuilding the City of Cultural Creativity and Social Inclusion (2007–2011)," adopted by the Japanese Ministry of Education and Science (Sasaki & Mizuuchi, 2009).

From its headquarters in the basement of a building in the center of Senba, the Senba Art Café (Osaka City University, 2010) conducts research and practical experiments concerning art and the community. The organization is composed of researchers who study art, culture, or community, centering on staff from Osaka City University; and, using their respective resources, they are developing a practical program to experimentally demonstrate the possibilities for art and the ideal form of urban planning in the historic urban center.

The activities of the Senba Art Café can be roughly divided into two kinds. One is an attempt to bring in new art from outside and, by implanting it in the city, to make Senba into a center of transmission for a more diverse culture. The other is an attempt to discover and enrich the latent culture of Senba and explore new possibilities for utilizing urban spaces in the historic urban center by having artists conduct workshops themed on Senba.

Examples of the first kind of activity are the Asian ethnic music lessons called the "Senba Musical Spring." In this event, top class musicians from various parts of Asia are invited to Senba to hold workshops open to the public. So far, they have dealt with music from such places as Thailand, India, Yaeyama, and Mongolia. It has been well received each time as an after-five, cultural program for women, including those who work in the office districts near Senba.

A representative example of one of the latter activities in practice – especially in close relation to this article – is an event called the Senba Architecture Festival, making use of modern architecture (which will be described later) and transmitting their appeal, among many other projects. Many attempts aiming towards the rediscovery of the historic urban center of Senba through the medium of culture and the arts and involving the residents have been developing, such as: a project assembling children from Senba's local nursery school and having them paint a giant illustrated map of Senba on white paper spread all across the floor, called "A Map of Tomorrow in Senba"; or, a project in which participants pick up video cameras and shoot short one-minute movies of Senba, called "Café Image in Senba." Through such endeavors, the aim is to deepen interest in urban space or in communities, rediscover the city's charms, and stimulate discussion towards new urban planning.

The fruits of these activities include succeeding in the introduction of new leaders of town planning, and, along with it, through the participation of those people who

had theretofore rarely been involved in the city's cultural activities, the arrival of visitors who had no relation to Senba before, but who came because of an interest in the cultural and arts programs. At the same time, it was proven that the development of cultural applications can be attempted utilizing the unused time frames of the office district, the busy hours of the weekday when the district falls silent.

After spending about two years in the first stage of activities, the Senba Art Café has now begun its second stage of activities since 2008. It aims at further deepening its ties to Senba's *machizukuri* (community development) activities beyond what it has been until now, to incorporate art in practice in the field of area management, and to connect knowledge from such practices into policy research. In other words, we can position these activities as attempts to realize urban regeneration by utilizing the practice of art to the full (see: Table 1).

## Practices focused on unique local cultural resources: the Senba Architecture Festival

One of the historic and cultural resources representing Senba is its modern architecture. As the curtain rose on a new age called the modern age, a large number of ambitious architectural works were built reflecting the prosperity of the times. While these modern buildings held an established reputation among experts, their existence was widely unknown to the common citizens (Hashizume, 2007). The Senba Architecture Festival, as a means of spotlighting the cultural resource of modern architecture, is an attempt to discover and broaden the dormant cultural power of Senba through the medium of the arts.

As its subtitle, "The Creative Utilization of Modern Architecture and the Regeneration of Osaka," indicates, this experimental program that the Senba Art Café has been involved in since 2006 attempts to show methods of utilization different from the original usage of architecture for business or commercial purposes and to further heighten the cultural power of historic urban centers by redefining the value of spatial resources lying throughout the historic center and proposing reutilization measures for them.

For example, at the second annual festival in 2007, the idea was to find possibilities in the rooftops of modern buildings, which normally have little opportunities for use (see Photo 1). One activity considered the rooftop as a resource for historical tourism and conducted a tour of four different rooftops; the number of people who responded far exceeded the capacity of the tours. Another event was the "Senba Festa," which turned the rooftop into an urban park. A café and flea market were set up on the rooftop of the Shibakawa Building, and musicians from many different genres performed there in turn.

Thanks to the results of the Senba Architecture Festival, utilization of modern buildings is coming to be widespread. Modern buildings, which disappeared one by one during the period of soaring land values, have recently come to be preserved or utilized, realizing the opportunity for them to continue to exist as landmarks in the city. Examples such as the entire imposing building of a former bank turned into a restaurant, an unconventional former commercial facility filled with fashionable shops, or an art deco style

**Table 1**  
Programs implemented by the Senba Art Café (2006.1 ~ 2011.3).

Program name	Date	Cat.	Description	# Times/term	Host/co-host/cooperate/support	
<i>2005/2006 # programs: 12 (Lec: 3, Mus: 3, Dis: 1, Spe: 1, WS: 1, Exp: 1, Exh: 2, Res: 0, Sym: 0)</i>						
Artist talk	Coco-A vol. 1 <i>Rasuto Sheen wa Watashibune ni</i> (The Last Scene on a Ferryboat)	Jan.	Lec.	WS talk about experience at Osaka City University Hospital	Host	
	Coco-A vol. 2 A-1 (shidaiTV)	Mar.			Host	
Lessons in Asian ethnic music	Piphat of Thailand	Feb., Mar.	Mus.	Practical course by musicians about ethnic musical instruments in practice	Series of 7 Series of 7	Host Host
	<i>Indo no seigaku/sokkyou no tanoshimi</i> (the Enjoyment of India's Vocal Music and Improvisation)	May, June			Series of 7	Host
	Javanese Gamelan	Aug., Sept.			Series of 7	Host
<i>Kiku Chikara: Phiripin no Machi no Saundo-sukepu</i> (The Ability to Listen: Soundscape of Towns in the Phillipines)		May	Lec.	Lecture on sound, politics, and community in the cities of the Phillipines through Buenconsejo	Host	
Entertainment Panel Forum		May	Lec.	Discussion centering on the keyword "entertainment"	Series of 3	Host
Luc Ferari Festival – <i>Sekai no Zawameki, Oto no Kioku</i> (Commotions of the World, the Memory of Sound) -		July	Spe.	Showing of music documentary directed by French modern musician, Luc Ferari, etc.	21st ~ 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Host
Coco-A vol. 3 <i>Swimmy Mu</i> BOOK in Senba		Aug.	WS	WS using wait time for Osaka City University Hospital's pediatric patients	Series of 3	Host
Senba Architecture Festival – <i>Kindai Kenchiku no Souzouteki Katsuyou to Osaka Saisei</i> (The Creative Use of Modern Architecture and the Regeneration of Osaka)		Oct.	Exp.	Symposiums and art programs thinking about ways to make use of modern architecture		Host
Coco-A: vol. 4 Tangram Lanscape		Jan., Feb.	Exh. Etc.	Art project using the protective walls around the reconstruction work on pediatrics ward in Osaka City University Hospital	Jan. 21 ~ Feb. 18	Host
Osaka Art Kaleidoscope 2007: " <i>Dai-Osaka ni Aitai</i> (I want to meet Dai-Osaka)"		March	Exh.	Exhibition of art projects throughout the city with the stage of space transmitting the present and past of Osaka	1st ~ 21st	Cooperate
<i>2007: # programs: 9 (Lec: 0, Mus: 2, Dis: 0, Spe: 1, WS: 2, Exp: 1, Exh: 1, Res: 1, Sym: 1)</i>						
Lessons in Asian ethnic music	Okinawa <i>Uta no Kokoro</i> (the heart of music)	June, July	Mus.	Practical course by musicians about ethnic musical instruments in practice	Series of 7	Host
	Mongolia <i>Sougen no Koe</i> (the voice of the plains)	Jan. ~ Mar.			Series of 7	Host
Art & Access Research Group		Sept. ~ Jan.	Res.	Creation of new encounters and communication through art, in cooperation with handicapped or hospitalized people	Series of 5	Host
Senba Architecture Festival 2 – <i>Okujyou he ikou!</i> (Let's go to the rooftop!)	Modern architecture rooftop tour Senba FESTA	Oct.	Exp.	A tour taking the rooftops of modern architecture as sightseeing resources in the city center Eating on the rooftop of building and introducing historical architecture through sound and visual media		Host
Nakanoshima Communication Café eX-station <i>Kanousei no Eki</i> (Station of Possibilities)		Oct.	Exh.	Exhibition of modern architecture and Nakanoshima's past landscape through photos and paintings – at Nakanoshima Library	12th ~ 14th	Cooperate

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

Program name	Date	Cat.	Description	# Times/term	Host/co-host/cooperate/support
Drama Therapy lecture & workshop	Nov.	Spe. Etc.	Lecture and workshop on drama therapy, led by instructor Mr. Onoe, a licensed therapist	3rd ~ 4th	Co-host
Café Marge in Senba	Dec.	WS	Creation and showing of “ultra short movies” themed on Senba	Series of 2	Host
Coco-A vol. 5: <i>Koukishin Seijin no Chousen – Moriki Tadasuke Shashin-ten</i> – (The Challenges of Mr. Curiosity – Photo Exhibit of Tadasuke Moriki –)	March	Exh.	A joint exhibit by Tadasuke Moriki, a patient hospitalized at Osaka City University Hospital, and his photographer friend	27th ~ 28th	Host
<i>2008: # programs: 7 (Lec: 1, Mus: 0, Dis: 0, Spe: 0, WS: 3, Exp: 1, Exh: 1, Res: 0, Sym: 1)</i>					
Art Meets Care academic meeting	June	WS, etc.	Talk on the new relationships born from the meeting of art and care, the way community should be, and the possibilities of the body		Cooperate
Public talk on “ <i>Shintai/Hyougen/Kankeisei</i> (Body/Expression/Relationship)”					
“ <i>Bunka Seisaku to CCD Seminar – Jizoku Kanou na Bunka-ten</i> (Cultural Policy and CCD Seminar – Exhibit on Sustainable Culture)” Osaka session	Nov.	Sym.	About the possibilities of the CCD, who aim to solve the tasks faced by communities as well as social issues through art		Cooperate
Neighborhood Commons Senba Architecture Festival 3 in Korai-bashi 2 cho-me	Nov.	Exp.	Thinking about the utilization of a city's history, culture and space, and the regeneration of a city through the power of art		Host
Movie showing			Introduction of the past landscape of Korai-bashi 2 cho-me, including old festivals, as well as the present landscape	25th, 27th ~ 29th	
Asian music live event			Daily live event in public open space in front of hotel	25th ~ 28th	
Korai-bashi street town walking tour			Introduction of the neighborhood's charms, such as its history and culture, through a tour of Senba by the “ <i>Senba Kenkyu-tai</i> (Senba Research Group)”		
Seminar and salon			Gathering together the cultural power that Korai-bashi prides itself on to touch upon the depth of the city through diverse programs	25th ~ 28th	
Higashinari <i>Ashita no Chizu yo</i> (Map of Tomorrow)	Feb.	WS	A workshop conducting field work in the Higashinari district from diverse viewpoints and then illustrating a giant map		Co-host
Monthly Art Cafe	Feb.	Lec. Etc.	Lectures, workshops, and talk shows changing daily over the course of a month	Jan. 23rd, 1st ~ 28th	Host
Osaka Picnic 01 “ <i>Saka</i> (Hill)”	March	WS	Workshop led by Shin Sakuma	Series of 3	Host
Coco-A vol. 6: Osaka City University Hospital Art Project 2008 “ <i>Kaze no Omiku-shi</i> ”	March	Exh.	Art project by artists presented at the hospital		Host
<i>2009: # programs: 14 (Lec: 3, Mus: 2, Dis: 0, Spe: 1, WS: 2, Exp: 1, Exh: 3, Res: 1, Sym: 1)</i>					
Workshop on Thailand dance	April	WS	Workshop held by Institute of Technology Rachamonkon art department professors		Host
Thailand dance drama: <i>Suton Oji to Manora</i>	April	Spe.	Lecture by dance group from the Institute of Technology Rachamonkon and Suriya Sangkhit		Co-host
<i>Chiiki no Tame no Aarto Manegimento Kouza</i> (Lecture on Art Management for the Community)	May ~ Feb.	Lec.	Lecture for the public inviting lecturers related to each of the themes	Series of 21	Support
<i>Aato Manegimento Kenkyukai</i> (Art Management Research Group)	June ~ Feb.	Res.	Study group inviting guests at the forefront of art management	Series of 8	Cooperate
<i>Yagai-engeki to “Kyoudou-tai”</i> (Outdoor Theater and the “Community”)	June	Lec.	Talk show by representatives from the theater troupe HANTOMO and theater group <i>Naniwa Grand Roman</i> (NGR)		Cooperate

Aato & Akusesu Kenkyukai (Art & Access Research Group)		Sept.	Sym.	Research group inviting guests under the title "Kamagasaki no Art he (Towards an Art of Kamagasaki)"	11th ~ 12th	Cooperate
Senba Center Building Museum in Senba Festival		Sept.	Exh. Etc.	Exhibit using visual imagery and town walking tour of Senba	14th ~ 21st	Host
Osaka Picnic 02 "Saka (Hill)"		Oct.	WS	Workshop led by Shin Sakuma	Series of 3	Host
Naniwa-to Suku-run ♪ "Denshi Ongaku Kouza ~ Ambiente 2009 ~ (Electronic Music Lecture ~ Ambient 2009 ~)"		Nov, Dec.	Mus.	Lecture on electronic music by Taro Nijsushi, president of 360records	Series of 2	Support
Neighborhood Commons 2009 Senba Architecture Festival 4	Symposium	Nov.	Exp.	Introduction of <i>machizukuri</i> (community development) through culture and art, using the former Rissei elementary school in the urban downtown district of Kyoto		Host
	<i>Machikado Eizou Tenji</i> (Movie Showing on Street Corners)			Showing of footage from old festivals and resources that tell the history of <i>kusuri no machi</i> (medicinal town) Doushou-machi	16th ~ 20th	
	Asian music live event			Daily live event in public open space in front of hotel	16th ~ 20th	
	Kita-Senba town walking tour Seminar and salon			Introduction of charms of Kita-Senba by the "Senba Kenkyu-tai (Senba Research Group)" Gathering together the wide range of cultural power of Kita-Senba to hold a diverse program in a distinctly Kita-Senba place	16th ~ 20th	
Private Museum Osaka Minami Senba		Nov., Dec.	Exh.	Exhibition of paintings in apparel shops, etc.	Nov. 19th ~ Dec. 25th	Cooperate
Lessons in Asian ethnic music	Sound of Lanna Northern Thailand	Jan.	Mus.	Practical course by musicians about ethnic musical instruments in practice	Series of 3	Host
Monthly Art Café		Feb.	Lec., etc.	Lectures, workshops, and talk shows changing daily over the course of a month	1st ~ 28th	Host
Coco-A vol. 7: Osaka City University Hospital Art Project 2010 "Kiri Harete Hikari Kitaru Haru (Fog Clears and Spring Comes with Light)"		March	Exp.	Art project by artists presented at the hospital	8th ~ 12th	Host
2010: # programs: 10 (Lec: 2, Mus: 1, Dis: 0, Spe: 0, WS: 3, Exp: 1, Exh: 2, Res: 0, Sym: 1)						
Creative Workshop		June ~ Sept.	WS	Workshop intended for staff of Osaka City University	Series of 4	Host
Osaka/Hamburg Renovation Workshop		Aug.	WS	Area Management based on Osaka/Hamburg citizens creating " <i>sumigotae no aru machi</i> (Cities worthy of living in)"		Co-host
Project House		Sept. ~ Nov.	Exh.	Exchange project between Japanese and Korean artists		Co-host
Institut Seni Indonesia + Gamelan MargaSari concert		Sept.	Mus.	Performing in <i>Kawachinaga Sekai Minzoku Ongaku-sai</i> (Kawachinaga World's Ethnic Music Festival)		Co-host
Osaka Picnic 03 "Chika Kara Sora he (From the Basement to the Sky)"		Oct.	WS	Workshop led by Shin Sakuma	Series of 3	Host
Neighborhood Commons 2010 Senba Architecture Festival 5	Symposium	Nov.	Exp.	Symposium on the role the university should play towards Osaka's industry, culture and future		Co-host
	Asian music live event			Daily live event in public open space in front of hotel	Series of 3	
	Kita-Senba town walking tour Seminar and salon			Introduction of charms of Kita-Senba by the "Senba Kenkyu-tai (Senba Research Group)" Gathering together the wide range of cultural power of Kita-Senba to hold a diverse program in a distinctly Kita-Senba place	1st ~ 5th	
Arts Management Lecture: Lecture by Leonie Baumann in Osaka		Dec.	Lec.	Lecture on art curation with citizen participation in Germany		Host

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

Program name	Date	Cat.	Description	# Times/term	Host/co-host/cooperate/support
Monthly Art Café	Feb.	Lec., etc.	Lectures, workshops, and talk shows changing daily over the course of a month	1st ~ 28th	
Coco-A vol. 8: Osaka City University Hospital Art Project 2011 "Anata no 'Inochi' wo Sasaeru Te (The Hands that Support your 'Life')"	Feb. ~ March	Exh.	Exhibition of artwork in the hospital	Feb. 28th ~ March 11th	Co-host
Kita-Senba Modern Architecture Summit at the old Yagi commerce office	March	Sym.	Symposium on the coalition of modern architecture, held at a modern building to be dissembled leaving only the exterior walls		Co-host

Categories: Lec, lectures; Mus, lectures on music; Dis, discussions; Spe, speeches; WS, workshops; Exp, social experiments; Exh, exhibitions; Res, research meetings; Sym, symposiums.



Photo 1. Photo of the "Senba Festa" held on the rooftop of the Shibakawa building (1927).

building that is popular among young creators are steadily increasing from year to year. Of course in Senba, as the site of economic activity as well as a historic center, the fact that modern architecture is not preserved as a protected cultural property, but that most examples allow the architecture to play out their role as a usable resource and revitalize the city through it can also be identified as a characteristic trait.

**An experiment in rediscovering and sharing the charms of the city through culture and the arts: the Neighborhood Commons**

The success of the Senba Architecture Festival has turned the undertakings aimed at the regeneration of the historic urban center through history and culture in the direction of further development. That is, it has moved towards solving the issues faced by the urban historic center themselves, in other words, to strengthen the relationship with the distinctive spaces of the historic urban center and to move in the direction of urban regeneration through its cultural use. Since 2008, the aforementioned Senba Architecture Festival, instead of limiting its activities to modern architecture and the regeneration/restructuring of the urban community, focused on the spatial resources of diverse regions to develop into an experiment towards urban regeneration utilizing culture and the arts, under the new name of the "Neighborhood Commons."

The awarding of the 2009 Nobel Prize in Economics by the Swedish Royal Academy of the Sciences to Professor Elinor Ostrom of Indiana University and Professor Oliver Williamson of the University of California, Berkeley, is still fresh in our memories. In her book *Governing the Commons: the Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*, Professor Ostrom is concerned with the governance of common-pool resources and presents empirical research on how the various stakeholders agree on appropriate rules and manage collectively by individuals and organizations, such as oceans, fish, forests, grazing land, and water resources like rivers and lakes (Ostrom, 1990). This idea of the commons

is an extremely important keyword in the regeneration of the historic urban center as well. If the historical and cultural resources that lie dormant in the historic urban center can be visualized as the common-pool property of all the various people who are active there, and if they can be managed effectively, then it follows almost naturally that we are able to outline a scenario for regeneration.

With that in mind, the Neighborhood Commons project is initiating a model experiment bringing art into the city to lead it towards urban regeneration, targeting a neighborhood called Korai-bashi (bridge) – a particularly old neighborhood, even for the historic center of Senba, formerly known as a high-status neighborhood – and its surrounding districts.

The activities of the Neighborhood Commons, begun in 2008, are changing and showing diversification with each passing year, but it can roughly be organized into three categories. In the first are attempts to make visible and share the attractiveness of spatial resources in the neighborhood such as modern architecture or open space; in the second are attempts to make visible the intangible resources of tradition and culture that have lived and been passed down in the neighborhood community; in the third are attempts to bring about the sharing of experience by having people participate in and experience this very process.

Through these three approaches, the aim is to lead into a concrete move towards urban regeneration, such as changing people’s awareness by using art as a medium, developing the many commons lying dormant in the historic urban center of Senba, promoting the utilization of urban spaces that are not being used effectively, and bringing about progress in full scale area management through the reconstructed community (see Fig. 1). Furthermore, through such experimentation, they are also looking at the prospect that these will be reflected in the establishment of rules in urban planning and the planning and design of urban space based on the premise of such utilization.

Asian music concerts in public open space are an example of an attempt to visualize and share the charms of spatial resources. The aforementioned public open spaces were originally vacant land provided as an incentive to receive bonus floor–area ratio for buildings. In the historic urban center, where publicly-owned land like parks cannot be sufficiently secured, this is an invaluable rule that can create vacant lots in privately-owned land, and it is also a rule that boosts the intensive use of urban space by utilizing space three-dimensionally. However, it also encompasses the problem that, because they are operated based on the unit of the building site and because they are not facilities that have been given a clear function in the city like a park, they are not used effectively. On top of this, having a chain of unused vacant lots along a road also creates problems such as the loss of a city’s bustling atmosphere and attractive cityscape.

In the Neighborhood Common’s experiment, this public open space is utilized as the arena space for a mini-concert of Asian music at dusk. Into the usual busily flowing landscape of the city, Asian music begins to pour – people stop in their tracks and turn their heads to listen. Many of them realize for the first time that there are such dormant places as public open space in the city. While there is no spatial change in the historic urban center, by bringing art into it, we are able to visualize the possibilities of the place.

Seminars and salons are examples of attempts to make intangible sources visible. They are endeavors to put the spotlight on people such as creators based in *shinise* (long-established shops) in the historic urban center of Senba and those who are involved in the handing down of traditional culture, and to have them talk to people who work in the office district. Through such events as talks by the chief priest of a shrine on the origins and history of the neighborhood where the medicinal herb wholesalers congregated, talks by famous actors on the commercial customs of the merchants’ town of Senba,

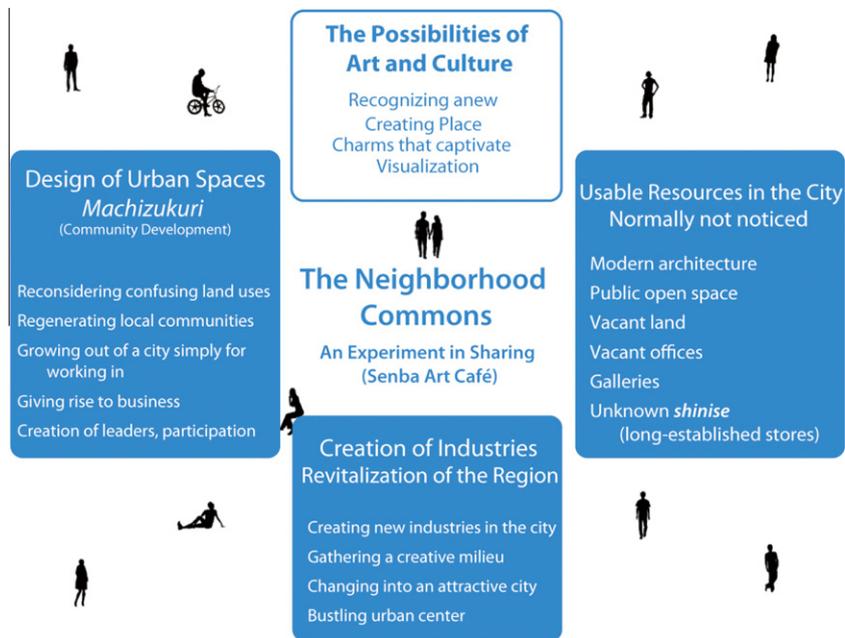


Fig. 1. Diagram of the Neighborhood Commons: regenerating the city through the medium of culture and the arts.

dances that feature pounding *mochi* (rice cake) and making *zoni* (soup with rice cakes) with the cooperation of a famous old restaurant, the opening up of a gallery belonging

to a world-class product designer to the exhibition of up-and-coming photographers, these provide opportunities for people to understand the city's possibilities and diver-

**Table 2**  
The Neighborhood Commons programs by year.

	Symposium	Exhibition	Town Walking Tour	Seminars & Salons	Live Events	Social Experiments Using Urban Open Space
Neighborhood Commons 2008 Nov. 25 (Tues.) ~ 29 (Sat.), 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thinking about the regeneration of a city through the commons ④</li> <li>A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing the past and present of Korai-bashi ②, ④ D</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town walking tour along Korai-bashi (bridge) street ④E</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Mizuhiki</i> (decorative Japanese cord made from twisted paper) class ③A</li> <li>Modern architecture seminar</li> <li>Kitcho <i>mochi-tsuki</i> (rice cake pounding) ③B</li> <li>"ART" and "Sencha de SALON (SALON with Green Tea)" ③D</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asian music event ③C</li> </ul>	
Neighborhood Commons 2009 Nov. 16 (Mon.) ~ 21 (Sat.), 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possibilities of <i>machizukuri</i> (community development) through culture and the arts ④</li> <li>A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction to the history of <i>Shimou-sai</i> (festival held on the winter solstice to honor the <i>shimou</i>, the ancestor of medicine) and Doshou-machi ③E</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town walking tour of Kita-Senba ④E</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kogan Ashiya talks about "Banton-han to Deechi-don (The Head Clerk and the Apprentice, a comedy show)" ③A</li> <li><i>Shimou-san</i> lecture for beginners ③A</li> <li>Kitcho <i>mochi-tsuki</i> (rice cake pounding) ③B</li> <li>A story about when "retro" used to be hated ③A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asian music event ③C</li> </ul>	
Neighborhood Commons 2010 Nov. 1 (Mon.) ~ 5 (Fri.), 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry and Culture: Towards the Future of Osaka ③A</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town walking tour of Senba ④E</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Morning Yoga Class ①A</li> <li>Class on <i>Namba-aruki</i> (old way of walking in Japan, extending the right hand and leg at the same time and the left hand and leg at the same time)</li> <li>Beginning <i>Osaka-gaku</i> (learning about Osaka) ③A</li> <li><i>Machiba no Osaka-nori</i> (Theory of Osaka on the Streets) (Senba version) ③D</li> <li>Talk on <i>hanraku</i> (Japanese puppet theater) as related to Senba ③B</li> <li>Thinking about the afterlife through Shinto ③A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asian music event ③C</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open pub ③, ④C</li> <li>JA Evening Market ③C</li> <li>Open Café ③C</li> </ul>
	<p># of programs: 9</p> <p>●: 8 ■: 0 ▲: 1</p> <p>①: 0 ②: 1 ③: 5 ④: 3</p> <p>A: 3 B: 1 C: 1 D: 3 E: 1</p>					
	<p># of programs: 9</p> <p>●: 8 ■: 0 ▲: 1</p> <p>①: 0 ②: 0 ③: 7 ④: 2</p> <p>A: 4 B: 1 C: 1 D: 0 E: 3</p>					
	<p># of programs: 20</p> <p>●: 4 ■: 8 ▲: 8</p> <p>①: 2 ②: 0 ③: 14 ④: 4</p> <p>A: 8 B: 3 C: 5 D: 3 E: 1</p>					
	<p>Legend</p> <p>●: Art Café programs</p> <p>■: Local community programs</p> <p>▲: Joint programs</p> <p>①: Early morning weekday</p> <p>②: Noon on weekday</p> <p>③: Evening ~ night on weekday</p> <p>④: Weekends, holidays</p> <p>A: Modern architecture, etc.</p> <p>B: <i>Shinise</i> (long established shop)</p> <p>C: Public open space</p> <p>D: Gallery/ showroom</p> <p>E: In the city</p>					
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about wine and cheese – theme on movies ③B</li> <li>Kitcho <i>mochi-tsuki</i> (rice cake pounding) ③B</li> <li>Inoue Ryukodou's <i>Sencha de SALON</i> (SALON with Green Tea) ③D</li> <li>Matcha party at Tani Matsuya Toda Shouten ③D</li> <li>Dream collaboration lunch at the Shibakawa building ④A</li> <li>THE STAGE's handmade spectacles class ④A</li> </ul>		

sity by making visible the creative power of the city – the cultural creativity that the city has undeniably nurtured – in things that are usually closed to them or that they may not normally notice (see Table 2).

By continuing with the Neighborhood Commons since 2008, a gradual change has evolved in the neighborhood community. First of all, there has been a movement towards regenerating the local community that had been collapsing due to the drastic decline in nighttime population. In the urban center in which business activities had been the core theretofore, people who had formerly hardly ever talked to each other, even if they were close neighbors, have begun to communicate on the topic of the Neighborhood Commons and have begun to gradually become aware that the neighborhood is something that all the local people share – this had led to holding regular clean-up activities. Furthermore, not only building owners, retailers, or those who work in Senba participate in such communication, but there is a movement of new residents who live in the city center, such as those who have moved into the “tower mansions” recently constructed in the city center, participating as well. While it takes on a different shape than the former local communities comprised of permanent residents, a new urban community has begun to be formed through different and diverse backgrounds – those who work in the region regardless of industry, those who come to the region on business, and new residents. And, the movement towards the formation of this new type of community has given rise to changes in the executive organization of the Neighborhood Commons as well. Activities that had been carried out mainly by the Senba Art Café, in other words centering on the university, are now shifting into activities led by the new local community and this has led to their being run as local neighborhood festivals (see Fig. 2). Bringing to light the dormant resources such as



Photo 2. Asian music live event, exploring the possibilities of public open space (the Neighborhood Commons).

open space and modern architecture one after another and involving new leaders who would come to assume responsibilities in the future, the Neighborhood Commons has entered into a process in which its numbers will unmistakably continue to increase (see Photo 2).

**What it means to regenerate a city through art**

From the abovementioned activities implemented by the Senba Art Café, let us look back at the potential and results of the practice of art in urban regeneration. Generally, when we speak of art, we most often give our attention to the artist or the artist’s creation itself. Of course there are many works of art that depend profoundly on the introspection and skills of the artist, but from the standpoint of urban regeneration, the art that is important is that



Fig. 2. Spatial development of the Neighborhood Commons: its area has gradually expanded and the locals have begun participating in the operation.

which has the power to bring about changes in the city. In other words, the role of art anticipated from the viewpoint of urban regeneration is what can be called the essence of art, giving rise to a reciprocal interaction between the artist or the artwork and the audience, and effecting a spiritual or sensory change inside people.

This is the meaning of using art to realize urban regeneration and put urban space to a cultural use. We are not simply discussing the introduction of new and original art to the city on the level of creating conspicuous spectacles to provide trendy topics of popular interest.

The issues of dissolving spatial distortions in the historic urban center, reconstructing the order being lost in the urban centers, and utilizing the resources of the historic urban center have long been pointed out among specialists. However, the method of using art as a prescription for solving those issues goes beyond the specialist's conceptual understanding and holds within it the potential of many common people understanding it in a visceral way. Also, the changes brought about through the arts can actually be expected to change into self-sustaining energy that revitalizes the neighborhood itself. If many people become aware of the problems encountered by the neighborhood, urban planning and its mechanisms can be smoothly improved to adapt to the historic urban center; the cultural use of such space will create not only a bustling atmosphere and diversity in urban space, but it will offer clues to heightening the quality of urban spatial design. And, above all else, it should add stimulation to the daily lives of people who live in the neighborhood.

This project has also offered a new model for how the university should become involved in the local community as the propulsive force in realizing such new regeneration, both of the city and of culture and the arts – how to give rise to the ripple effect of a neighborhood revitalization that would lead to the revitalization of the urban community through the process of cultural use of urban space.

In this way, such community regeneration and the rediscovery and utilization of urban space will lead to the development of policies and to finding clues for the illustration of a future vision of the city; and along with this, the means of applying this as urban planning should gradually become clear as well. In other words, such endeavors can be said to possess the prospect of a redefinition and conceptual change in urban planning.

## Conclusion

This article focuses on urban regeneration through the arts, and by introducing examples of such attempts in practice, gives an account of their characteristics.

First it reviews the Creative Cities Theory as an urban policy that focuses on culture and the arts, confirming that they emphasize interactions with urban planning. At the same time, from the standpoint of urban planning, it points out that a comprehensive policy outlook taking into perspective the revitalization of the city is a task being called for in matured cities. Next, it points out the urban regeneration issues facing the historic urban center of Senba, Osaka. In concrete terms, it organizes the three tasks of: how to dissolve the spatial distortions in the historic urban center; how to reconstruct the order being lost in the city center;

and how to make use of the resources in the historic urban center.

With these in mind, the activities of the Senba Art Café are introduced as an experiment in urban regeneration through culture and the arts; by pointing out the introduction of the new leaders-to-be (who had theretofore not been involved in the community) as well as the potential in the development of art and culture through use of urban space outside of business hours, the undertakings and results of the Senba Architecture Festival were explained, as an example of a practice focusing on the cultural resources unique to a community. Furthermore, the undertakings of the Neighborhood Commons, extending its sphere of vision to the cultural use of urban space, are introduced. Their activities, through implementation, make visible the potential for using urban space and, through their implementation process, realize the reconstruction of the urban community; the process will lead to an autonomous regeneration that will realize urban regeneration – presenting the prospect of a cyclical urban regeneration.

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