Tokyo Art Research Lab publishes in English an interesting study - an overview of Art Projects in Japan: a Society that Co-creates with Art. Essential reading for anyone who wants to know more about socially engaged art and social practice in Japan, the contexts and impacts of such projects.

The 41 page study, published by Arts Council Tokyo, discusses recent Japanese art projects, mixing case studies and theory, is well illustrated and the result of a collaborative research under the Tokyo Art Research Lab over five years. It focuses on process-oriented work and looks at how art projects in Japan engage with contemporary society and become embedded in local communities.

The report is written by Sumiko Kumakura and Yūichirō Nagatsu (The Art Project Research Group) and has been translated into English by Art Translators Collective.

DOWNLOAD: An Overview of Art Projects in Japan: A Society that Co-Creates With Art
One of the results of the original research project was to develop a concise definition of the art project:

_Art projects are a co-creative form of artistic activity centered around contemporary art, that developed in various locations around Japan beginning in the 1990s. Not limited to the exhibition of artworks, art projects engage deeply with contemporary society, evolving in relation to the social conditions of a particular time and place. They are activities that generate new artistic and social contexts by seeding new contact points and social connections outside of pre-existing ones._

Art projects are generally characterized by the following:

1. Emphasis on the process of art-making and active disclosure of that process.

2. Site specificity, with reference to the social context of the site.

3. Sustained, long-term, and developing operations, with expectation of diverse ripple effects.

4. Collaboration among people of diverse social backgrounds and emphasis on communication to foster such collaboration.

5. Interest and engagement with social fields outside art

This report was published in 2015 and compiled as a part of the Tokyo Art Research Lab (Arts Council Tokyo)’s “Dissemination and Research on the History and Present State of Art Projects in Japan” research and development program (consigned to Tokyo University of the Arts), [http://www.tarl.jp](http://www.tarl.jp)

_Sumiko Kumakura_ is Professor at Tokyo University of the Arts. Teaches art management and cultural policy. Producer of numerous regional art projects such as the Toride Art Project, Kitamoto Vitamin, and Art Access Adachi: Downtown Senju--Connecting through Sound Art. She is also an adviser on cultural policy for the Agency for Cultural Affairs and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.
Yūichirō Nagatsu is Managing Director of NPO Research Laboratory for Art and Dialogue Related to Diversity and Boundaries. His research focuses on socially inclusive artistic activities such as the creative activities of the disabled. Through both research and practice, he explores how people of different backgrounds and standpoints can work together.


Middle image: Two girls proposed an art museum for their ideal town after their homes had been wiped out by the 3.11 earthquake and tsunami. Jun Kitazawa, Mytown Market, 2011-. Photo by Yuji Ito.
