

SHIGERU BAN BUILDING A BETTER WORLD

FROM 05.12.26 TO 30.08.27

GALLERY 3, FORUM & PTS

 **Centre
Pompidou-Metz**

PRESS RELEASE

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Centre Pompidou-Metz



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Centre Pompidou-Metz

OPENING HOURS

Every day except Tuesday and May 1st

01.11 > 31.03

MON. | WED. | THU. | FRI. | SAT. | SUN. | 10:00 – 18:00

01.04 > 31.10

MON. | WED. | THU. | 10:00 – 18:00 / FRI. | SAT. | SUN. | 10:00 – 19:00



SHIGERU BAN. BUILDING A BETTER WORLD

From December 5, 2026 to August 30, 2027

Gallery 3, Forum and Paper Tube Studio

Curated and designed by Shigeru Ban

Shigeru Ban returns to the building he designed

Sixteen years after the opening of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, Shigeru Ban takes over the museum he designed with Jean de Gastines to showcase over forty years of architecture: from early experiments to major cultural buildings, from emergency structures in the wake of disasters to explorations of wood, paper, and recyclable materials, the exhibition reveals an architectural vision of remarkable coherence.

For Building a Better World, Shigeru Ban personally oversees both the curation and the scenography. In a rare occurrence, the architect thus presents his work from within one of his own creations. The Centre Pompidou-Metz becomes at once the venue, the subject, and one of the experiences of the exhibition: a dialogue between a building, its architect, and a philosophy that has never separated constructive invention from responsibility and care for those who inhabit the architecture.

For Shigeru Ban, building a museum, a house, a school, a cathedral or a temporary shelter does not belong to different worlds. The same question runs through his action and his thought: how to build in a way that meets the needs of those who will inhabit the architecture?

Through models, drawings, prototypes, photographs, films and full-scale devices, Building a Better World invites visitors to step into Shigeru Ban's way of thinking, designing, and acting. The exhibition shows how architectural experimentation can become a collective practice, capable of responding to the transformations of the world without ever sacrificing beauty, invention or functionality.

The story continues beyond the exhibition. In September 2027, its closure will be marked by the opening of the Paper Dome, one of the modules of the Blue Ocean Dome designed by Shigeru Ban for the 2025 Osaka World Expo. Installed in the Triangle Nord, near the museum, it will host the School of the Centre Pompidou-Metz.

In dialogue with the Centre Pompidou-Metz building and with the Paper Tube Studio, located in the Jardin Sud (South Garden), the Paper Dome permanently establishes three architectural works by Shigeru Ban in Metz. A unique ensemble to discover his body of work and philosophy, crowned by the most prestigious international distinctions, including the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2014, the Praemium Imperiale in 2024 and the Gold Medal 2026 from the American Institute of Architects.

A profoundly humanist architect

From the Forum onwards, the exhibition presents an essential dimension of Shigeru Ban's work: the architecture he has been developing since 1995 with populations affected by the disasters of war and natural catastrophes. In collaboration with communities and local stakeholders, he designs shelters, housing, schools, places of worship, and collective spaces.

The Centre Pompidou-Metz brings together full-scale constructions and models of projects carried out in various parts of the world: the Paper Log House, designed after the 1995 Kobe earthquake, whose cardboard tube walls rest on beer crates filled with sandbags; a shelter for Rwandan refugees in 1999; a classroom built in Chengdu Hualin, China, after the 2008 earthquake; the Aquila Temporary Concert Hall (Italy) and the Onagawa Container House (Japan), built in 2011 after devastating earthquakes; and the model of the Cardboard Cathedral, built in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2013, combining cardboard tubes, shipping containers, and an innovative glass treatment process that recreates the effect of stained glass. Paper, cardboard, containers, and locally available materials: the simplicity of the materials used in the construction of these buildings is never synonymous with poverty. Instead, it becomes a constructive possibility.

For this commitment, awarded the Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice in 2017, architectural theorist Riichi Miyake described Shigeru Ban as the "Doctor Without Borders of architecture" for his work.

Through these projects, Shigeru Ban demonstrates that lightweight, demountable architecture, built from locally available resources, can respond to the most critical situations with great ingenuity. His approach is based on a constant conviction: even in emergencies, architecture must preserve the privacy and dignity of its inhabitants.

The power of drawing: a process made visible

In Gallery 3, the exhibition explores the architect's enduring achievements through an exceptional collection of sketches, models, architectural details, design objects, documentaries, and photographs tracing the development of his work, from his student projects (many of which are being shown for the first time) to his most recent creations. The "Emergence of Form" section brings together several hundred drawings by Shigeru Ban, displayed on a wall that reveals his creative process. Created by hand, these drawings serve as the starting point for each of his buildings and demonstrate a practice in which sketching remains the primary design tool, predating any use of digital tools. This exceptional collection reveals the importance of handwork in Shigeru Ban's practice and allows us to follow the evolution of an idea, from initial intuitions to its translation into a model and then into architecture.

A scenography conceived by Shigeru Ban as an ode to light

Shigeru Ban designed the exhibition himself. From the moment they enter, visitors are greeted by the same light that Ban envisioned for his own home. This light illuminates a vast colonnade of cardboard tube arches that spans Gallery 3. Small models are nestled within the structure, while larger-scale projects unfold across the space. Between the columns, light and shadow shift as visitors move through the exhibition. This attention to light, and the continuity between interior and exterior, is further emphasised by the outstanding opening of Gallery 3's large bay window. Offering a panoramic view of Metz Cathedral, whose ever-changing appearance from this vantage point in the museum is an optical experience in itself, it brings the city into the museum. The landscape observed through the immense window thus becomes an integral part of the visitor experience, creating a memorable encounter for all.

A constant commitment to the environment, balancing sustainability and impermanence

Experimentation with the cardboard tube, a material previously absent from architectural vocabulary, is one of the guiding threads of the exhibition. In collaboration with engineers, Shigeru Ban transformed it into a novel structural element, demonstrating that a simple, recyclable, and widely available material can open new avenues for architecture. This ingenuity characterises the architect's numerous projects worldwide, notably the Centre Pompidou-Metz, which illustrates his ability to combine traditional craftsmanship with engineering prowess, brought together in the innovative architectural system of its roof: a free-standing grid of interlocking laminated timber slats covered with a translucent textile membrane. The exhibition also presents his research on engineered wood, developed after the Centre Pompidou-Metz, one of the most ambitious expressions of which is the Swatch and Omega headquarters in Biel, Switzerland, one of the largest timber structures in the world. Another section is dedicated to La Seine Musicale in Paris, whose mobile solar sail moves on rails following the sun's path, demonstrating his growing commitment to renewable energy.

Far from opposing emergency architecture and permanent construction, Shigeru Ban's work is characterised by a profound continuity, guided by the life cycle of buildings, their modularity, the reuse of materials, and the

reduction of waste. For him, ecology is the natural development of a thought that transforms into concrete practice. Like the woven bamboo hat that inspired the roof of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, the exhibition reveals an interweaving of materials, structures, and know-how, and reminds us that building is, above all, about caring for the world.

From Paper Tube Studio to Paper Dome: passing on knowledge

The story of Shigeru Ban and the Centre Pompidou-Metz, with this exhibition, continues to grow and unfold across the city.

During the design of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, the Paper Tube Studio (PTS) served as Shigeru Ban's workshop, located on the 5th floor terrace of the Centre Pompidou in Paris between 2004 and 2009. Since 2020, this architecture of cardboard tubes has found a place in the South Garden of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, where it hosts participatory exhibitions.

On the occasion of Building a Better World, Shigeru Ban deploys his research around paper and cardboard structures. Young and old, alone or in groups, visitors are invited to experiment too, to imagine constructive solutions to concrete situations, and to question what architecture can contribute in social, political or human contexts.

The story continues beyond the exhibition

In September 2027, the Paper Dome, one of the modules of the Blue Ocean Dome designed for the Osaka World Expo in 2025, will arrive in Metz. Located in the Triangle Nord (Northern Triangle), it will house the Centre Pompidou-Metz School.

Together with the Centre Pompidou-Metz and the Paper Tube Studio, three of Shigeru Ban's architectural works will engage in a dialogue on either side of the museum. At the heart of the Amphithéâtre district, they will create an architectural landscape where different scales, uses, and temporalities of his work can be experienced: the large cultural facility, the experimental workshop, and the place for learning and transmission.

Building a Better World, may not be about imagining an ideal world. It is rather about starting, very concretely, by building differently.

A catalogue designed by Kenya Hara

A richly illustrated reference work, the exhibition catalogue invites readers to immerse themselves in the thinking of Shigeru Ban through a lengthy essay by architectural theorist Riichi Miyake on the architect's influences and key innovations, as well as a conversation between Shigeru Ban and Chiara Parisi. Developed day by day during the exhibition's preparation, it reveals the architect's lifelong curiosity about materials, objects, and the processes of creation—the foundation of an architecture that never stems from abstract theory but from a constant attention to uses, people, and situations. The graphic design by Kenya Hara, with whom the architect has a long-standing collaboration, imbues the book with the same attention to forms, materials, and spaces that characterises their creative exchange.

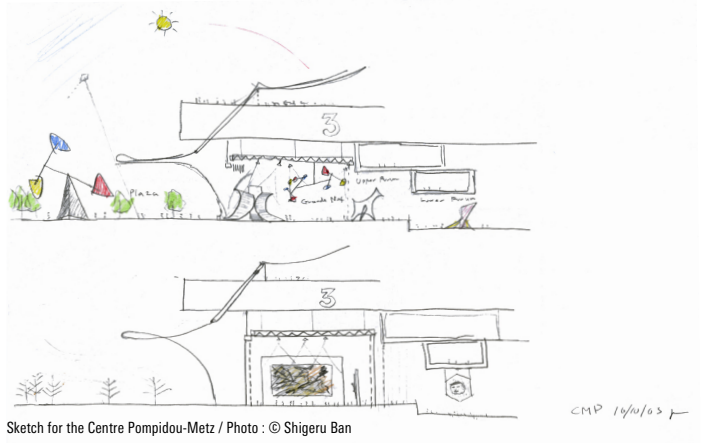
An exceptional masterclass to meet Shigeru Ban

On Saturday, December 5, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. GMT, to mark the opening of the exhibition, Shigeru Ban will give a masterclass entitled “Équilibre entre architecture et contribution sociale” (Balance Between Architecture and Social Contribution) in the Auditorium of the Centre Pompidou-Metz. Drawing on projects spanning more than forty years of his career, and over thirty years of commitment to emergency architecture, he will reflect on the ideas that underpin his work. Beyond achievements, this masterclass is an invitation to step into the architect’s thought: understanding what leads choices, what fuels creation and how, in the face of emergency as in any project, architecture can become an act that is both concrete, committed and profoundly humane. Known for their free-spirited tone and humour, his masterclasses also reveal, behind the architect’s rigor, a very personal, lively, and often unexpected way of talking about architecture.

PRESS VISUALS AVAILABLE



© Shigeru Ban Architects Europe & Jean de Gastines Architectes, with Philip Gumuchdjian for the design of the competition's winning project / Euro-Métropole de Metz / Centre Pompidou-Metz /
Photo : © Roland Halbe



Sketch for the Centre Pompidou-Metz / Photo : © Shigeru Ban



Cardboard Cathedral, New Zealand, Christchurch, 2013 / Photo : © Stephen Goodenough



Paper Temporary School / Chengdu Hualin Elementary School, China, Chengdu 2008 / Photo : © Li Jun



Paper Temporary Studio, France, Paris, 2004–2010 /
Paper Tube Studio (PTS), France, Metz, since 2020
Photo : © Didier Boy de la Tour



Blue Ocean Dome, Japan, Osaka, 2025 / Photo : © Hiroyuki Hirai

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Haesley Nine Bridges Golf Clubhouse, Yeosu, South Korea, 2010 / Photo : © Hiroyuki Hirai



Wall-less House, Japan, Nagano, 1997 / Photo : © Hiroyuki Hirai



Paper Log House Kobe, Japan, Kobe, 1995 / Photo : © Takanobu Sakuma



Zenbo Seinei, Meditation Pavilion, Japan, Awaji, 2022 / Photo : © Hiroyuki Hirai