



Tchoban Foundation
Museum for
Architectural Drawing

Press information

Berlin, 02 May 2022

AKIRA–The Architecture of Neo Tokyo

Tchoban Foundation. Museum for Architectural Drawing Christinenstraße 18a, 10119 Berlin

Exhibition dates: 4 June–4 September 2022

Opening times: Mon–Fri 2–7 pm, Sat–Sun 1–5 pm

Guided tour for the press: 3 June 2022, at 6 pm

Please register at newsletter@tchoban-foundation.de. You will receive confirmation of registration.

Exhibition opening: 3. June 2022, at 7 pm

AKIRA–The Architecture of Neo Tokyo presents the original background artwork of the classic science-fiction animation film in an unprecedented exhibition.

The film made on the basis of the manga *AKIRA* which was released in 1988, has been almost solely responsible for the boom enjoyed by Japanese animation (anime) film among an international audience since the early 1990s. For many viewers, *AKIRA* was the first film that they perceived as anime – as specifically Japanese animation. As such, it had a tremendous influence on a whole generation of film enthusiasts. Much of *AKIRA*'s cinematic power stems from the opulent representation of the film's iconic city of Neo Tokyo.

A major influence on the design of Neo Tokyo was the work of the architect Kenzo Tange. And most importantly, the idea of locating Neo Tokyo on a landfill in Tokyo Bay was drawn directly from Tange's radical urban scheme *A Plan for Tokyo, 1960: Toward a Structural Reorganization* (1961).

The towering high-rise buildings that appear in the background of many of the low-angle cuts are inspired by the urban design of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). The influence on *AKIRA* of



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another iconic science-fiction movie, Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), is also undeniable, resonating strongly throughout the project. *AKIRA* is even set in the same year (2019) as the seminal cyberpunk film.

At the time of production, *AKIRA* was the most expensive anime ever made and marked a pinnacle in the design of realistic background artwork. Drawing and painting architecture is a very time-consuming process, much more so than the depiction of pastoral motifs. Because the bulk of production costs for an animated movie go for the work force, each building to be painted consumes a large part of the budget. In terms of architecture, therefore, realism is a big challenge for any animated film and in this respect *AKIRA* set new standards. Apart from the ingenious artwork, both the dynamic approach to editing and the extremely fluid motion were unlike anything seen before.

The film was almost entirely produced on paper. Although some digital effects were incorporated during post-production, all the background artworks were painted in poster colour and shot on film. A visual tour de force, *AKIRA* had a tremendous influence on the subsequent expectations of film enthusiasts and on the understanding of what anime could be.

Fifty-nine original production backgrounds, layout drawings, concept designs and image boards used to create Neo Tokyo in the film will be on display. Exclusive access to the studio archives of the artists is thanks to *AKIRA*'s production unit allowing the presentation of artworks which have never been shown outside of Japan and only very few of which have ever been published. The exhibition includes works by Toshiharu Mizutani, who served as the production's art director, and his colleagues Katsufumi Hariu, Norihiro Hiraki, Shinji Kimura, Satoshi Kuroda, Hiromasa Ogura, Hiroshi Ohno, Hajime Soga, Tsutomu Uchida and Takashi Watabe.

The Tchoban Foundation Museum for Architectural Drawing sees its mission in promoting awareness of architectural drawing amongst a broader audience. Works of renowned architects such as Peter Cook, Thom Mayne, Álvaro Siza and Lebbeus Woods have been shown in exhibitions at our museum in Berlin. The exhibition *Anime Architecture* in 2016 presented the background art of *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), *Patlabor: The Movie* (1989) and *Metropolis* (2001). In 2019 the exhibition German Film Architecture: 1918–1933 showed the original concept designs for Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) and the *Nibelungen* (1927), Paul Wegener's *The Golem How He Came into the World* (1920) and Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1920). In 2021 the museum presented original designs by Mark Fisher (1947–2013) for famous entertainment shows and rock concerts. *AKIRA—The Architecture of Neo Tokyo* now continues this line of programming.



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The exhibition is curated by Stefan Riekeles, Managing Director of the Riekeles Gallery, in collaboration with Nadejda Bartels, Director of Tchoban Foundation. Hiroko Myokam of Eizo Workshop (Japan) is co-curator of the show.

www.riekeles.com

www.eizo.ws

The accompanying book to the exhibition *Anime Architecture – Imagined Worlds and Endless Megacities* by Stefan Riekeles was published by Thames & Hudson in 2020.

Lichtblick Kino will be showing the film *AKIRA* on 16 July, 30 July, 20 August and 4 September. Visitors to the exhibition receive a discounted ticket (6 € instead of 7.50 €), good for attending the film screening. Address: Cinema Lichtblick, Kastanienallee 77, 10435 Berlin

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Please send us a copy of the publication



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Images

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AKIRA

(Movie)

Based on the graphic novel "AKIRA" by Katsuhiro Otomo. First published by Young Magazine, Kodansha Ltd.

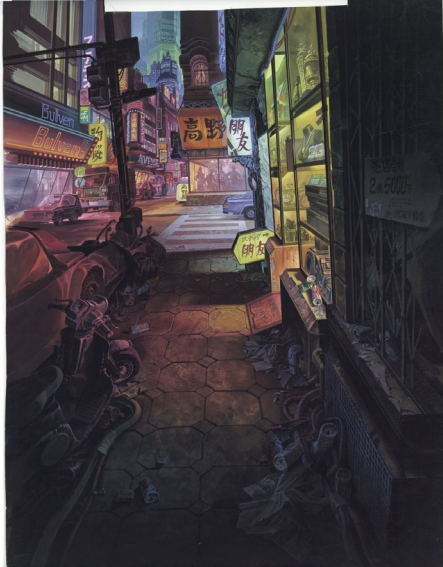
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AKIRA, cut. no. 2211
Final production background
Hiroshi Ohno
Poster colour on paper
50 x 36 cm



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AKIRA, cut no. 182
Final production background
Toshiharu Mizutani
Poster colour on paper
55 x 42 cm



AKIRA, cut no. 2204
Image board
Toshiharu Mizutani
Poster colour on paper
25 x 35 cm



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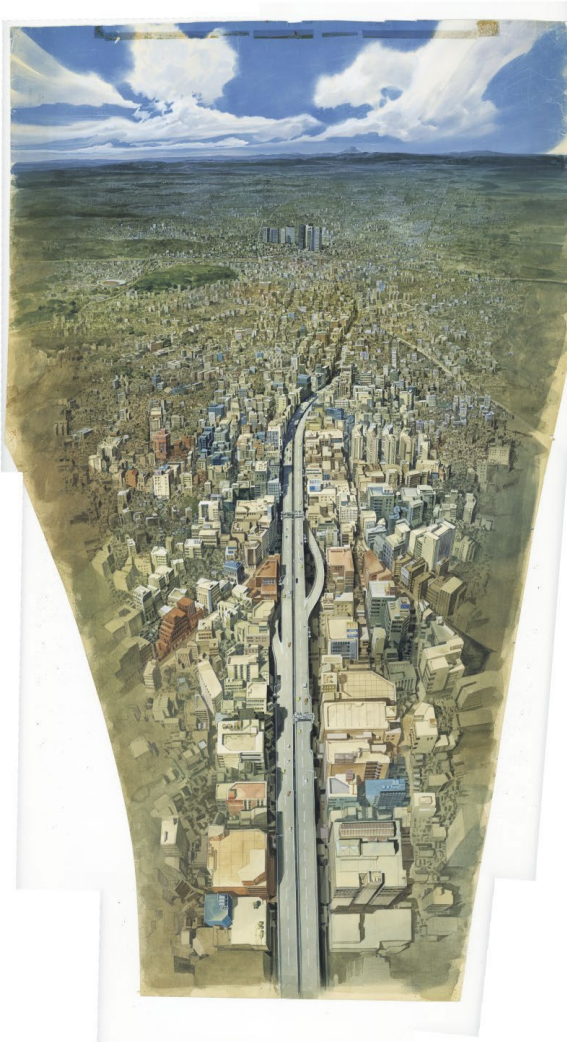
AKIRA, cut no. 214
Final production background
Toshiharu Mizutani
Poster colour on paper
25,5 x 37 cm



AKIRA, cut no. 700
Final production background
Toshiharu Mizutani
Poster colour on paper
26 x 37 cm



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AKIRA, cut no. 1
Final production background
Detail
Toshiharu Mizutani
Poster colour on paper
93 x 53 cm