

PRESS RELEASE  
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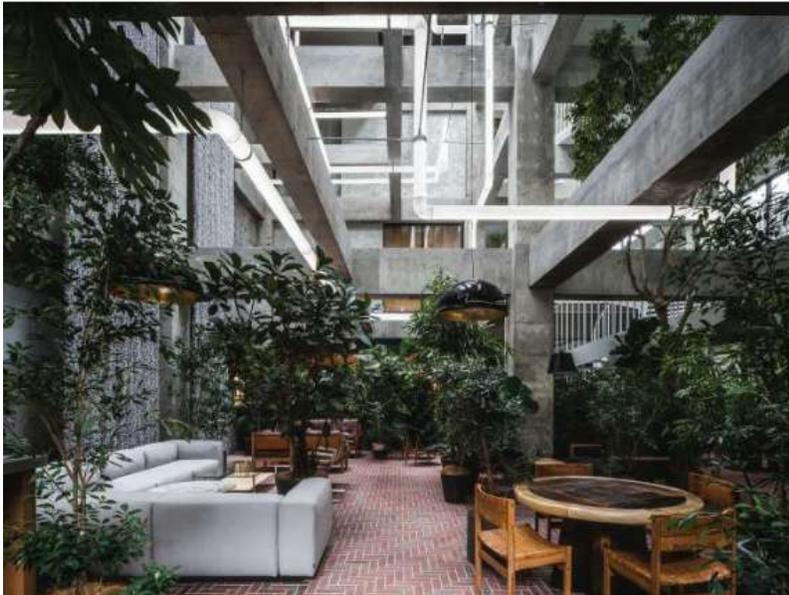


Minako Morita  
Public Relations  
pr@shiroiya.com  
+81-(0)70-3858-7580

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **“ART DESTINATION” SHIROIYA HOTEL OPENS IN MAEBASHI, JAPAN**

**[MAEBASHI, GUNMA, December 2020]** — SHIROIYA HOTEL Inc. (Maebashi City, Gunma Prefecture, Japan, CEO Ko Yamura) is pleased to announce the opening of its new art-inspired hotel, SHIROIYA HOTEL, on December 12, 2020. As of November 4, 2020, the hotel has begun accepting accommodation and restaurant reservations. For reservations, visit [www.shiroiya.com](http://www.shiroiya.com)



Photos: Katsumasa Tanaka (left) / Shinya Kigure (right)

The birth of the SHIROIYA HOTEL began with an ambition to revitalize central Maebashi. The new SHIROIYA HOTEL will occupy the grounds of the former Shiroiya Ryokan (Japanese Inn), which closed permanently after hosting guests in Maebashi for over 300 years. Maebashi is a former silk-manufacturing city that greatly contributed to Japan's modernization. The new SHIROIYA HOTEL will be reborn as the “city's living room” — a destination inspired by art and culinary culture where local residents and travelers can mingle.

In August 2016, Maebashi City announced its new vision for the future to become a place “Where Good Things Grow.” Following the promulgation, new innovative shops and communities began emerging in the city, largely contributing to the city's revitalization. The “Maebashi Model” quickly became well-known as a model for the revitalization of medium sized cities. SHIROIYA HOTEL sits at the heart of the city center and will serve as an “art destination,” a place of inspiration for people visiting the area.

SHIROIYA HOTEL is designed by Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto. It features two buildings, the “Heritage Tower,” a boldly renovated building occupying the building of the former Shiroiya Ryokan, and “Green Tower,” a new building inspired by the former river bank of Tonegawa. The hotel houses a variety of exclusive artworks, including an installation by Leandro Erlich and numerous other works decorating the hotel facilities and guestrooms. SHIROIYA HOTEL has two

dining spaces, “the RESTAURANT,” a Joshu (the name formerly used for the wide Gunma Prefecture area) cuisine restaurant supervised by 2-Michelin star chef-owner Hiroyasu Kawate, and “the LOUNGE,” an all-day diner. Both restaurants offer a variety of surprising culinary experiences that will surely please guests.

SHIROIYA HOTEL is further surrounded by multiple landmarks, including Mount Akagi and Mount Haruna, both located on a 30-minute to one hour drive from the hotel, where guests can enjoy hot springs and nature.

SHIROIYA HOTEL aims to be a place that stimulates individual creativity through art, architecture, design, food, nature and city experience.

### SHIROIYA HOTEL Facts & Figures

Opening date: December 12, 2020

Address: 2-2-15 Honmachi, Maebashi City, Gunma Prefecture, Japan

TEL : +81-(0)-27-231-4618

URL : [www.shiroiya.com](http://www.shiroiya.com)

Total room number: 25 (Heritage Tower: 17, Green Tower: 8)

Construction: Reinforced concrete (RC), 4-story (Applies for both Heritage Tower and Green Tower)

Total area: 2,565.46 m<sup>2</sup> (Heritage Tower: 1,744.52 m<sup>2</sup> , Green Tower: 820.94 m<sup>2</sup>)

Facilities : Heritage Tower: Reception Desk, Main Dining, All-day Dining & Lounge

Green Tower: Finnish Sauna, Mist Sauna

Access: 15 minutes on foot from JR Maebashi Station. From Tokyo: 1.5 hours by Shinkansen (bullet train), Approximately 2 hours by car

Operating Company: SHIROIYA HOTEL Inc.

### SHIROIYA HOTEL's Architecture & Design

SHIROIYA HOTEL is designed by leading Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto. It is one of his approaches to the challenge of how to create a new essential urban space. With its rough concrete exterior, the Heritage Tower preserves the old look of the former Shiroiya Ryokan (inn) while also housing a boldly designed atrium. The Green Tower, on the other hand, boasts a design inspired by the former river banks of the city in-line with Maebashi City's new slogan for the future, “Where Good Things Grow.” The two towers combined act as a “living room” of the city, a place where local residents and travelers gather and interact. To complete this image of the hotel, Fujimoto guided the overall design and interior, while further collaborating with various designers and artists.



Heritage Tower, Exterior. Photo: Shinya Kigure



Green Tower, Exterior. Photo: Shinya Kigure

## SHIROIYA HOTEL's Art

Visitors and guests of SHIROIYA HOTEL can enjoy original architecture and various art and designs throughout the hotel. The exterior of the hotel facing Route 50 is adorned with Lawrence Weiner's distinct design. The reception desk welcomes guests with a large photograph from Hiroshi Sugimoto's "Seascapes" collection. The atrium of the four-story Heritage Tower houses numerous artworks, including the fantastical "Lighting Pipes" by Leandro Erlich, who is known for his permanent work at the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa and also for his recent exhibition at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo. At the top of the Green Tower, hotel guests can enjoy artwork by internationally acclaimed artist Tatsuo Miyajima. As if visiting a museum, each guest room at both towers exhibits unique artwork of local Gunma Prefecture-based and international artists, providing guests with an extraordinary art experience upon every visit.



Lawrence Weiner's art on display at the Heritage Tower. Photo: Shinya Kigure (left) | Leandro Erlich's "Lighting Pipes" at the Heritage Tower's atrium. Photo: Katsumasa Tanaka (right)



A Hiroshi Sugimoto photograph behind the reception desk. Photo: Katsumasa Tanaka (left) | Artwork by Hiraku Suzuki in one of the guest rooms. Photo: Shinya Kigure (right)

## SHIROIYA HOTEL's Guest Rooms

SHIROIYA HOTEL's Heritage Tower boasts four exclusive rooms designed by four great creative minds: Great Britain's world-renowned designer Jasper Morrison, Italy's master of architecture Michele De Lucchi, Argentina's famous conceptual artist Leandro Erlich and Japan's leading architect Sou Fujimoto. The artists designed each room's installation, creating a one-of-a-kind space that is unique to this hotel. The remaining rooms are designed by Sou Fujimoto for guests to enjoy gentle colors and subtle attention to materials and details. The Green Tower's guest rooms include a balcony from where guests can feel a sense of unity with the greenery surrounding the tower.

The bed mattresses in each room are Serta, a brand used in luxury hotels in Japan and overseas; the curtains have been designed by textile designer and coordinator Yoko Ando, and furnishings and accessories have been selected by interior stylist Tomomi Nagayama. Each room is decorated with different artwork, providing guests with the chance to have a different experience on each stay.

Out of concern for the environment and hygienic purposes, SHIROIYA HOTEL minimizes plastic items and vinyl packaging. Guests will find locally-sourced "Sekkasui" pure mineral water and alcohol-free beverages in each room's minibar. Other drinks can be ordered from the LOUNGE on the ground floor as room service during business hours.

### Guest Room Information

Guest Rooms: 10 types, 25 rooms. Adjoining rooms are available for a group of guests.

Special Rooms: 4

Junior Suite Room

Executive Room

Heritage Tower Deluxe Room

Heritage Tower Superior Room

Green Tower Deluxe Room

Green Tower Superior Room

Price/Night: From 30,000 yen (Before Tax)

Room size: From 25 m<sup>2</sup>

### Special Rooms



The JASPER MORRISON ROOM



The MICHELE DE LUCCHI ROOM



The SOU FUJIMOTO ROOM



The LEANDRO ERLICH ROOM

## Heritage Tower Rooms



Junior Suite Room



Executive Room



Deluxe Room

## Green Tower Rooms



Deluxe Room

Photos: Shinya Kigure



Superior Room

## the RESTAURANT

Produced under the supervision of Hiroyasu Kawate, the chef-owner of two Michelin-starred French restaurant Florilège in Aoyama, Tokyo, the RESTAURANT is SHIROIYA HOTEL's primary dining location. Chef Hiro Katayama, a native of Gunma Prefecture, begins his culinary journey at the RESTAURANT after a two-year experience at Florilège and other domestic and international restaurants. Paying homage to his birthplace, Katayama uses carefully selected locally-grown ingredients, which he chooses after personally visiting Gunma-based farmers and producers, and combines them with his original culinary interpretation to create SHIROIYA HOTEL's Glocal Cuisine, one plate at a time. Drink pairing (including non-alcoholic beverages) with the day's special meal is available daily. The restaurant is set up as an open kitchen, allowing guests to both enjoy the chef's cooking presentation and taste.

### the RESTAURANT Information

Venue: SHIROIYA HOTEL Heritage Tower Ground Floor

Menu: Chef's Course (8 dishes) 12,000 yen\*

Drink Pairing 7,000 yen\* (Non-alcoholic pairing available)

For reservations: +81-(0)27-231-2020

Business hours: Open daily, 17:30-23:00 (Last Order at 20:30)

Total surface area: 75.22 m<sup>2</sup>

\*All prices are subject to 10% service charge and applicable tax



## the LOUNGE

Situated under SHIROIYA HOTEL's atrium, the LOUNGE is an all-day dining space. While enjoying Leandro Erlich's installation "Lighting Pipes," guests and visitors can use this space for various purposes, just like a real living room. While making the best use of local ingredients, the LOUNGE chef strives to serve familiar dishes like beef curry and rice and sandwiches with surprises. Coffee lovers will also appreciate the LOUNGE coffee, using beans from "Single O," a pioneer of specialty coffee in Australia, which has a great influence on the world coffee scene, for the first time in Gunma Prefecture.

### the LOUNGE Information

Venue: SHIROIYA HOTEL Heritage Tower Ground Floor

For reservations: +81-(0)27-231-2020

Business hours: Open daily, 7:00-22:00 (Dinner Last Order at 21:00, Drinks Last Order at 21:30)

Seats: 63

Total surface area: 118.18 m<sup>2</sup>

## SHIROIYA HOTEL's History

Founded during the Edo Period in Maebashi, a city well-known for its enormous contribution to the Japanese modernization thanks to its thriving silk industry since the early Meiji Era, Shiroiya Ryokan (Japanese inn) served as a purveyor for the former Imperial Household Agency and was frequented by many Japanese artists and celebrities, such as novelist Ogai Mori and Maresuke Nogi, a famous Japanese general. However, despite converting into hotel business in the 1970s, Shiroiya Ryokan was forced to close due to the overall decline of business in the city center. Sadly, Shiroiya Ryokan put a period to its 300-year-old history in 2008. After it closed, Shiroiya Ryokan was in danger of being demolished, but was saved by a 2014 city regeneration project, the "Maebashi Model," launched as part of the activities of the Hitoshi Tanaka Foundation to revitalize Maebashi City. After six long years of renovation and thanks to the hard work and creativity of executive designer Sou Fujimoto and internationally-acclaimed participating artists, including Leandro Erlich, Shiroiya Ryokan is on its way to making history again, reborn as SHIROIYA HOTEL in December 2020.



Shiroiya Ryokan in the early Meiji Era. The current Heritage Tower building was rebuilt in the 1970s on a 4-story RC structure, which had been rebuilt multiple times since the Edo Period due to fires or war damages.

## SHIROIYA HOTEL's Key Project Members

- Overall Architecture & Design: Sou Fujimoto
- Guest Room Design: Michele De Lucchi, Jasper Morrison, Leandro Erlich, Sou Fujimoto
- Lighting Design: Hiroyasu Shoji
- Textile Design: Yoko Ando
- Interior Coordination: Tomomi Nagayama
- Digital Signage, Art Direction: nanilani
- Restaurant Supervisor: Hiroyasu Kawate (Florilège)
- Restaurant Design: Shinsuke Kai (Esquisse, inc.)
- Planting Supervisor: Taichi Saito (Solso)

## Access

2-2-15 Honmachi, Maebashi City, Gunma Prefecture, Japan  
15 minutes on foot or 5 minutes by taxi from Maebashi Station on the JR Ryomo Line

### BY TRAIN/SHINKANSEN

Tokyo-Takasaki Joetsu Hokuriku Shinkansen: Approximately 50 minutes

Takasaki-Maebashi: Approximately 15 minutes on the Ryomo Line

### BY CAR

Approximately 15 minutes from Maebashi IC on the Kanetsu Expressway

Approximately 2-hour drive from Tokyo



## A Message to SHIROIYA HOTEL

### Sou FUJIMOTO Architect

Born in Hokkaido in 1971. After graduating from the Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering at Tokyo University, he established Sou Fujimoto Architects in 2000. After winning the 1st prize at the 2014 International Competition for the Second Folly of Montpellier, France (Arbre Blanc), in 2015, 2017 and 2018, he further became the 1st prize recipient of several international competitions in various European countries. In 2019, he was selected as the Master Architect for Tsuda University Kodaira Campus Master Plan development. In 2020, he was appointed the Expo site design producer for the 2025 Japan International Exposition (Osaka/Kansai Expo). His notable works include "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2013" (2013), "House NA" (2011), "Musashino Art University Museum & Library" (2010), "House N" (2008) and many more.



*The Shiroiya project began in 2014 and it has undergone dramatic changes over the past six years. The concept stemmed from a plan to renovate the main building and open up a large atrium. Once the floors were stripped out, the structure's powerful presence came to light, revealed after many years. This offered a taste of how the atrium could look, as a plaza for locals and international visitors to mingle. The space seemed capable of holding all kinds of objects and events. The project went ahead with input from worldwide artists and designers, people in the Maebashi area and those involved in community-life generation. Taro Okamoto's Bell of the Sun was relocated to the city at this time, and that gave rise to the idea of incorporating a hillock in a new building. We hope that Shiroiya will go on developing, together with the entire city of Maebashi, accepting and involving a diversity of people, activities and materials.*

### Leandro Erlich Artist

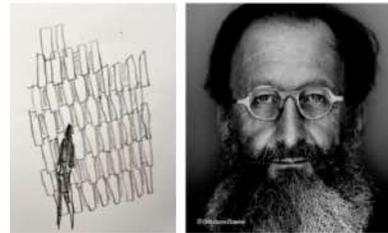
Born in Argentina in 1973. Primarily based in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, Erlich is an internationally-active artist. In Japan, Erlich is best known for his "The Swimming Pool" artwork permanently exhibited at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa Prefecture. His 2017-2018 solo exhibition "Leandro Erlich: Seeing and Believing" at Tokyo's Mori Art Museum attracted immense interest from the public, becoming one of the museum's most popular exhibitions to date. Through his perceptual art, Erlich is continuously exploring the relationship between people and spaces.



*When I first visited the SHIROIYA HOTEL, already under construction and Sou's [Sou Fujimoto] direction, I was impressed by his brilliant and innovative approach to this project: creating something totally new, while also preserving the pre-existing structure. I felt that I was witnessing a magical process in reverse, the creation born of demolition — which is really the nature of creativity. Watching Sou work, I realized that this building would be like no other and that the incorporation of new ideas into the existing form would create a unique accomplishment. The result is a dynamic excavation that highlights the power of empty space and air. I felt, for a moment, as if I were inside of Calvino's Invisible Cities. One of these stories describes a building that is invisible to the eye but whose pipes and electrical tubes can be seen. I've envisioned this architectural detail as the veins of invisible creatures. This was the inspiration behind the Lighting Pipes that run throughout the building. Architecture is a manifestation of the human imagination and also a springboard for the creativity of the present moment, of the power of art to interface with everyday life.*

## Michele de Lucchi Architect

Born in Ferrara, Italy, in 1951, Michele de Lucchi has been a leading figure in architecture and design since the 1970s. While designing masterpiece furniture and lighting for world-famous manufacturers, de Lucchi has also designed a number of architectural projects that are now cultural landmarks. In addition to being the founder of AMDL CIRCLE, a multidisciplinary studio with thinkers and innovators as members, since 2018, de Lucchi has been focusing on "Earth Stations," a future-sharing architecture that combines technological development and humanistic principles.



### The 2725 Elements (Room)

*Shingles are small wooden boards commonly used in the building of the roofs of Japanese traditional houses. The technique is based on surprisingly simple ideas. Although the origin of this technique remains unknown, shingles have been used and produced throughout the ages in different parts of the world.*

*For us architects, it is particularly rewarding to design with wooden shingles because they produce an effect of aesthetic and formal significance. The use of shingles allows us to design curved, spherical and corrugated shapes. They make rigid surfaces seem soft. By adding gaps between shingles, the architect can play with space and distances, creating transparencies that are similar to textiles and curtains see-through effects.*

*We applied this idea to the SHIROIYA HOTEL, where we applied them only on edges and corners, coating a small room with these shingles-made curtains that, in their entirety, look light and soft.*

*We wanted to bridge the gaps between sculpture and interior design to have a room that is also an art installation. To do so, we employed 2725 wooden shingles. Hotel rooms are usually identified by numbers, and in this case, our Room has a special number: we called it the 2725 Elements Room.*

*The material effect of surfaces is combined with the choice of colour and shades, a succession of dark tones in harmony with each other, conducive to a sense of calm tranquility, rest, and also- good sleep.*

## Jasper Morrison Designer

Born in London in 1959. After studying design at the Kingston Polytechnic Design School and the Royal College of Art in London, Morrison spent a year studying at the Berlin University of the Arts. He set up his Office for Design in London in 1986. Morrison's works are produced internationally by leading manufacturers of furniture, lighting, electronics and more, including Vitra, Flos, Alessi and Marni. He is considered one of the most influential and versatile designers of our time.



©Kento Mori

*When we visited the old SHIROIYA HOTEL, the building's condition was quite bad. It didn't have a very welcoming atmosphere. I wanted the room we designed to be the opposite, warm and protective. I started to think of wooden panelling for the walls and that led me to the idea of the room being a wooden box. There's a big window which looks on to the hotel foyer so you can enjoy the atmosphere of the public space. Still, if you want to be more private, you can close the wooden window shutters and the room becomes a kind of packing case like the ones made to transport art, and the precious content is you!*

## For Media Inquiries

### Contact

Email: [pr@shiroiya.com](mailto:pr@shiroiya.com)

Tel: +81-(0)- 70-3858-7580

Minako Morita

Public Relations

Due to the ongoing pandemic, we will not organize a group press preview. For media representatives wishing to visit SHIROIYA HOTEL for an individual press preview, please contact us directly at the address or phone number listed above.

When using official images of SHIROIYA HOTEL, please provide photo credit as follows:

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Photo: Shinya Kigure or Katsumasa Tanaka

Press release images: <https://is.gd/xB0iRv>

Other images: <https://is.gd/bVdoby>

High-resolution images are also available upon request.

## About SHIROIYA HOTEL Inc.

SHIROIYA HOTEL Inc. (Headquarters: Maebashi, Gunma Prefecture, CEO Ko Yamura) is a hotel and restaurant management and planning company founded on December 12, 2019 with the mission to support the revitalization of Maebashi City.

### Company Information

Address: 2-2-15 Honmachi, Maebashi City, Gunma Prefecture, Japan

Tel: +81-(0) 27-231-4618

Capital: 9,500,000 Japanese Yen

Number of employees: 35 (including part-time staff)

CEO: Ko Yamura

### **About SHIROIYA HOTEL's COVID-19 Safety Measures**

We have implemented the following heightened safety and hygiene measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 while ensuring our guests' optimum comfort and safety:

- Frequent sanitization at all hotel facilities
- Social distance
- Frequent ventilation
- Mandatory health checks of all employees

We kindly ask guests and visitors to support us in our efforts to prevent the spread of the virus by cooperating through temperature checks and hand sanitization, wearing masks and disclosing any potentially related symptoms or health conditions. Necessary paperwork will be displayed digitally and tablets will be frequently sanitized.