

Yashima Visitor Center

The Yashima Visitor Center is one of the best places to enjoy the view from the heights of Yashima. The center is located beside the New Yashima Aquarium and serves multiple purposes: it is a hub for cultural exchange between visitors and local residents, an observation deck, a local landmark, a gallery, and a terrace. The design competition for the center was won by SUO, a Kyoto-based architectural firm founded by Takashi Suo, and the project was realized through a collaboration between SUO and Style-A, another architectural office.

The building's distinctive, irregularly curved shape is designed to help it blend in with its surroundings while highlighting the nature around it. One side of the building faces the city of Takamatsu and the Seto Inland Sea, with large windows opening out with sweeping views. North of the observation space is the Panorama Exhibition Hall, a gallery that features a panoramic artwork depicting the Battle of Yashima, which took place in 1185. The circular hall affords visitors an immersive 165-degree view of the painting.

The visitor center also has a cafe and gift shop. The entire building can be explored by walking the winding circular path around it, which also encircles a public plaza with several small gardens.

Yashima Visitor Center: Panoramic Painting

The Yashima Visitor Center's Panorama Exhibition Hall is a semicircular gallery inspired by the 360-degree panoramic halls that were popular in Japan in the late nineteenth century. It features a curved panoramic painting, along with three-dimensional objects on the floor. The painting is designed to connect with these objects in a blending of two- and three-dimensional forms of expression. Unlike a regular painting in a frame, the 165-degree panoramic painting is intended to immerse onlookers in the scene.

The artwork's primary motif is the Battle of Yashima, which took place in 1185. It was made by artist Hoshina Toyomi and employs perspective to depict the relationship between humans and nature and to highlight dramatic elements in the battle scene. Such elements include the menacing power of nature, light and darkness, the calm sea, and people's anxiety about nightfall. It is not a complete, historically accurate depiction of the event, but it contains key moments from the battle and there is even a message hidden in the painting for those who look closely.