

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Arakawa to hold an exhibition showing products with unused seaweed "Nori" in Milan Design Week 2023.**



**TOKYO, Japan (15<sup>th</sup> March 2023)**- [Arakawa & Co., Ltd.](#) (headquarters: Shibuya-ku, Tokyo; President Hajime Arakawa), its 50th anniversary in 2023, was the first in the world to develop a wire cable gripper, "ARAKAWA GRIP," in 1975, which is now used in museums, galleries, and stores around the world. We opened our first showroom outside Japan in Milan, Italy, last November for architects and interior designers. In Milan Design Week 2023, we invite to collaborate with we+, a contemporary design studio, to exhibit works that expand the possibilities of ARAKAWA GRIP at Almach Art Gallery, one of the most prestigious galleries in Milan, where ARAKAWA GRIP has long been a favorite of customers.

In addition, our first product and works of architects and designers who used ARAKAWA GRIP will be introduced at the gallery through the composition of the venue using the concept colors by STUDIO BYCOLOR, the director of "50Grips", the Arakawa's 50th-anniversary project.

## **EXHIBITION CONCEPT: Less, Light, Local**

This project combines the cutting-edge wire system "ARAKAWA GRIP", from Arakawa & Co., Ltd. and the innovative "NORI" research project by we+. This collaboration opens up new possibilities for seaweed.

As the world's largest consumer of seaweed, Japan has a rich history of seaweed processing technologies that produce a wide variety of edible seaweeds. Among these, ITA NORI, an edible seaweed sheet used for sushi and rice balls is a unique processed product with a deep connection to traditional Japanese craftsmanship. It is said to have been invented during the Edo period, and was derived from the Japanese handmade paper-making technique. This product demonstrates the wisdom of our ancestors, who conserved limited resources without waste and appreciated the gustatory qualities of this product. However, in recent years, rising water temperatures due to climate change and changes in ocean currents and ecosystems have led to numerous seaweeds growing wilted and lacking in nutrients. Many of these seaweeds are not edible for human consumption and commercial use, leading to their combustion and wastage.

This exhibition seeks to give new value to these discarded and non-edible ITA NORI. ARAKAWA GRIP, known for creating light and open spaces by combining a variety of materials, such as glass and wood, will show their expertise in installation and lighting, using NORI in sheet form, as the primary material, which is strong, light and sustainable. Just as ITA NORI originated from Japanese traditional craft, the exhibits draw their inspiration from those handcrafted techniques, using local materials and techniques to create a simple design. The exhibition not only explores the future of products but also presents new ways of using ITA NORI as a new material, which is attracting interest from around the world as seaweed is a material deeply rooted in Japanese culture.

### **Event Information:**

**Title:** Less, Light, Local

**Subtitle:** The NORI Project exploring the future of seaweed through Arakawa Grip technology

**Venue:** Almach Art Gallery (Via Gaudenzio Ferrari, 3, 20123 Milan, Italy)

**Time & Dates:** 11 am to 7 pm, Tuesday 18 to Sunday 23 April 2023

**organizer:** Arakawa & Co., Ltd.

**Director:** STUDIO BYCOLOR

**Creator:** we+

**Cooperation:** KITOTE, NBC Meshtec Inc

**Support:** NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FISHERIES CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS, Seaweed business promotion council of National Fisheries Federation, Tanaka-Masazou Co.,Ltd.

**Website:** <https://www.arakawagrip-global.com/50grips/mdw2023/>

### **About Arakawa & Co., Ltd.**

Arakawa & Co., Ltd. invented the first wire gripper mechanism, which could be adjusted along the wire cable with one push and locked without a set of screws. This innovative system can be applied as a display tool for shop interiors and art museums in collaboration with architects and designers.

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### **■ "50 GRIPS", Arakawa's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary project**



Arakawa will celebrate its 50th anniversary in September 2023.

From 2023 to 2024, we will carry out various planning as "50 GRIPS" to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The logo was designed by graphic designer, Azumi Mitsuboshi, designed the logo. The color scheme, based on the dark blue color that gives an impression of "Arakawa, a company with reliability and technology" as an unusual feature, and the sunlit pink color that represents the sunlight that expands creativity, was designed by STUDIO BYCOLOR, the total direction for the project.

**Director: STUDIO BYCOLOR**



Kaori Akiyama founded the firm in 2013, a design office that effectively utilizes colors and materials. She graduated from the Department of Design Science of the Faculty of Engineering at Chiba University in 2002 and worked for an office furniture manufacturer in Japan until 2012. INHERENT:PATTERN, the result of material experimentation, won the iF DESIGN AWARD in 2022. STUDIO BYCOLOR has also received iF DESIGN AWARD, German Design Award, DFA Gold Award, DIA Top 100, Good Design Award, and was selected for LEXUS NEW TAKUMI PROJECT 2016. In addition to serving as a judge for the Good Design Award, she is a part-time lecturer at Chiba University and the Faculty of Design Engineering, Hosei University.

In recent years, she has organized MATERIAL IN TIME, a design exhibition that conveys Japanese creativity to overseas countries using materials as a starting point, both in Japan and abroad, including Hong Kong. In 2022, she directed BLACK SERIES, co-sponsored by Almach Gallery, at TIERS GALLERY, operated by Arakawa & Co., Ltd.

**Creator: we+**



we+ is a contemporary design studio founded in 2013 by Toshiya Hayashi and Hokuto Ando, that gives form to new perspectives and values using methods based on research and experimentation.

The studio explores the possibilities of alternative design that establishes a close coexistence with the natural and social environment around us, and incorporates a diversity of values that are often forgotten in today's society, where convenience and rationality are sought. Members with diverse backgrounds and skills: designers, engineers, researchers and writers, come together to present self-initiated projects that have emerged from their daily research, both in Japan and abroad. With the knowledge gained from these projects, we participate in a wide range of corporate and organizational projects, including R&D, installations as commissioned works, branding, product development, spatial design and graphic design.

In recent years, we have been working on projects including ["Nature Study"](#), which investigates how human beings have coexisted with nature until now and imagines a new way of living whereby nature and artificial merge, and ["Urban Origin"](#), which examines the origins of today's overly complicated manufacturing process and reevaluates the waste produced by cities as indigenous materials.

Dezeen Awards / Emerging Design Studio of the Year Public Vote (UK), Wallpaper\* Design Awards / Best Elements of Surprise (UK), EDIDA / Young Designer of the Year Nominee (Italy) / KUKAN DESIGN AWARD Gold Prize (Japan) / DSA Design Award Gold Prize and other awards / The work is in the collection of Vitra Design Museum, Germany.