Steve Bishop: 3 Films About Buildings

December 5, 2026 – March 31, 2027



Design: Okamoto Takuto

The Towada Art Center is pleased to present Steve Bishop's first solo museum exhibition in Asia from Saturday, December 5, 2026, to Wednesday, March 31, 2027.

In recent years, the presence of uninhabited buildings, including long-abandoned houses, investment properties, and second homes, has become a serious social issue not only in Japan but around the world.

Here in Towada City—long renowned as a horse-breeding region that further developed into a "horse town" in modern times with the establishment of the Army Horse Supply Department—the number of unoccupied buildings is also increasing against the backdrop of a declining population. In addition, relocations resulting from the 2001 Central Government Reform left behind numerous vacant plots [1]. Towada Art Center (TAC) was established as part of a policy initiative to address this urban core context.

This exhibition brings together three videos by London-based artist Steve Bishop, each taking a group of buildings as its subject and exploring the distance between a building and the lives it is supposed to hold: a concern that resonates strongly with Towada's own situation.

Marking Bishop's first solo museum exhibition in Asia, the exhibition features the world premiere of his newest work, *Stolen From The People* (2026), set in a deserted village in southern England where all residents were forcibly evicted by the military during the Second World War. It also presents *The Caretaker* (2018), which documents a small town in northern Canada that continues to be maintained even after all residents departed following a nearby mine closure, and *Meanwhile…* (2008), which reconfigures New York City b-roll that 1990s American sitcoms used to establish where their characters lived [2]. The programmes themselves were filmed in Los Angeles, meaning that the arbitrary buildings depicted in *Meanwhile…* stand in for homes that never existed.

TAC is distinguished by its "houses for art" configuration, in which stand-alone galleries each display a single work, and this exhibition similarly presents one video in each gallery. In these spaces, large and small, people move around the works every day, viewing, invigilating, cleaning and repairing. The same quiet

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labour runs through Bishop's films: a caretaker maintaining a town where no one lives, volunteers keeping a village church consecrated within a military training area. A building endures only for as long as someone keeps attending to it.

Seen alongside a museum built on ground that had fallen empty, the videos invite reflection on the relationship between land, buildings and people, and on what it takes to hold a community together.

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[1] Central Government Reform: An administrative overhaul implemented in 2001 that restructured 1 Office and 22 Ministries/Agencies down to 1 Office and 12 Ministries/Agencies to improve efficiency. In Towada City, the consolidation and relocation of local branch offices of government agencies resulted in vacant plots along Kanchogai-dori, making the revitalisation of the town centre an urgent challenge.

[2] Sitcom (Situation Comedy): A genre of narrative comedy originating in the United States, typically set in fixed rooms or spaces, revolving around the everyday conversations and events of a regular cast of characters. Representative works include *Friends*.

Exhibition Highlights

1. A village where daily life has long since vanished

Stolen From The People (2026), making its international debut at TAC, was filmed in the small English village of Imber, from which the residents were forcibly evicted by the army in 1943. They were never permitted to return, and the village remains in the center of a vast military training area. Abandoned buildings in the video are now enclosed by the facades of new buildings constructed for urban warfare training. Bishop notes that in this work the “buildings” are viewed as ideological documents, communicating that the village was altered not by the local people, but external social and political pressures. Meanwhile, St. Giles Church, which escaped purchase by the military, remains consecrated and is maintained by a team of volunteers.



Still from *Stolen From The People*, 2026
© Steve Bishop 2026, courtesy the artist and Carlos/Ishikawa, London

2. Uniquely immersive sound and visuals

Bishop’s latest work *Stolen From The People* (2026) was made in collaboration with Glasgow artist and musician Jack Vickridge. Its score is based on the bells of St. Giles Church—one of the few remaining elements of the deserted village still in use. The result is as much a soundscape as a film. Sound has long been integral to Bishop's installations, playing from radios, cars or carried by videos projected within a space. This is the first time a soundtrack has been composed specifically for one of his works.

3. Connecting daily life: a resonance with the Towada Art Center

The area around the museum has long been known as a horse-breeding region, which further developed into a "horse town" in modern times following the establishment of the Army Horse Supply Department, giving rise to the current town centre known as Kanchogai-dori. However, relocations resulting from the 2001 Central Government Reform left behind several vacant plots along Kanchogai-dori. TAC was established as part of a policy initiative to address this urban core context.

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TAC is distinguished by its “houses for art” configuration in the form of stand-alone galleries each displaying a single work, and this exhibition also presents one video per gallery. In these spaces, large and small, people move around the works every day, viewing, invigilating, cleaning and repairing. The same quiet labour runs through Bishop's films: a caretaker maintaining a town no one lives in, volunteers keeping a village church consecrated inside a military training area. A building stands for as long as someone keeps attending to it. Seen alongside a museum built on ground that had fallen empty, the videos prompt reflection on the relationship between land, buildings and people, and on what it takes to hold a community together.

Statement by Steve Bishop

3 Films About Buildings is the first exhibition to focus solely on my video work. All three works dwell on the shells of buildings — houses, apartment blocks, a village — and often on their interiors. The inhabitants are never present, leaving only questions.

My work has often used architecture and interior space to describe what goes on inside us; the rooms we build around ourselves, and the choices enclosed within them, are extensions of our own interior states. The work often connects a sense of place to time and to memory. I think of my work as amounting to portraits, but not of anyone in particular.

For this occasion I am showing a major new film, *Stolen From The People*, which documents a village close to where I grew up in the UK. It changed drastically in the twentieth century, and the forces that shaped it were not local ones. Coming to Towada, I learned that those same forces have also altered the socio-political conditions here.

That is not why I made the film, but it is a large part of why I want to show it here. As with all of my work I hope it finds an audience, but especially one here in Towada.

Steve Bishop



Photo: Will Sheridan Jr.

Born 1983 in Toronto; based in London. Earned his MA in sculpture from the Royal College of Art (London) in 2008. Recent solo exhibitions include “1971–2026” (madame leniou, London, UK, 2026), “Start Over Every Morning” (Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto, Canada, 2025), “On The Street Where You Live” (Kunsthalle Osnabrück, Osnabrück, Germany, 2024); and recent group exhibitions, “Imagining Kunsthalle: Routinen” (Kunsthalle Appenzell, Appenzell, Switzerland, 2026), “Maybe we could both belong” (Den Frie, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2025), and “Foreverism: Endless Horizons” Ilmin Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea, 2024). https://stevebishop.org

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Public Programme

*Please note that additional programms will be scheduled during the exhibition period. Further details will be announced on our website at a later date.

Artist Talk

Date ＆ Time: Saturday, December 5, 2026, 14:00-14:40

Location: Towada Art Center (Admission: Free *Ticket for the exhibition is required.)

About the Exhibition

Title	*Steve Bishop: 3 Films About Buildings*
Dates	Saturday, December 5, 2026–Wednesday, March 31, 2027
Opening Hours	9:00-17:00（Last admission 16:30）
Closed	Mondays (or the following day if Monday falls on a national holiday). December 28–January 1 / January 12–15
Admission fees	1,800 yen for adults (including the permanent collection); free for under 18
Organized by	Towada Art Center
Supported by	The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, Nomura Foundation
Endorsed by	Asahi Broadcasting Aomori Co., Ltd., Aomori Television Broadcasting Co., Ltd., Aomori Broadcasting Corporation, FM Aomori, The Daily-Tohoku Shimbun Inc., Towada Oirase Tourism Organization, The To-o Nippo Press, Towada City Board of Education, British Council
Curation	Nagao Eriko

Towada Art Center

The Towada Art Center opened in 2008 as the first contemporary art center in Japan's Tohoku region. Its permanent exhibition comprises thirty-eight works by world-class artists, including Kusama Yayoi, Nara Yoshitomo, Shiota Chiharu, and Ron Mueck. The collection expands beyond the art center to the Art Square, a park-like area where children and adults alike can stroll, relax, and interact with the outdoor artworks.



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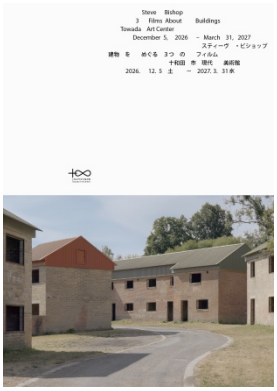
October, 15, 2026

【1】



Main visual for *Steve Bishop: 3 Films About Buildings*
Design: Okamoto Takuto

【2】



Main visual for *Steve Bishop: 3 Films About Buildings*
Design: Okamoto Takuto

【3】



Still from *Stolen From The People,* 2026
© Steve Bishop 2026, courtesy the artist and Carlos/ Ishikawa, London

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Still from *Stolen From The People,* 2026
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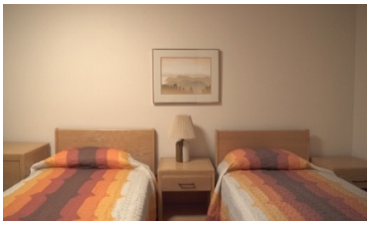
Still from *Meanwhile...*, 2008
© Steve Bishop 2008, courtesy the artist and Carlos/Ishikawa, London

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Still from *Meanwhile...*, 2008
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Still from *The Caretaker*, 2018
© Steve Bishop 2018, courtesy the artist and Carlos/Ishikawa, London

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Still from *The Caretaker*, 2018
© Steve Bishop 2018, courtesy the artist and Carlos/Ishikawa, London

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Steve Bishop
Photo: Will Sheridan Jr.

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