



The secret of Finnish sauna -from traditional saunas to modern saunas by Alvar Aalto-

Exhibition Period: December 19 (Fri.), 2025 to March 5 (Thu.), 2026



Koetalo sauna hut (Jyväskylä, 1952-54) Photo by Maija Holma / Alvar Aalto Foundation

■ Overview

Recently, Japan has seen a surge in sauna enthusiasts, to the extent that people say there's a "sauna boom." In Finland, however, sauna facilities exist not only in every home but also almost invariably wherever people gather, serving as places for communication and social interaction.

This culture, forged in Finland's harsh natural environment, is deeply rooted in both celebrations and daily life, from spring through winter. The sauna serves as a place for everything from welcoming newborns to mourning the deceased, storing food, and maintaining physical and mental health, thriving as a central part of daily life and a part of people's identity.

Alvar Aalto, renowned Finnish architect, conceived of cultural facilities reminiscent of ancient Roman public baths early in his career, when he designed and proposed a cultural complex centered around the sauna—a source of national pride—for Jyväskylä. Unfortunately, this proposal was never realized, but Aalto went on to design numerous masterpieces, ranging from public saunas to private saunas in residences. For Aalto, who valued Finland's environmental characteristics and placed importance on coexisting with nature, the sauna was also a sacred space, a place central to his design philosophy.

This exhibition not only introduces the sauna hut from his experimental house in Muuratsalo (Koetalo) but also presents saunas from his major residential designs and public saunas, through full-scale models, original design drawings, photographs and more, while also focusing on the history, function, and broader impact of the sauna on lifestyle and culture. It explores the essence of the Finnish sauna, an indispensable part of daily life and culture where the Finnish spirit resides.



■ General Information

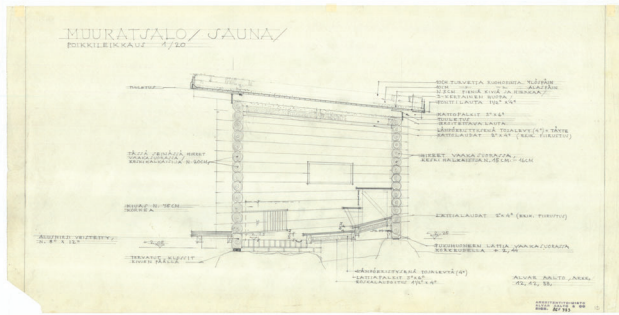
Title	: The secret of Finnish sauna -from traditional saunas to modern saunas by Alvar Aalto-
Venue	: GALLERY A ⁴ (A-quad), 1-1-1 Shinsuna, Koto-ku, Tokyo 136-0075
Period	: Friday, December 19, 2025 to Thursday, March 5, 2026
Opening hours	: 10:00 - 18:00 (17:00 on Saturdays and the final day)
Closed	: Sundays, national holidays, Dec. 26 (Fri.) to Jan. 4 (Sun.), and Feb. 2 (Mon.)
Admission	: Free
Organizer	: Public Interest Incorporated Foundation Gallery A4
Special Cooperation	: Alvar Aalto Foundation
Support	: Embassy of Finland, Finland Center, Koto City
Cooperation	: METOS, Tuusula Museum, Nihon Fukushi University
Co-sponsorship	: Dai Nippon Printing
Co-planning	: S2 Corporation
Contact	: Gallery A4 Office Tel.: 03-3660-6011
E-mail	: gallery@a-quad.jp
Official website	: https://www.a-quad.jp

■ Highlights

- * Introduction to six sauna designs by Alvar Aalto
 - Six sauna works:
 - The Koetalo sauna,
 - The cultural sauna (unrealized),
 - sauna for the chief physician at Paimio Sanatorium,
 - sauna at Villa Mairea,
 - Jokisauna (sauna by the river),
 - sauna at Villa Kokkonen
 - Full-scale reproduction of the Koetalo sauna interior
 - Nine original blueprints of the six works, and more
- * Introduction to sauna history, construction, and types by era
- * Introduction to tools developed in conjunction with the sauna
(buckets, ladles, sauna stools, thermometers, ceramics, glassware, etc.)
- * Partial recreations of a 1970s sauna and a modern sauna
that allow visitors to experience the spatial scale



Images for PR



a. Koetalo sauna cross-section
Alvar Aalto
Alvar Aalto Foundation



b. Koetalo sauna Photo by Maija Holma
Alvar Aalto Foundation



c. Alvar Aalto enjoying the sauna
in the Koetalo sauna hut
Alvar Aalto Foundation



d. Interior of the Koetalo sauna
Photo by Maija Holma
Alvar Aalto Foundation



e. Sauna at Mairea House
Photo by Mikko Merckling
Alvar Aalto Foundation



f. People cooling down in front of
a sauna hut
Photo by Katja Lösönen /
Kalevala Women's Association, Finland



g. Diving into the lake after the sauna
Photo by Esa Ylijaasko



h. Helsinki's oldest public sauna
"Kotiharjun Sauna"
© Jari Jetsonen



i. Löyly
Photo by Miho Kakuta



j. Illustration by Marja Vendelin
(1930s–1950s)
Photo by Vesa Mäkinen



■ Related Events

□ Talk Show “Discussing Aalto’s Saunas”

Date: Tuesday, February 10, 16:00-18:00
Instructors: Makoto Mizushima (Architect registered with the Bavarian Chamber of Architects, Germany)
Daishi Sakaguchi (Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Nihon Fukushi University)
Venue: Toyocho green+ 2F Hall (2-5-14 Minamisuna, Koto-ku, Tokyo)
Admission: Free
Capacity: 100 people Application required (first-come, first-served)
Application: From 10:00 on Monday, December 1 on the official website

□ Talk Show “Forest, Lake, and Sauna: The Finnish Lifestyle”

Date: Thursday, February 26, 16:30-18:00
Instructors: Laura Kopilow (Finland expert)
Hiroko Sakomura (S2 Corporation President and CEO/Cultural Producer)
Michiyo Okabe (Director, Gallery A4)
Venue: Toyocho green+ 2F Hall (2-5-14 Minamisuna, Koto-ku, Tokyo)
Admission: Free
Capacity: 100 people Application required (first-come, first-served)
Application: From 10:00 on Tuesday, January 13 on the official website

▼ official
website



*For details and registration, please visit the official website.