

Embracing What Lives

When I began unravelling woven fabrics as a student, I think it was because I was never particularly interested in the beauty of completion. Rather, I wanted to capture moments when something strong reveals its fragility, or the contradictory feeling in which fascination with things in the process of becoming disappears the instant completion is achieved. I wanted to render such dynamic states themselves — things that cannot be expressed through static objects — into a fixed form. At the same time, I have long been strongly drawn to the history of Japanese companies, which continued creating things through extraordinary imagination and determination amid the drastic rupture between Edo and Meiji and the turbulent eras that followed. My interest in such histories is not unrelated to my act of unravelling textiles.

Beyond words such as “city” or “nation”, which we use casually every day, there is in fact no fixed substance — only soft living organisms endlessly falling apart and healing, never fully completed. Whenever I pick up shopping notes left behind in supermarkets, I experience a strange sense of sudden intimacy with someone whose face I do not know. Perhaps this is because, for a brief moment, I can feel myself existing inside a vessel that continues generating itself without fixed substance.

This time, I had the opportunity to encounter the corporate history of TODA CORPORATION. From this emerged the idea that buildings — things that envelop living beings — are also made by human beings, and that large, strong, rigid structures are created by soft human bodies. Juxtaposed with old maps of Edo from just before the opening of Japan and historical materials depicting Taishō-era construction sites are carefully decorated gel nails, arranged almost as if protecting both body and spirit, as well as shopping notes left by people who buy small things they like at supermarkets, withdraw money, and hang their laundry out to dry. How might a work created while contemplating such things, in the very centre of old Edo — beside present-day Tokyo Station — appear to those living in this era?

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May 2026