

Mori Art Museum's Chairperson Emerita, Mori Yoshiko, Establishes Mori Contemporary Art Foundation

Supporting the Global Development of Japanese Contemporary Art with a Residency for Overseas Curators and Award for Mid-Career Contemporary Japanese Artists

(Tokyo, Japan, July 31, 2025) – Mori Yoshiko, the first Chairperson and now Chairperson Emerita of the Mori Art Museum, is pleased to announce the establishment of the Mori Contemporary Art Foundation (MoriCAF) on May 7, 2025, with the goal of promoting Japanese contemporary art to the international art world.

The foundation will provide ongoing support to boost Japanese contemporary art on the global stage through the **Curator Residency Program**, which offers opportunities for overseas curators to conduct research on artists in Japan and interact with art professionals, as well as the **Mori Art Award**, which recognizes excellence in Japanese artists from a global perspective. Through these activities, MoriCAF aspires to contribute to the promotion and further development of Japanese contemporary art, bolstering and sustaining its presence in the international art world.

Representative Director and founder Mori Yoshiko explains her vision for MoriCAF as follows: “Established in 2003, Mori Art Museum has actively built relationships with major art museums overseas and learned from international standards. On visits to art scenes around the globe, I was greatly struck by how though Japan has many incredibly talented artists, there are still few opportunities to introduce them internationally. I have long wanted to present Japanese contemporary art on the world stage, and so in order to provide sustained support in an individual capacity, rather than through the institutional framework of a museum, I established the Mori Contemporary Art Foundation.



Photo: Shintsubo Kenshu

The foundation's activities center around two pillars: a residency program for overseas curators to research Japanese contemporary art and the Mori Art Award, which boosts the international profile of mid-career Japanese artists. A key feature of both programs is that directors of globally renowned art museums, including MoMA in New York, serve as members of the International Jury. The foundation is able to carry these activities thanks to the more than twenty years of experience I accrued at Mori Art Museum and the many people I met during that time. I am personally very excited to see the outcome of the foundation's efforts.”

Kataoka Mami, Director of Mori Art Museum and Chair of the foundation's International Jury, said the following: “Since the 1990s, the contemporary art community has spread all over the world, and each region is actively engaged in sharing art based on its own historical and cultural contexts. Strategy is vital to firmly position a country or region's art on this global platform. It is my hope that through the Mori Contemporary Art Foundation's core activities of professional exchange and recognizing mid-career artists, Japanese contemporary art will connect with the world and the founder's vision will be achieved.”

The foundation's official website was launched today, along with the **open call for the Curator Residency Program**. Information about the foundation's future activities will be sent out via an email newsletter (registration required).

MoriCAF Website: <https://mori-caf.jp/en/>

MoriCAF Activities

1. Curator Residency Program

The Curator Residency Program aims to promote international awareness of Japanese contemporary art by providing overseas-based curators with interests in Japanese contemporary art with opportunities to conduct research and interact with various artists, art museums, international exhibitions, galleries, and so on in Japan.

- Eligibility: curators residing outside Japan who want to conduct research on contemporary art in Japan (no restriction on nationality; residents in Japan ineligible)
- Number of residents: 3–4 per year
- Residency period: approx. 2 weeks–3 months
- Applications: open call on MoriCAF website
- Output: a written report by participants at the end of the residency
- 2026 selection schedule (tentative): open call ends early September 2025; results announced late October; residencies begin from February 2026

2. Mori Art Award

The Mori Art Award decorates mid-career contemporary artists in Japan to further their international status. Held biennially, the award selection process begins with a short list of artists recommended by the Japan-based Nomination Committee from superb examples of exhibitions and works over the previous two years. The International Jury then selects four finalists after screening the submission materials. The winning artist is decided after a final screening. The winner receives prize money of 10 million yen and the opportunity to hold an exhibition of their work, jointly organized by MoriCAF and Mori Art Museum. The other three finalists receive prize moneys of 1 million yen each.

- Eligibility: mid-career artists based in Japan or with a strong connection to Japan even if based overseas. There is no age limit.
- Nomination Committee: 6 curators from public and private art museums across Japan
- Selection process: first round of screening (online) of submission materials to select four finalists; final round of screening through in-person presentations and interviews with International Jury to select winner
- 2026 selection schedule (tentative): nominations close early September 2025; finalists announced October; final screening and winner announced late February 2026

2026 International Jury (for both Curator Residency Program and Mori Art Award)

Kataoka Mami (Director, Mori Art Museum; Chair, International Jury)
 Rhana Devenport (Former Director, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide)
 Glenn D. Lowry (Director, The Museum of Modern Art, New York)
 Frances Morris (Director Emerita, Tate Modern, London)
 Suhanya Raffel (Museum Director, M+, Hong Kong)
 Eugene Tan (Director, The National Gallery Singapore and Singapore Art Museum)

Mori Contemporary Art Foundation Organizational Structure

Directors

Mori Yoshiko (Representative Director, Mori Contemporary Art Foundation; Chairperson Emerita, Mori Art Museum)
 Mori Kyoko (Managing Director, Mori Contemporary Art Foundation; Chairperson, Mori Art Museum)
 Obayashi Takeo (Chairman of the Board, Obayashi Corporation)
 Kimura Eriko (Director, Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art)
 Suematsu Atomu (CEO and President, TOLOT Inc.)
 Furuta Ryo (Professor, The University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts)

Board of Trustees

Mori Yasuko (President and CEO, Mori Kiyo Co., Ltd.)
 Imamura Keiichi (Former Chairman of the NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo)

Ohara Akane (Representative Director, Ohara Art Foundation)
Kawai Yoshihiro (Visiting Professor, Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Tokyo)
Sou Fujimoto (Representative Director, Sou Fujimoto Architects)
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Auditors

Tarumoto Satoshi (Lead Attorney, Inteasu Law Office)
Matsuoka Akio (Representative Partner and Tax Accountant, MatsuokaOe Tax Accountant Co.)

Secretary General

Kataoka Mami (Chair, International Jury, Director, Mori Art Museum)

About Mori Yoshiko

Representative Director, Mori Contemporary Art Foundation
Director, Mori Building Co., Ltd.
Chairperson Emerita, Mori Art Museum

In 2003, Mori Yoshiko was appointed as the first chairperson of Mori Art Museum. During the more than twenty years that she held the position, she played a leading role in supporting Japanese contemporary art. Mori has served as a Trustee of the Royal Academy of Arts (London, UK) (1999–2017), Chairperson of Mori Art Museum (2003–24), Trustee of the Odawara Art Foundation (2009–), Trustee of the Western Art Foundation (2014–), Trustee of the Ishikawa Foundation (2015–), and Honorary Trustee of the Royal Academy of Arts (2017–). She was awarded the Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur of the French Republic in 2013 and the Honorary Order of the British Empire in 2025.

Media Contact

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