



森現代芸術財団

Mori Contemporary Art Foundation

Press Release
October 30, 2025

Mori Art Award 2026 Finalists and Curator Residency Program Participants Announced



From left: Katayama Mari, Koizumi Meiro (Photo: Yokota Toru), 目[mé] (Photo: Goto Takehiro), Yamashiro Chikako (Photo: Takano Ryudai)



From left: Maria Brewinska, Imaseki Yurika, Philippe Pirotte, and Shinoda Yayoi (Photo: Gabe Hopkins)

(Tokyo Japan, October 30, 2025) – The Mori Contemporary Art Foundation (MoriCAF; Chairperson: Mori Yoshiko) today announced the four finalists for the Mori Art Award 2026: **Katayama Mari**, **Koizumi Meiro**, **目 [mé]**, and **Yamashiro Chikako**. In addition, the participants selected for the Curator Residency Program were also announced as **Maria Brewinska**, **Imaseki Yurika**, **Philippe Pirotte**, and **Shinoda Yayoi**.

“The Mori Contemporary Art Foundation has launched its inaugural initiatives: the Mori Art Award 2026 and the Curator Residency Program 2026. We received nominations and applications from highly accomplished artists and curators,” said Kataoka Mami, Chair of the MoriCAF’s International Jury. “On behalf of the International Jury, I am pleased to announce the selection of four mid-career artists who pursue dynamic and outstanding practices, as well as four curators and researchers capable of promoting the value and historical significance of contemporary Japanese art to the world. These selections will serve as a benchmark for our foundation’s future endeavors and represent a significant step toward the realization of our vision as an institution.”

The Nominators for the Mori Art Award 2026 has also been announced.



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The winner of the **Mori Art Award 2026** will be decided by the International Jury in February next year, based on presentations by the finalists. The winner will receive prize money of 10 million yen and the opportunity to exhibit their work in partnership with Mori Art Museum. The other three finalists will each receive prize money of 1 million yen.

The selected participants for the **Curator Residency Program 2026** will start arriving in Japan from February next year to undertake research on Japanese artists and meet with art world figures.

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 (Former 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)

Moreover, the Nomination Committee for the Mori Art Award 2026 was announced. The International Jury selected the four finalists from a shortlist of artists prepared by the following curators.

Mori Art Award 2026 Nominators (in alphabetical order)

Cho Sunhye (Associate Curator, Mori Art Museum)
Kimura Eriko (Director, Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art)
Nakamura Fumiko (Senior Curator, Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka)
Sumi Naoko (Curatorial Head, 21st Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)
Tokuyama Hirokazu (Curator, Mori Art Museum)
Tsubaki Reiko (Curator, Mori Art Museum)

For the latest information, see the

Mori Contemporary Art Foundation website. <https://mori-caf.jp/en>

Mori Art Award 2026 Finalists (in alphabetical order)

1. Katayama Mari

Born 1987. Based in Gunma.

Katayama Mari's practice centers the daily lived experience of her body, which she treats as a living sculpture, mannequin, and social lens. Combining photography with sculptural objects sewn and made by hand, her work reveals and challenges social norms regarding what is natural, artificial, and correct. Katayama's practice also encompasses the High Heel Project, which advocates freedom of choice. Wearing high heels custom-made for her prosthetic legs, she is active as a singer, model, guest speaker, and more. Her major exhibitions include *Performer and Participant* (Tate Modern, London, 2023), *Home Again* (Maison européenne de la photographie, Paris, 2021), the 58th Venice Biennale (Giardini and the Arsenale, 2019), and *Roppongi Crossing 2016: My Body, Your Voice* (Mori Art Museum, Tokyo). <https://marikatayama.com>



caryatid #011, 2024
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2. Koizumi Meiro

Born 1976. Based in Kanagawa.

Koizumi Meiro's work explores the tension between personal emotion and collective memory, examining the ways in which political, cultural, and technological systems of power shape the individual. In addition to video, drawing, and sculpture, his practice has recently encompassed virtual and augmented reality. Koizumi's compelling work creates a strong emotional resonance while revealing latent aspects of society, such as state power, war, history, oppression, and personal trauma. His major exhibitions include *Theaters of Life* (De Pont Museum, Tilburg, Netherlands, 2025) and *Listen to the Sound of the Earth Turning: Our Wellbeing since the Pandemic* (Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, 2022), and his other output includes the VR theater performance *Prometheus Unbound* (2019). <https://www.meirokoizumi.com>



Installation view: Meiro Koizumi: *Theaters of Life*, De Pont Museum, Tilburg, the Netherlands, 2025.
Photo by the artist

3. 目 [mé]

Formed 2012.

[mé] is an art collective centering on the artist Kojin Haruka, director Minamigawa Kenji, and installer Masui Hirofumi. The collective's collaborative practice emphasizes situations and circulation incorporating viewers, offering new ways for them to experience the ordinary. Its major exhibitions include *Obviously, no one can make heads nor tails*. (Chiba City Museum of Art, 2019) and *Unreliable Reality – The Where of This World* (Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo, 2014). Its projects staged in Japan and beyond include *masayume*. The collective also served as director of Saitama Triennale 2023. <https://mouthplustwo.me/>



masayume, Veranos de la Villa 2024, Madrid, Spain
Photo: Madrid Distino/Fernando Triño

4. Yamashiro Chikako

Born 1976. Based in Okinawa and Yokohama.

Yamashiro Chikako's moving image and performance practice uses her own body to explore the complex history as well as geographical and political issues in Okinawa, where she was born and raised. She probes how universal trauma and memories are passed down, shedding light on social divisions and the layered nature of history. In her early work, Yamashiro captured the past through the eyes of the individual, and presented new perspectives that applied a critically engaged lens on Okinawan memory and history. In recent years, she has expanded her scope from Okinawa to the rest of East Asia, attempting to unearth the bodies, spirits, and voices of people lost to history. Her major exhibitions include *Jam Session: The Ishibashi Foundation Collection × YAMASHIRO Chikako × SHIGA Lieko In the midst of* (Artizon Museum, Tokyo, 2025–26) and the solo shows *The Song of the Land* (Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 2024) and *Flowers of Belau* (Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art, Kagawa, 2023). <https://ycassociates.co.jp/artists/2019/03/20/218/>



Yamashiro Chikako, *Recalling(s)*, 2025.
©Chikako Yamashiro. Courtesy of the artist



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■ Curator Residency Program 2026 (in alphabetical order)

1. Maria Brewinska

Curator at Zachęta – National Gallery of Art
Based in Warsaw

Residency project: Phase – Mother Earth: Remembering Mono-ha

Maria Brewinska is a long-time curator at Zachęta – National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, where she has created many important exhibitions that have shaped the profile of that important institution. She is the originator of the first exhibitions in Poland to feature postwar Japanese and East Asian art, and has contributed significantly to international scholarly exchange. During the residency, Brewinska will revisit Mono-ha, the avant-garde movement that emerged in late-1960s Tokyo, from a contemporary ecological perspective. The outcomes of her research will be presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow (MOCAK) in 2027–28. Her most important curatorial projects include: *Gendai: Between the Body and Space – Contemporary Japanese Art* (2000), Kawamata Tadashi exhibition and permanent installation (2001–03), both held at the Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, and a Kusama Yayoi exhibition, *Between Collectivism and Individualism—Japanese Avant-garde in the 1950s and the 1960s* (Zachęta Gallery, 2021), and *Koji Kamoji: Don't let the unnecessary overshadow the whole* (Watari Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 2025).

2. Imaseki Yurika

Independent curator and researcher
Research Assistant, Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean
Based in London

Residency project: Research for *Japanese Women Artists after 1945* (September 2026–February 2027) and a study on pioneering Japanese women artists

After completing her MFA in Curating at Goldsmiths, University of London, Imaseki Yurika has been conducting transnational research and curatorial projects with a focus on Japanese contemporary art. She employs an interdisciplinary approach, grounded in decolonial and queer feminist thought as a critical framework. This approach underpinned her research as an external advisor for *Chá, Chai, Tea* (Horniman Museum and Gardens, London, 2023–24), and continues to inform her current research for the forthcoming exhibition *Japanese Women Artists after 1945* at Mudam Luxembourg. She previously worked as Programming Officer (Exhibitions) at Japan House London (2023–24). Imaseki has also guest-lectured at universities, including Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London.

3. Philippe Pirotte

Professor of Art History, Städelschule (Frankfurt) / independent curator
Born in 1972. Based in Brussels.

Residency project: Research for *Spectres of Bandung: A Political Imagination of Asia–Africa*

During his career, Philippe Pirotte has curated numerous exhibitions across Europe, Asia, and Africa, exploring cross-cultural dialogue, critical historiography, and new models of curatorial practice through the lens of colonial histories and non-Western epistemologies.

During his residency, he will conduct research for his forthcoming exhibition project *Spectres of Bandung: A Political Imagination of Asia–Africa*, which takes inspiration from the 1955 Bandung Conference to examine the relationship between postwar Japanese art and cultural solidarities between Asia and Africa. Among his major curatorial projects are *Arus Balik: From below the wind to above the wind and back again* (NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore, 2019) and *Seeing in the Dark* (Busan Biennale, 2024). From 2019 to 2022, Pirotte served on the Documenta Commission, where he played an instrumental role in the appointment of the Indonesian collective ruangrupa as the first Asian artistic directors of documenta.

4. Shinoda Yayoi

Associate Curator, Japanese Art, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (Kansas City, Missouri, USA)
Born in 1980. Based in Prairie Village, Kansas, USA



Residency project: Threading Thoughts, Weaving Identity

Specializing in Japanese art history and material culture, Shinoda Yayoi has curated exhibitions that explore the intersections of tradition and innovation as well as locality and internationalism. Her curatorial practice focuses on how materials and techniques shape identity and social values within cultural contexts, emphasizing dialogue between artworks, society, and history. During the residency, under the theme of “Threading Thoughts, Weaving Identity,” Shinoda will investigate how contemporary Japanese artists address ideas of gender, hybridity, and cultural belonging through fiber-based practices such as weaving, dyeing, stitching, and knotting. The project aims to reconsider the relationship between the inheritance and innovation of materials, positioning fiber art as a field of expression that connects cultural memory with creative transformation. Her curatorial projects at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art include *Weaving Splendor: Treasures of Asian Textiles* (2021) and *Hokusai: Masterpieces from the Spencer Museum of Art, the Richardson-North Collection, and The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art* (2024), organized to complement the traveling exhibition *Hokusai: Waves of Inspiration from the Museum of Fine Arts Boston*, which she helped present at the museum in 2024.

Notes to Editors

1. 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 shortlist 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: nominations close September 10, 2025; finalists announced October 30; final screening and winner announced late February 2026

2. 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 September 10, 2025; results announced October 30; residencies begin from February 2026

Please note that all Japanese names are written family name, followed by given name.

Official Website: <https://mori-caf.jp>

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