



Katayama Mari Wins Inaugural Grand Prize



Mori Art Award 2026 Grand Prize Winner Katayama Mari Surrounded by, from left to right, Eugene Tan, director of The National Gallery Singapore and Singapore Art Museum; Suhanya Raffel, museum director of M+; Kataoka Mami, director of Mori Art Museum and chair of the International Jury; Frances Morris, former director of Tate Modern; Rhana Devenport, former director of the Art Gallery of South Australia Photo: Tayama Tatsuyuki

(Tokyo, Japan, February 26, 2026) — The final screening for the Mori Art Award 2026 was conducted by the International Jury on February 25, 2026, and **Katayama Mari** was selected as the winner of the inaugural Grand Prize. Mori Contemporary Art Foundation (MoriCAF) hopes that the award both serves as a showcase of the current state of Japanese contemporary art and leads to further international success for the winner. The Grand Prize winner receives prize money of ¥10 million and the opportunity to hold an exhibition of their work, jointly organized by MoriCAF and Mori Art Museum. The other finalists also receive prize moneys of ¥1 million each.

Mori Art Award was established by MoriCAF to support mid-career artists set to become the next leading figures in contemporary art. MoriCAF continues the Mori Art Award and its other efforts in keeping with the deep passion for contemporary art of its founding chairperson, Mori Yoshiko, and her aspirations to promote international cultural exchange and the sustainable development of Japanese contemporary art.

| Jury's Commentary on the Mori Art Award 2026

The four finalists of the inaugural Mori Art Award 2026 engage with diverse media and themes, sharing a profound conviction that art can bring reconciliation to the world. All of them demonstrate the passion and courage to take on major challenges.

The Mori Art Award was established to support mid-career Japanese artists in achieving greater international prominence. It calls on artists to transcend individual concerns — whether rooted in the personal or the planetary, technology or geopolitics — to reach the wider world.

Grand Prize winner Katayama Mari explores the possibility of extending the boundaries of her own body with strength and affirmation, working with analog photography and handcraft practices such as embroidery and needlework.

Her recent work *tree of life* suggests an ambitious new direction. Katayama's practice invites comparison with international peers and is expected to transcend cultural and social boundaries through the fusion of powerful imagery and a strong conceptual framework.

| Mori Art Award 2026 Grand Prize Winner and Finalists

Grand Prize Winner **Katayama Mari**

Finalists **Koizumi Meiro, 目[mé], Yamashiro Chikako**



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

Mori Art Award 2026 Grand Prize Winner

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

©Mari Katayama, courtesy of Mari Katayama Studio and Galerie Suzanne Tarasieue, Paris

Mori Art Award 2026 Finalists

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

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 Tribiño

Yamashiro Chikako

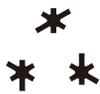
Yamashiro Chikako's moving image and performance practice uses her own body to explore the complex history as well as geographical and political issues in Okinawa, where she was born and raised. She probes how universal trauma and memories are passed down, shedding light on social divisions and the layered 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/>



Recalling(s), 2025

Installation view from The Ishibashi Foundation Collection × YAMASHIRO Chikako × SHIGA Lieko In the midst of, Artizon Museum, Tokyo
©Chikako Yamashiro. Courtesy of the artist
Photo: Naoya Hatakeyama



| Mori Art Award 2026 International Jury and Nominators

International Jury

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

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 (Senior Curator, Mori Art Museum)
- Tsubaki Reiko (Curator, Mori Art Museum)

| Notes to Editors

Mori Contemporary Art Foundation's activities center around two pillars: a residency for overseas curators to research Japanese contemporary art, and the Mori Art Award, which boosts the international profile of mid-career Japanese artists.

For the latest information, see the Mori Contemporary Art Foundation website. <https://mori-caf.jp/en>

* * * Mori Art Award

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 curators serving as a Nominators 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.
- Nominators: 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

* * * Curator Residency Program

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