



森の芸術祭 晴れの国・岡山

Forest Festival of the Arts Okayama:
Clear-skies Country

Press Release | 2024.9.2

森の芸術祭 岡山



Leandro Erlich, *The Nature Above* (conceptual drawing), 2024

Forest Festival of the Arts Okayama will be held from September 28th to November 24th.

The Forest Festival of the Arts Okayama: Clear-skies Country will be an international art festival held in the northern half of Okayama Prefecture, Japan in the autumn of 2024. The art director is Yuko Hasegawa, the director of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, who will be directing her first art festival in Japan. A total of 40 artists (39 groups) will participate.

Hasegawa describes her concept for the festival as follows:

“While looking to the future, the festival does not depend on sophisticated digital technology or a glut of information. Instead, it detoxes these elements and gives full play to sensibility, knowledge updating, and idea proposals. The enchantment of forests is sure to induce an awakening to a new ecology.”



Outline

Title: **Forest Festival of the Arts Okayama: Clear-skies Country**
Festival period: **September 28th (sat) – November 24th (sun)**
Venue: **12 municipalities in Okayama Prefecture, Japan**
Art Director: **Yuko Hasegawa**
Organizer: **Forest Festival of the Arts Okayama: Clear-skies Country Executive Committee, Ryuta Ibaragi (Governor of Okayama Prefecture)**
Official web-site: <https://forestartfest-okayama.jp>

Features of this festival

- Even in the context of Japan, where many art festivals are held, this festival is a unique one, in that it takes forest ecology as its theme and sets forth diverse forms of symbiosis between nature and humanity in five large areas.

- It is an art festival showcasing a neo-capitalism that draws on natural capital and remakes it into new capital together with experts and local residents.

- The festival encompasses a wide variety of sites including forests, waterfalls, hot springs, highlands, caverns, historical post roads, Japanese-style gardens, and old Western-style buildings. It offers site-specific works of art and projects by various creators and professionals such as artists, architects, flower arrangers, designers, performers, and researchers.

- **Anri Sala** provides a new interactive experience with use of sound and light in a cavern containing a waterfall with a drop of 50 meters. At the end of another cavern appears a crimson nirvana produced by **NINAGAWA Mika** with **EiM**. A display at the **Nagi MOCA** manifests **Arata Isozaki's** bold vision for the marriage of art and architecture. These are just some of the works shown at the festival.

- There is another project for the preparation of cuisine, produced by a local chef who has won award in an international competition.

Art Director
Yuko Hasegawa

Yuko Hasegawa is a curator, educator and writer based out of Tokyo. She currently holds positions as Director of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Director of Art and Design of the International House of Japan, Curator of the Better Co-being pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka-Kansai, Artistic Director of the Inujima Art House Project and Professor Emeritus of Tokyo University of the Arts. She was Artistic Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo until 2021 and during her post she curated solo exhibitions of Dumb Type, Olafur Eliasson and rhizomatiks among others.

She has curated Japanese contemporary art and media and technology extensively both domestically and internationally. Her curatorial language is interdisciplinary, encompassing not simply art but also architecture, design, science and anthropology, and combined with global curating experience, allows her to view art as part of a single, holistic ecology.

Hasegawa has also curated, either solo or in a joint capacity, international art biennials including the 7th International Istanbul Biennial (2001), the Shanghai Biennale (2002), the 29th São Paulo Biennial (2010), the Sharjah Biennial 11 (2013), and the 7th Moscow Biennale (2017), Thailand Biennale, Korat (2021) and also served as art advisor to the 12th Venice Architecture Biennale (2010). She has been honored with the Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France (2024).

Artists

Tarek Atoui | born in Beirut, Lebanon, 1980, lives and works in Paris

Paola Besana | born in 1935 in Italy, died in 2021

Bianca Bondi | born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1986, lives and works in Paris

Masanobu Emi | born in Okayama in 1947, lives and works in Okayama

Leandro Erlich | born in Argentina in 1973, lives and works between Paris, Buenos Aires and Montevideo

Lucila Gradín | born in San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina in 1981, lives and works in Buenos Aires

Katsukichi Higashi | born in Oita in 1908, died in 2007

Shiori Higashiyama | born in Hyogo in 1990, lives and works in Tokyo

AKI INOMATA | born in Tokyo in 1983, lives and works in Tokyo

Arata Isozaki | born in Oita, Japan in 1931, died in 2022

Umesh P K | born in India, lives and works in India

Atsunobu Katagiri | born in Osaka in 1973, lives and works in Osaka

Moe Kato | born in Saitama in 1988, lives and works in Okayama

Hideaki Kawashima | born in Aichi in 1969, lives and works in Tokyo

Rinko Kawauchi | born in Shiga in 1972, lives and works in Chiba

Kimsooja | born in 1957 in Daegu, Korea, lives and works in Seoul, New York and Paris

Chiharu Koda | born in Okayama, lives and works in Okayama

Chien-Chung Liao | born in Taipei in 1972, lives and works in Taipei

Michael Lin | born in Tokyo in 1964, lives and works in Taipei and Brussels

Yuka Mori | born in Osaka in 1991, lives and works in Kyoto

Mirai Moriyama | born in 1984, lives and works between Kobe and Tokyo

Ernesto Neto | born in 1964 in Rio de Janeiro, lives and works in Rio de Janeiro

NINAGAWA Mika with EiM

Saburo Ota | born in Yamagata in 1950, lives and works in Okayama

Smitha G S | born in India, lives and works in India

Ryuichi Sakamoto + Shiro Takatani

Ryuichi Sakamoto: born in 1952 in Tokyo, died in 2023, **Shiro Takatani**: born in 1963 in Nara, lives and works in Kyoto

Anri Sala | born in Albania in 1974, lives and works in France

Kazuyo Sejima | born in Ibaraki

Muhannad Shono | born in 1977 in Riyadh, KSA, lives and works in Riyadh, KSA

Yuko Someya | born in Chiba in 1980, lives and works in Chiba

Keita Sugiura | born in Okayama in 1980, lives and works in Okayama

Jukan Tateisi | born in Chicago in 1986, lives and works in Tokyo and London

Rirkrit Tiravanija | born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, lives and works in NY, Berlin, Chiang Mai

Yoshihiko Ueda | born in Hyogo in 1957, lives and works in Kanagawa

Asim Waqif | born 1978 in Hyderabad, India, lives and works in India

Yuna Yagi | born in 1980, live and works in Kyoto

Giacomo Zaganelli | born in 1983, lives and works in Florence and Berlin



About

The Forest Festival of the Arts Okayama: Clear-skies Country will be an international art festival held in the northern half of Okayama Prefecture in the autumn of 2024.

From ancient times, the Izumo Road linking the provinces of Yamato to the east and Izumo to the west traversed this area, whose castle towns and post towns flourished in early modern times. The area consequently has a legacy of various traditional structures, crafts, and performing arts. Its land and forests yield an abundance of fruit, lumber, and other products.

Various efforts are being made to ensure the sustainability of its blessings. Of particular note is a project making effective use of forest resources in applications such as woody biomass power generation, which has been given high ratings as a progressive model for attainment of SDGs. In addition, the leisurely time and open space represented by the Hiruzen Highlands as well as the three Mimasaka spas, limestone caves, and other features which have not undergone excessive tourism development hold new possibilities in ecological thinking.

The title “Forest Festival of the Arts” was inspired by the forests in this area, which are full of elements that are of vital importance for our lives, including a moderate climate, ample supply of water and other resources, and foodstuffs. They likewise symbolize its diversity and richness as a place of natural bounty and culture, where people come together.

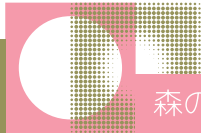
Taking the activation of this bounty born of forests into the future using the power of art as its objective, the festival will pose a question: “what kind of capital do we truly need?” Under an outlook regarding cultural facilities (such as art museums, memorial halls, and schools),

life infrastructure (the supply of water, energy, and food), and the natural environment as components of the social common capital, the point is to create new capital through activities by not only artists but also experts (architects, scientists, and ethnologists), with the cooperation of local residents.

Besid including a moderate climate, ample supply of water and other resources, and foodstuffs. They likewise symbolize its diversity and richness as a place of natural bounty and culture, where people come together.

Taking the activation of this bounty born of forests into the future using the power of art as its objective, the festival will pose a question: “what kind of capital do we truly need?” Under an outlook regarding cultural facilities (such as art museums, memorial halls, and schools), life infrastructure (the supply of water, energy, and food), and the natural environment as components of the social common capital, the point is to create new capital through activities by not only artists but also experts (architects, scientists, and ethnologists), with the cooperation of local residents.

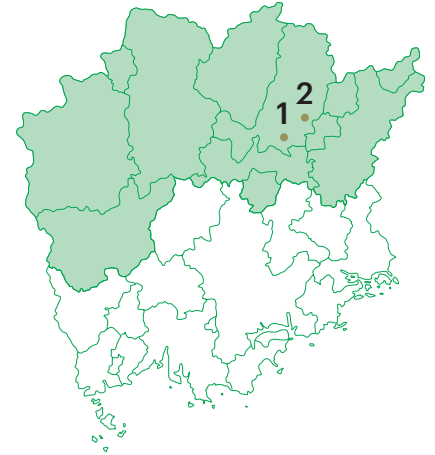
Besides reflecting diverse views, art generates empathy with them among viewers and nurtures powers of imagination toward new perspectives on the world and things. This makes people feel surprised, deeply moved, excited, and inspired, as well as the joy of being alive and the sense of fulfillment that comes from profound sensibility and thought. Infused with the energy of art, the ecological system of northern Okayama will be transformed into a topos that refreshes people’s hearts and minds. This festival of residents in the forested part of “clear-skies country” will celebrate this transformation.



1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City

A place where natural and cultural assets intersect, chronicling history from the Edo period (1603–1868) to the modern era.

Kimsooja / Bianca Bondi / Masanobu Emi / Lucila Gradin / Umesh P K / Hideaki Kawashima / Smitha G S / Muhannad Shono / Yuko Someya / Giacomo Zaganelli / Asim Waqif / Moe Kato / Chiharu Koda / Yuka Mori / Saburo Ota / Rirkrit Tiravanija / Paola Besana / Tarek Atoui / Atsunobu Katagiri / Yuna Yagi



2. Green Hills Tsuyama area, Tsuyama City

An expansive place of relaxation for the community, dotted with cafés, walking paths, and flower gardens.

Ernesto Neto



Green Hills Tsuyama



Sakushu Folk Crafts Museum



Shurakuen Garden



Josai Romance Hall



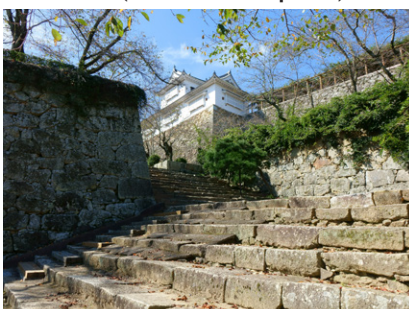
Former Tsuyama International
Hotel site (Shiroshita Square)



Tsuyama Wonder Museum



Joto's Old Townhouses



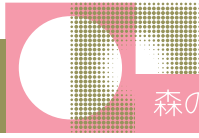
Tsuyama Castle (Kakuzan Park)



Tsuyama Railroad Educational
Museum



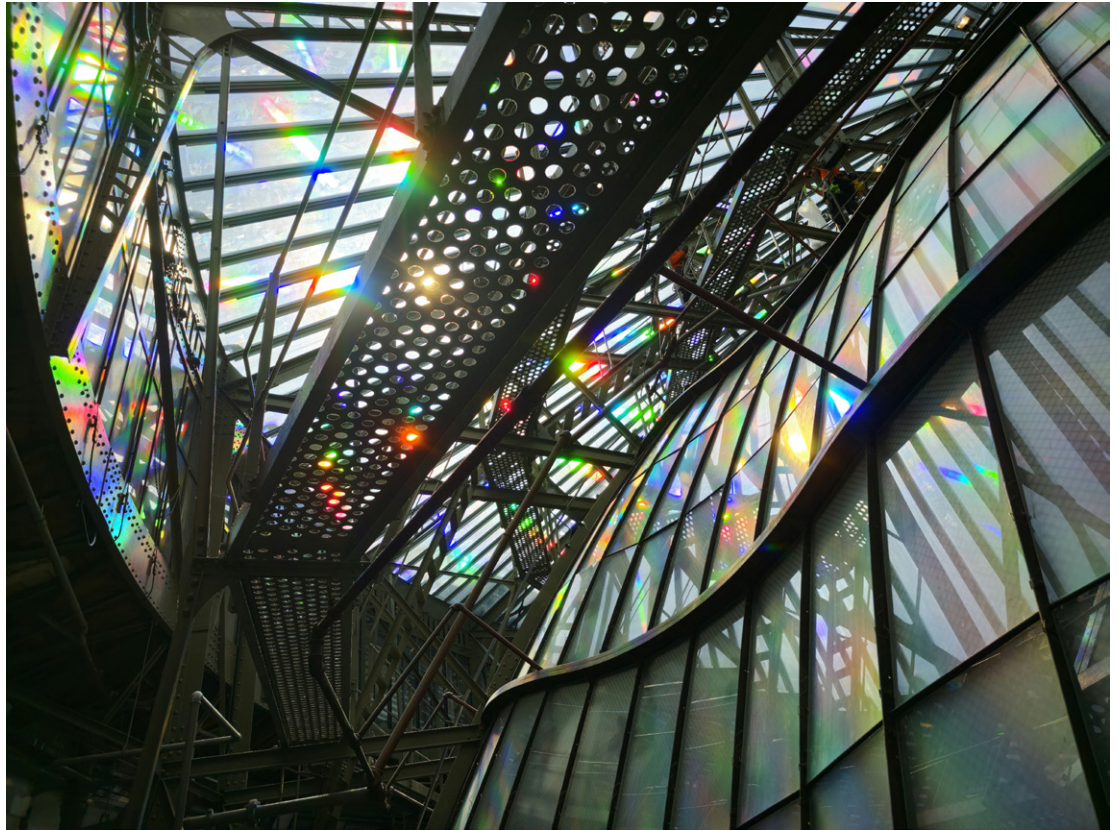
PORT ART & DESIGN TSUYAMA



1. Area on the periphery of
Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City

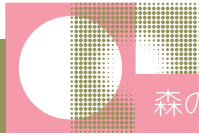
Kimsooja

born in 1957 in Daegu,
Korea, lives and works
in Seoul, New York and
Paris



Kimsooja, *To Breathe*, 2023
Site-specific installation consisting of diffraction grating film.
Installation view at Galeries Lafayette Haussmann, Paris, France, 2023
Photo: Jaeho Chong
Courtesy of Lafayette Group and Kimsooja Studio

Kimsooja graduated from Hongik University in Seoul in 1980 and went on to study at the same university's graduate school as well as at the École National des Beaux-Art in Paris. She is a multi-media artist whose conceptual works take Asian culture as their starting point and which have earned her international acclaim since the 1990s. Her artistic treatment of women, immigrants, traditional culture, and universal truths, as well as her grand views of the universe, are particularly notable. She is known for installations that cover the glass windows of buildings with diffraction grating film, and for wrapping objects in traditional Korean fabric bundles known as *bottari*. The works she exhibits at the festival are from a series similar to "To Breathe – A Mirror Woman," which she displayed in natural light at the Crystal Palace of the Reina Sofía National Art Center in Madrid in early 2006. All 2,188 windows of the spectacular, up to 8-meter-high Old Tsuyama Fan-shaped Locomotive Depot will be covered with diffraction grating film. The natural light entering the building will be converted into rainbow light using prisms with nanoscale scratches in the shape of crosses, producing a spectrum of light in this site-specific installation work. With the installation, the artist aims to use the non-physical material of light to express the structure of the universe posited by the traditional Korean color spectrum (*obangsaek*) and the ancient East Asian concept of the Five Phases. Kimsooja's stained-glass works are on permanent display at the Cathedral Saint-Étienne de Metz, France, and at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) in Sydney, Australia.



1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City

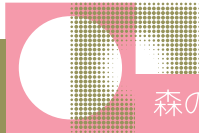
Bianca Bondi

born in Johannesburg,
South Africa in 1986,
lives and works in Paris

Bianca Bondi is a multimedia artist who uses mutating materials such as crystallized salt water and moss to incorporate the memories of places while creating narrative spaces under the theme of transformation. Her practice involves the activation of mundane objects, or their elevation into spiritual beings, through the use of chemical reactions, most often by salt water to form crystals. In addition to these materials, she works with old furniture and wallpaper and tapestries of her own design, advocating the life of matter with an emphasis on interconnectivity, transience, and the cycles of life and death. Often site specific and poetic, her works are very much connected to the places in which they are to exist. Bondi has taken an interest in forest medicine, a form of therapy developed in Japan and known for methods such as "forest bathing." At this year's festival she will be presenting an installation that binds the forest together with the venue, the former Nakashima Hospital. A great variety of herbs, moss, and other plants gathered in the surrounding area will be placed throughout the venue, with visitors moving from one room to the other as if they were walking through a forest. The shelves of antique cabinets along the walls hold medical containers, which are displayed in coexistence with the plants. In this installation the floor, ceiling, and walls of the venue transform into a forest landscape, and the aromas of the forest fill the space. The work invites visitors to bathe in a romantic, magical forest set in a Western-style building from the Taisho era (1912–1926).



Bianca Bondi, *Exotic Elixir*, 2024, © ADAGP, Paris & JASPAR, Tokyo, 2024 E5710 / Rebecca Fanuele
Co-organizer: Italian Cultural Institute in Osaka



1. Area on the periphery of
Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City

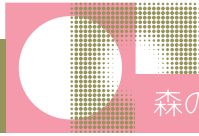
Masanobu Emi

born in Okayama in
1947, lives and works in
Okayama



Masanobu Emi, Kaleidoscope

Masanobu Emi graduated from the Tokyo Junior College of Photography (the current Tokyo Polytechnic University). He is Representative Director and President of Emi Photo Studio. Founded in 1873, Emi Photo Studio has a collection of more than 10,000 precious photographs in the form of glass photographic plates, the subjects of which are mainly the landscape and people of Tsuyama from the late Taisho era (1921–1926) to the early Showa era (1926–1989). Taken by Tadashi Emi, the third owner of the studio, the photos were digitalized by Masanobu Emi, the fifth-generation owner, and are available for viewing on the studio's website. While running his studio, Emi has been producing works of stained glass for more than 40 years. He is also fascinated by the little worlds of lamps and kaleidoscopes and the magical glow of their colors, and makes these items as well. Since getting on social media, Emi has been communicating with many people inside and outside Japan, sharing tricks and techniques he learned from his long years of trying different things in his pursuits. This time he will be exhibiting works including kaleidoscopes and presenting footage of the colorful, complex, and symmetrical patterns you see when peering into one of these devices. The similar experience provided by the camera and the kaleidoscope, both of which use light to conjure up a distinctive visual sensation, is indicative of the profound technical mastery the Emi family has achieved over a period exceeding 150 years.



Lucila Gradin

born in San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina in 1981, lives and works in Buenos Aires

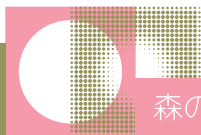
1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City



Lucila Gradin, *Chromatic Unfolding II*, 2023
Natural dyes and mordant on wool and felt, 275 x 160 cm

Lucila Gradín is a graduate of the Argentine Universidad Nacional de las Artes (UNA). Following a 2011 fellowship at the Centro de Investigaciones Artísticas (CIA) in Buenos Aires, she is currently collaborating with a team of women healers, doctors, philosophers, biologists, and others on a herbarium of medicinal and dye plants. Plants can be used not only for their colors in dyeing or for their fibers in crafts such as weaving, but also for medical purposes such as with medicinal herbs, as well as in magic. The artist approaches plants as a fountain of human knowledge and has studied plants used for dyeing by way of various traditional textiles, myths, and folk tales. She has a particular interest in collecting native plants and conducting experiments on their properties, such as their usefulness for dyeing. In *Chromatic Unfolding II* (2023) and *Goldenrod tautology* (2020) she employs natural dyes to color materials such as felt, wool, and silk, which are then elevated into works of art through processes including embroidery and weaving. In a time when ecosystems are being disrupted and transformed by invasive species, the works of Gradín, who focuses her research on native species, can be described as a pictorial mapping of the existing ecosystems of her area. Furthermore, her work carries the suggestion that textile traditions rooted in the history of a region, such as the Sakushu Kasuri of Tsuyama, also contain such important knowledge.

<https://www.instagram.com/lucilagradin/>



Umesh P K

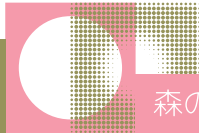
born in India, lives and
works in India

1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City



Umesh P K, *Moving into the Depths as it Revolves Around a Point*, 2024

Umesh P K completed his Master of Fine Arts in Painting at Hyderabad Central University in 2008. His interest in mythology, the history of representation, and spirituality feed his artistic pursuit, and he often draws inspiration from the natural world around us and creates paintings themed on the lost pathways between humans and nature. Drawing on his childhood in the state of Kerala—the southernmost part of the Indian subcontinent, a land that stretches between the biologically diverse Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea—he narrates a pictorial fiction of an imagined geography, its rituals, and creation myths. He explains his creative practice as a meditative process. His subjects originate from his own personal mythology and are never born out of thought, but rather appear as sudden visions. His new work, *Moving into the Depths as it Revolves Around a Point* (2024), depicts a mysterious whirlpool in the middle of a deep forest, spinning and descending into the depths. The work blends the mysteries of nature with inner reflection, evoking a deep connection with nature while inviting the viewer to plunge into an unknown abyss.

1. Area on the periphery of
Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City

Hideaki Kawashima

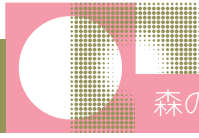
born in Aichi in 1969,
lives and works in Tokyo

After graduating from Tokyo Zokei University in 1991, Hideaki Kawashima underwent Buddhist training at Enryakuji Temple for a period of two years. He started his artistic career in 2001. Self-consciousness has been a consistent theme for Kawashima since the beginning of his career, and he has dedicated himself to depicting faces and the delicate and complex emotions that appear on them. His paintings have been characterized by the exquisite gradation of faintly applied pale colors achieved with acrylic paints, but in recent years he has also been working with oil paints. This year's festival features two of Kawashima's oil paintings in vivid and warm colors, created by overcoming a dislike of oil paints he felt when he first started painting. In *Guide*, a girl is holding Kawashima by the hand and guiding him as they play in a park. The two figures among the beautiful fresh greenery evoke the composition of traditional paintings, in which the subjects are seen as pointillistic images wandering happily into the forest. In *Stream*, a girl looks out over a rippling pond during a picnic with friends and family at a nearby park, and the water's surface, along with the shores of the pond, appear as a metaphor for her future. These works are based on photographs taken by the girl's parents and represented a challenge for Kawashima, who was not accustomed to painting landscapes based on photographs. Through the trees and water in them, the works also express Kawashima's present state of mind, which in recent years has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the deaths of relatives and friends, making him aware of his own mortality, but also by encounters and interaction with the young children of his friends and their families.

<https://www.instagram.com/hideakikawashima69/>



Hideaki Kawashima, *Guide*, 2023
oil, acrylic on canvas
194.5 × 162.0 cm
Photo: Kenji Takahashi
Courtesy of Tomio Koyama Gallery



Smitha G S

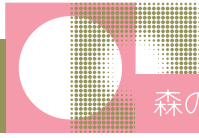
born in India , lives
and works in India

1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City



Smitha G S, *Untitled*, 2022
Acrylic on Canvas

Smitha G S is a self-taught artist influenced by childhood memories brimming with nature's melodies. Her works emphasize animals and the intricate beauty of nature. While her pieces previously often sidelined human forms, as her style evolved during the 2010s, Smitha's artworks began resonating with societal themes such as a Nipah virus outbreak in the Indian state of Kerala, juxtaposing human vulnerabilities with the unpredictable realm of animals. The Covid-19 lockdown marked another transformative phase, inspiring her to create a universe of happiness within the boundaries of her home. While her initial pieces celebrated the animal world, her post-Covid creations started to weave in human figures, emphasizing the performing arts and rituals of the Malabar region and their relation with nature. The works she presents at this year's festival depict humans coexisting with a wide variety of creatures in a multicolored forest. Her distinctive palette captures the meticulous and mysterious beauty of nature while expressing a sense of awe at its power, far beyond the reach of human control.

**1. Area on the periphery of
Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City**

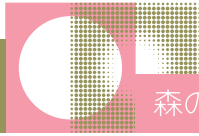
Muhannad Shono

born in 1977 in Riyadh,
KSA, lives and works in
Riyadh, KSA



Muhannad Shono, *On Losing Meaning*, 2024

Muhannad Shono received his B.A in Architecture from the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals in 2000. His work, unrestricted by scale, medium, concept, or technology, references cultural lore, spiritual texts, mythology, and urban legends. Informed by his family's history of migration, and interested in abandoned, uninhabited places, the artist explores notions of non-belonging through a practice structured by storytelling. With his post-minimal black, white, and gray tonal ranges, he has resolved his work around the potential of the line and the void to create, both as a reference to his drawing practice and as a conceptual framework. In "On Losing Meaning" (2021-), a four-legged robot moves randomly on sand, drawing and redrawing a variety of patterns. Through the continuous loss and creation of meaning caused by overlapping lines, the artist poses questions about the fluidity of language and the interpretation of symbols. Meanwhile the robot itself, as it produces drawings that slowly move and transform as if they were breathing, comes across like a living creature of sort, exploring and shaping the possibilities of new languages, symbols, and paintings.



Yuko Someya

born in Chiba in 1980,
lives and works in Chiba

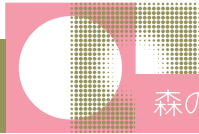
1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City



Yuko Someya, *Neither Knowledge Nor Intention., 2023*
Chinese ink, water color, pencil, lithograph ink, and Japanese paper on canvas, mounted on wood panel
52.5 × 68.5 cm / frame:54.5 × 70.5 cm
Photo: Kenji Tskahashi
Courtesy of Tomio Koyama Gallery

Yuko Someya graduated from Tokyo Zokei University with a bachelor's degree in painting in 2004, and from the Tokyo University of the Arts with a master's degree in printmaking in 2006. She captures familiar landscapes by relating them to aspects of life, death, childbirth, nature, and other fundamentals of existence gleaned from her own childhood memories and changes in her life, creating a new and entirely original form of expression. Someya constructs her paintings by drawing meticulous preliminary sketches in pencil, tracing them on painted washi paper to form molds, tearing or cutting out lines and shapes, and pasting them on the canvas in layers. She completes her artistic worlds by drawing with a sharpened pencil and ink. At this year's festival she will exhibit works featuring mountains, stars, the sky, and water seen in Okayama, depicted with sumi ink (mainly as stripes), a form of expression she has been researching for some time. During an extended stay at her grandmother-in-law's house in Yakage, Okayama, Someya was surprised by how close she felt to nature. She painted *The Sky*, depicting how the movement of the sky and that of water in a river are so alike that they seem the same, and *Neither Knowledge Nor Intention.*, which portrays clouds, rain, and lightning on a mountain range, to express the beauty of nature untouched by human hands. Also on display will be seven other works, including *Twilight*, which depicts a swirling starry sky seen by the artist through a telescope during a visit to an observatory in Biseicho. Someya's works reveal a deep relationship with nature while reflecting her own inner explorations.

<https://www.instagram.com/some8yuko/?hl=ja>

1. Area on the periphery of
Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City

Giacomo Zaganelli

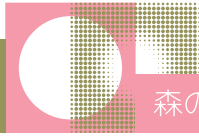
born in 1983, lives and works in Florence and Berlin



Giacomo Zaganelli, *Ping Pong Platz, Oshiage*, 2023

Giacomo Zaganelli is an artist, curator, and activator of artistic-cultural projects aimed at the community. Through participatory exhibitions and workshops, he has worked with local residents and government agencies to revitalize vacant lots and other neglected areas. Zaganelli and his partner Silvia Piantini spent about a month in the northern part of Okayama in 2022 and 2023, visiting Tsuyama city government offices, local communities, and schools to advance their project through dialogue with the residents. In Tsuyama Ping Pong Platz, they created an outdoor table tennis field open to the public on the former site of the International Hotel, which is located in the center of Tsuyama's cultural zone and had been used as a parking lot. According to the artist, public outdoor table tennis tables in Germany function as meeting points for citizens, who gather not only to play ping-pong but also to eat and drink at the tables on a daily basis. Three concrete ping-pong tables designed by the artist and built in collaboration with local craftsmen, as well as benches made from local wood, create a platform for amicable communication. The tables are set up permanently in Tsuruyama Park, harmonizing with the landscape of the park's stone walls and trees and inviting visitors and local residents to interact through table tennis.

<https://www.giacomozaganelli.com/>



Asim Waqif

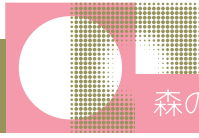
born 1978 in Hyderabad,
India, lives and works
in India

1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City



Asim Waqif, *Improvise*, 2022
Site specific installation for the Kochi Muziris Biennale
Bamboo, woven pandanus leaves, and ropes
Photo: Kochi Muziris Biennale

Asim Waqif studied architecture at the School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, and began his artistic career after developing an interest in the manual and improvisational work he observed in the field. He has been working with bamboo since early on, creating large, interactive installations that combine traditional techniques with new technologies. For this year's festival, Waqif created *Bamboo Heartbeat*, a more than five-meter-high installation, with local craftspeople including bamboo artisan Yukio Hiramatsu and the local bamboo company Takekichi Co. The venue, Tsuruyama Park, is a park built on the site of the former Tsuyama Castle. A structure of bamboo logs put together in an improvised manner rises against the backdrop of intricate, up to 10-meter-high stone ramparts. Inside the structure, meticulously woven bamboo strands form a dynamic, streamlined decoration, and viewers can strike a bamboo drum to make sounds. The work stimulates the senses of sight, touch, and hearing. The bold yet subtle use of bamboo, a natural material common throughout Asia, in a spatial construction crosses the boundaries between art and architecture, giving rise to new ideas for the use of bamboo as a resource.
<https://asimwaqif.com/>



Moe Kato

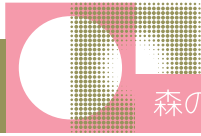
born in Saitama in
1988, lives and works in
Okayama

1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City



Moe Kato, *Dozing Off*, 2022 Photo: SATOSHI TAKASE

Moe Kato graduated with a master's degree (Ph.D.) from the Faculty of Fine Arts at Tokyo University of the Arts in 2014. She majored in lacquer art and studied mainly mother-of-pearl work and dry lacquer techniques. In September 2014, she moved to the city of Niimi in Okayama Prefecture to help revitalize the local community through lacquer art. She combines her creative activities with winemaking. Animals have been a consistent motif in Kato's art to date. She uses lacquer to skillfully express her impressions of animals she encounters, such as a friendly cat or various wild animals that she comes across on her walks. "Dozing Off" (2022), the work she is exhibiting at the festival, depicts a fox curled up and slumbering under the autumn leaves on a cold day in the mountains. The artist used a clay model to make a plaster mold, which she then covered with layers of lacquer and linen using a dry lacquer technique. The upper half of the body is enveloped with local kojiro washi paper and colored with lacquer, while the lower half is coated with layers of transparent lacquer to express the sunlight filtering through the trees in autumn. Kato's work reflects a deep connection with nature and a distinctive aesthetic that makes the most of local materials. She is the recipient of major awards including the Silver Prize, Art Division, at the International Urushi Exhibition Ishikawa 2020, and Second Prize at the 22nd Okayama Art and Culture Awards (2021).
https://www.instagram.com/katoh_moe/



Chiharu Koda

born in Okayama, lives
and works in Okayama

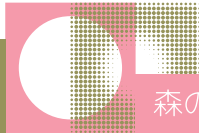
1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City



Chiharu Koda, *Kocho —withered—*, 2011

Chiharu Koda earned her Bachelor of Art and Design degree from the Faculty of Arts and Industrial Design at Okayama Prefectural University in 2005 and studied pottery techniques at the Tajimi City Pottery Design And Technical Center, from where she graduated in 2008. She developed an interest in the impact materials have on a space through her research into the properties of glaze. In 2020, she graduated from the Sculpture Department at the State Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe in Germany, and is currently expanding her activities with a focus on Germany. Focusing on the theme of materials and space, she creates sculptures based on materials she has researched and installation works that make use of technology. She describes her 2011 work *Kocho* as “a piece in which a plant grows from the head of a bird,” and indeed elements resembling the shoot of a plant and the body of a shellfish extend vertically from weathered, dry soil. The characteristic bark-like texture of the ceramic material was created by layering clay using a technique called coiling, expressing the passage of time in the form of years and growth rings. The work has a unique cavity at its center, filled with power and consciously shaped to create life, and explores the relationship between life and form while harnessing the characteristics of its material. Koda is the recipient of awards including the Okayama Prefecture Mr. I Award for Nurturing Emerging Artists (2008) and the Grand Shu-Ou Foundation Award for Art Travel (2012).

<https://chiharukoda.com/>



1. Area on the periphery of
Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City

Yuka Mori

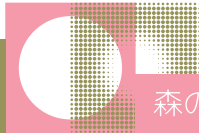
born in Osaka in 1991,
lives and works in Kyoto

Yuka Mori studied at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris as an exchange student in 2015 and received a master's degree in Nihonga (Japanese-style painting) from the Kyoto City University of Arts in 2016. She uses typical Nihonga lines and pigments to depict how the body and environment contain each other and remain in fluid change, based on her own experience and sensibility. She began sketching plants in 2019 and produces paintings and drawings inspired by the corporeality of plants. For this year's festival, Mori focused on the approximately 1,000 water lilies that grow in the pond at the Shurakuen Garden, and was inspired by the fact that these plants, whose flowers float on the water, reproduce by anchoring their roots to the soil under the surface and spreading their underground stems horizontally. In *Rhizome*, her new work, nearly the entire canvas is covered with water lilies seen beneath the surface, depicting the way the human body is connected to their underground stems. The work examines the connection between plant life and human corporeality, which cannot be captured visually. Mori's painting suggests that just as water lilies are more than only their beautiful flowers and leaves, the human body is an ecological entity that continuously interacts with its surroundings in unseen ways.

<https://yukamori.com/>



Yuka Mori, *Engulfing Bodies*, 2023
Japanese paper, Mineral pigment
31.8 × 41cm



Saburo Ota

born in Yamagata in
1950, lives and works in
Okayama

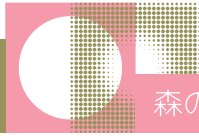
1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City



Saburo Ota, *Scenes in a Garden*, 2024

Saburo Ota graduated from the National Institute of Technology, Tsuruoka College with a degree in mechanical engineering in 1971. He moved from Tokyo to the city of Tsuyama, where his wife is from, in 1994. He began producing artwork in 1980 and is noted for his SEED PROJECT, for which he mounted seeds he collected on stamp-like squares of washi paper. Ota's works showcase aspects of daily life that tend to be overlooked, posing questions about the places and time underlying them. Displayed at this year's festival will be pieces including *Shuraku Botanical Garden*, a project to attach nameplates to plants and trees growing in the Shurakuen Garden; *Garden Scene*, a video work composed of footage of a persimmon tree and a tangerine tree growing in a garden near Ota's home, which he observed over a year and captured on film; and *FALL*, a video in which a persimmon tree bears fruit in autumn, with the fruit ripening and eventually falling to the ground. *The Drop of Life: Persimmon Jelly* is also based on Ota's idea, with a recipe created by students of the culinary arts society of Tsuyama's Mimasaka University, and lets viewers take home persimmon seeds and grow a new tree from them. Ota is the recipient of awards including the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Regional Cultural Merits Award (2018) and the Okayama Prefecture Cultural Award (2021). His works are included in the collections of museums such as the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden, and the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (Seoul).

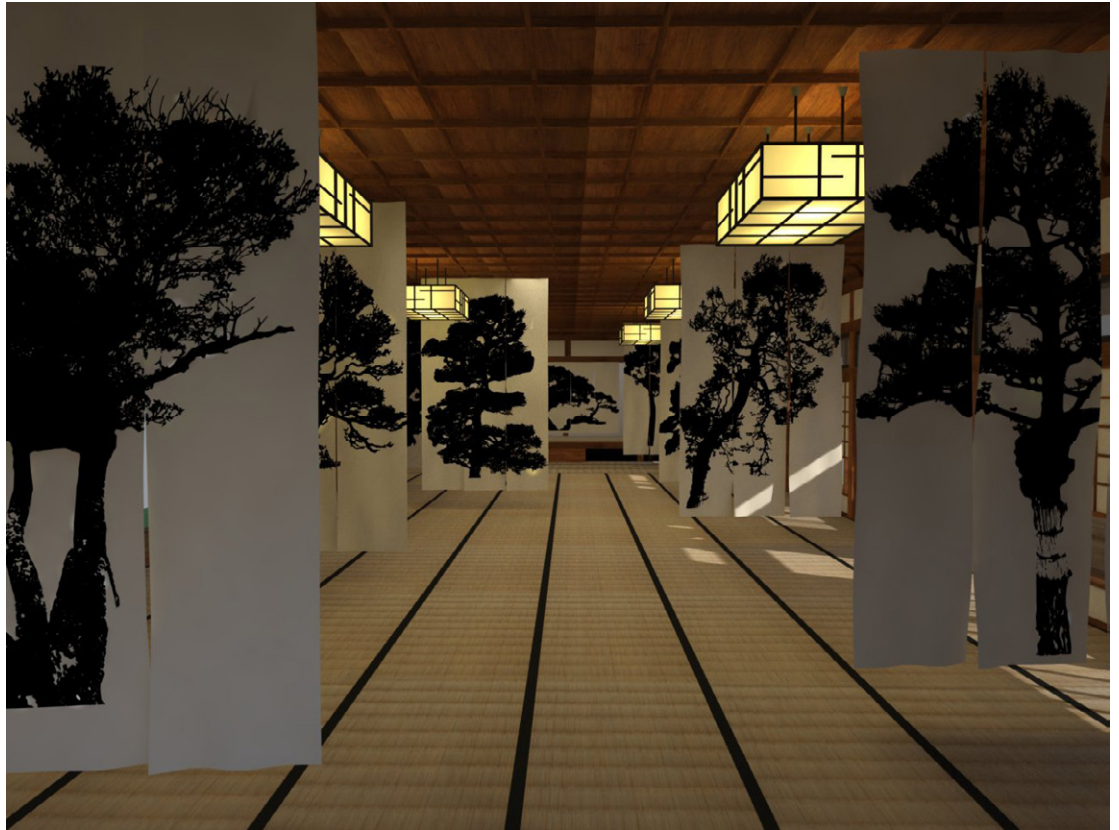
<https://www.otasaburo.com/>



1. Area on the periphery of
Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City

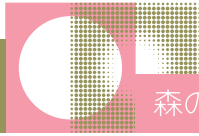
Rirkrit Tiravanija

born in Buenos Aires,
Argentina, lives and
works in NY, Berlin,
Chiang Mai



Courtesy of Rirkrit Tiravanija

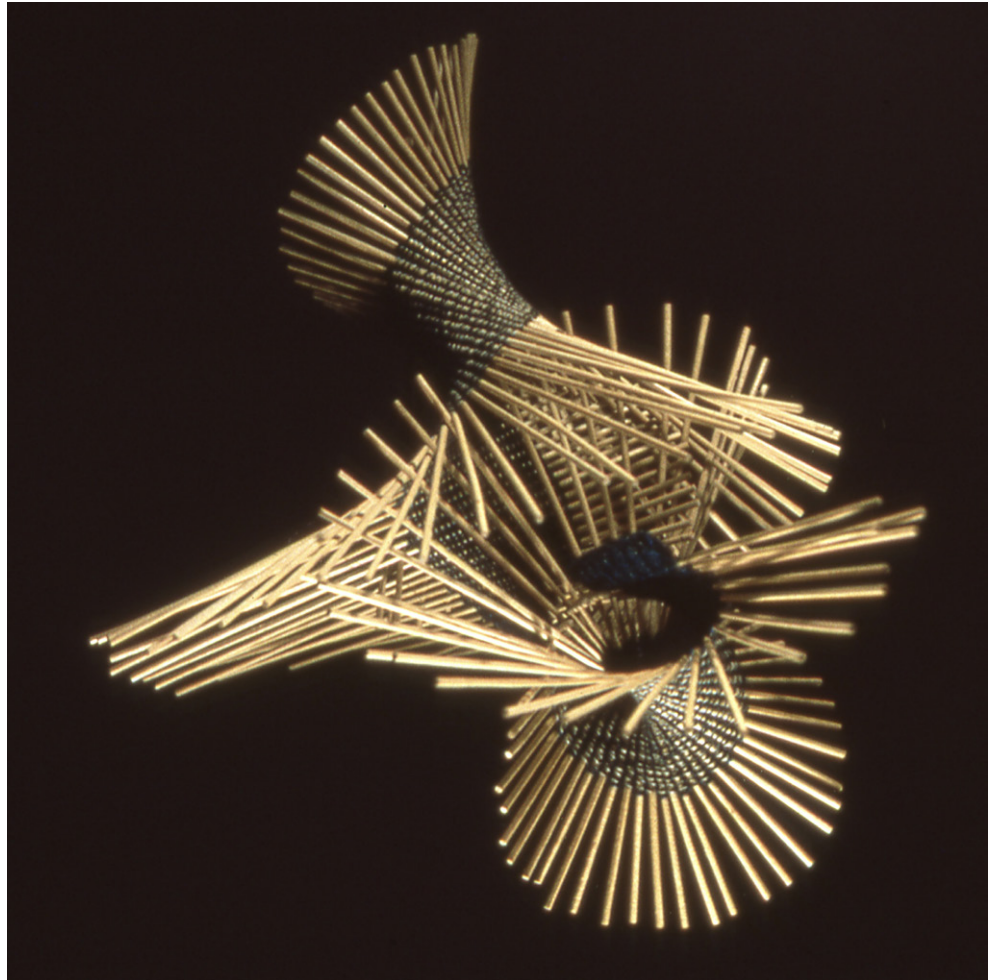
Rirkrit Tiravanija is known for his rejection of the conventional exhibition format and his presentation of social exchanges through the sharing of everyday activities such as cooking, eating, and reading. He is a professor at the School of the Arts at Columbia University and served as artistic director of the Okayama Art Summit 2022. "Untitled 2024 (to find water look for forests)" comprises the two aspects of crafts and food from northern Okayama Prefecture, which Tiravanija researched in 2023 and developed an interest in. One is a noren curtain he created in collaboration with Yoko Kano, a dyeing artist from the city of Maniwa, and the other a lunchbox in the form of an artwork, produced with local ingredients together with chef Tomoyori Hirayama of bistro CACASHII and the Marui supermarket in the city of Tsuyama. This project, in which visitors dine together in a space partitioned by the large noren, decorated with silhouettes of select trees from the Shurakuen Garden, is intended to gently blend the food and cultural resources of nature-rich northern Okayama Prefecture into the time shared with the audience, inviting mutual enjoyment.



Paola Besana

born in 1935 in Italy,
died in 2021

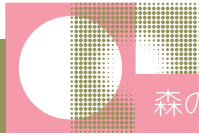
1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City



Paola Besana, *Una Strada Lunga*, 1971
Co-organizer Italian Cultural Institute in Osaka

Paola Besana studied under fiber artist Lily Blumenau (1912–1976) in New York in 1961–62, and in 1962–1963 with textile artist Trude Guermonprez (1910–1976) at the California College of Arts and Crafts. In 1968 she settled in Milan and opened her own studio, Studio di Tessitura Paola Besana, a workshop and center for research, production, and teaching. She worked in textile design for more than 30 years, covering industrial textiles as well as work in fields including architecture and fashion. Her work can be viewed at the Paola Besana Archives in Milan. Fascinated by the techniques of weaving, which developed under specific social and cultural circumstances, she strived to create works exploring three-dimensionality. Believing that knowledge of the history of weaving enables creative development, she explored and reinterpreted weaving techniques that were being lost. She also drew lines between popular and folk culture and abstract expression by exploring the structural and expressive possibilities offered by the contrasts and combinations of weaving techniques, materials, and colors. On view at the festival will be “Una strada lunga (Long Road)” (1978), a three-dimensional work that combines a wood structure with textiles, as well as samples of Besana’s original patterns and accompanying instructional drawings. This will be the first time that her work is presented in Japan in such variety. In Besana’s art, the geometric abstraction of modernism is enriched by handicraft and soft, delicate yarns; her work acts as a foretelling of the contemporary re-evaluation of the textile form.

<https://www.paolabesana.it/e-index.html>



Tarek Atoui

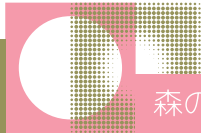
born in Beirut, Lebanon,
1980, lives and works
in Paris

1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City

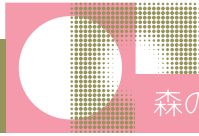


Tarek Atoui, *The Wind Harvester*,
Thailand Biennale at Chiang Rai 2023
© Wanchai Phutthawarin

Tarek Atoui explores the medium of sound and the way it gives shape to perceptions through dynamic installations, experimental acoustic environments, and collaborative performances. While drawing on the distinctive Arab culture of music in his native Lebanon, he works with composers and craftsmen from different countries to invent complex instruments with strong sculptural halos, testing the unique ways in which elements transmit and reflect sound. The instruments created as part of one of Atoui's projects, WITHIN, offer a tactile experience of sound, can be played by anyone, including people with hearing impairments, and allow their player to perceive sound with their body. At the festival, the artist will combine numerous instruments, custom-made electronics, and computer programs he has created over the years in the tatami room of a traditional townhouse to create a soundscape. Within this space, Atoui presents music and technology as powerful elements of expression and identity while alluding to contemporary social and political circumstances. The participation and experience of the viewers makes for an essential element in the multi-sensory environment produced within the house, which has been extended and remodeled repeatedly from the latter half of the 1800s through the Showa period (1926–1989). Atoui's works are part of several public collections, including those of the Tate Modern, the Guggenheim, and the New National Museum of Monaco, as well as the French national collection.

**1. Area on the periphery of
Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City****Atsunobu Katagiri** born in Osaka in 1973, lives and works in OsakaAtsunobu Katagiri, *LIGHT OF FLOWERS*, 2021

Atsunobu Katagiri is a flower arranger/artist and the master of the Misasagi Ikebana school. He studied in the United States after graduating from middle school, and returned to Japan in 1994. He succeeded to the aforementioned position of ikebana master in 1997. After the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 he visited Fukushima Prefecture, where he produced and photographed works conveying his hopes for the recovery of areas affected by the catastrophe at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power station. He documented these works in the book *Sacrifice: The Ikebana of Regeneration, Offered to the Future*, which was published in 2015. His works cover a wide range of themes, extending from arrangements of little wild plants to installations in the vein of avantgarde art. He delves into the animistic aspect that informs the roots of ikebana, and aspires to gain insights into the vitality of plants and human beings' relationship with them from the perspective of cultural anthropology. At this year's festival Katagiri will present an installation using a great volume of wheat grown in the city of Tsuyama and harvested in July 2024. The work will be displayed in the earthen-floor space of a large traditional townhouse that once belonged to a local merchant. Here, through the interaction of two timelines—that of wheat, a plant that has been eaten in Japan since the prehistoric Yayoi period, and the historical space of the townhouse with its traditional kamado stove as well as the relationship of this space with plants—the artist will nudge us to reconsider our relationship with nature and explore paths toward the future. Greeting visitors at the entrance to the townhouse will be ikebana arrangements created with plants gathered in the surrounding area.



Yuna Yagi

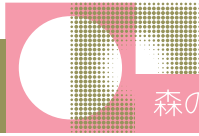
born in 1980, live and
works in Kyoto

1. Area on the periphery of Tsuyama Castle, Tsuyama City



Yuuna Yagi, *Light*, 2021
Cyanotype print on Japanese paper, Kakejiku
W634 × H957 mm
© Takeshi Asano-KYOTOGRAPHIE 2021

Yuna Yagi graduated with a bachelor's degree in architecture from the Parsons School of Design and is based in Kyoto. She produces mainly photographic works that induce a transformation of awareness from multiple perspectives and angles through the experience of seeing. For this year's festival Yagi focused on Mimasaka Bancha, a local bancha tea that has long been a favorite in the region and that she came across while visiting the northern part of Okayama Prefecture. Drawing on her experience of witnessing the process of drying tea leaves under the open sky at Kobayashi Hoko-en, a tea producer that remains committed to this traditional method, Yagi will present a work featuring Mimasaka Bancha in a tea room. Okayama and Kyoto, where the artist lives, are connected by the legacy of the twelfth-century Buddhist priest Eisai, who was a native of Bitchu Province (present-day Okayama Prefecture). Eisai, who is credited with founding the Rinzai school of Zen Buddhism, brought back tea seeds from his travels in China and wrote the *Kissa Yojoki* ("Drinking Tea for Health"), Japan's first book on tea cultivation and its medical benefits. He is thus considered the founder of the tea tradition in Japan, and he popularized the drink throughout the country. A manuscript and woodblocks of the book are in the possession of Ryosokuin, a temple founded by Eisai's disciple Ryusan on the grounds of the historic Kenninji in Kyoto, and Yagi visited the temple while conducting research. She aims to transcend a number of different boundaries with her work, which highlights tea from a folk perspective in line with the *Kissa Yojoki* and in contrast to the Zen-inspired tea ceremony. In the self-transcendent space of a tea room, the artist presents a sensation of being at one with others, nature, and the times, transcending different eras, places, and cultures. Yagi is the recipient of awards including the Grand Prix in the *Kyotographie Portfolio Review* (2016), and her works are in the collection of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa.



2. Green Hills Tsuyama area, Tsuyama City

Ernesto Neto

born in 1964 in Rio de Janeiro, lives and works in Rio de Janeiro



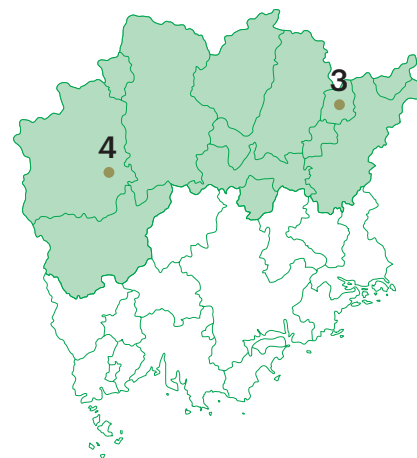
Ernesto Neto, *chantdance*, 2023
Photo: Wanchai Phutthawarin
Courtesy of Thailand Biennale Chiang Rai 2023; Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro;
Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York and Los Angeles

Ernesto Neto's work deals with relationships, whether between materials, forces, or beings. The curves created by the materials he uses are one of the characteristic mediating elements between gravity and balance in these relationships. While referring to the legacy of avantgarde movements such as Neoconcretism, Minimalism, and Arte Povera, Neto understands the body as a fundamental political issue in his poetic work. In 2014, he initiated an artistic exchange with the indigenous Huni Kuin people of Brazil, experiencing their rituals and shamanic traditions. Spiritual life, the healing that comes from being in harmony with nature, and the wisdom and peace bestowed by a deep connection to the energies of the earth inspired Neto to rediscover the strength and dynamism of nature. This experience had a profound influence on his creative work. The festival will feature an installation of crocheted nets made of recycled fiber, suspended from bamboo posts to form a canopy. The netting encases ceramic bowls, which visitors can touch when stepping inside the work. This time, at the artist's request, visitors are asked to enter the installation barefoot. Beneath the wide sky and on the expansive lawn of the venue, Green Hills, Neto's work draws the viewer into a meditative state, reconnecting the cultural body with the spirit of life. His other works are in the collections of museums around the world, including the Centre Pompidou (Paris), the Inhotim Institute (Brumadinho, Brazil), and the Museum of Modern Art (New York City).

3. Area in the vicinity of Nagi MOCA, Nagi Town

The world's first interactive art museum, in which buildings and artworks exist in near-permanent harmony. A "miracle" town with one of the highest fertility rates in Japan

Mirai Moriyama / AKI INOMATA / Arata Isozaki /
Ryuichi Sakamoto + Shiro Takatani / Leandro Erlich



Nagi MOCA



Symbol Road



Spark Nagi Indoor Gateball Field

4. Makido Cave, Ikurado Cave area, Niimi City

An area of natural formative beauty created over the course of millennia.

Anri Sala / Keita Sugiura / NINAGAWA Mika with EiM / Michael Lin



Ikurado Cave



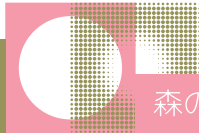
Fureai Center Maki



Makido Cave



Manabi no Mori Niimi Library
(Sub - Venue)



3. Area in the vicinity of Nagi MOCA, Nagi Town

Mirai Moriyama

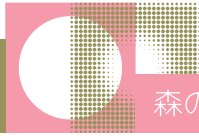
born in 1984, lives and works between Kobe and Tokyo



Mirai Moriyama, A Scene from Yokozen Kabuki Practice, 2023

Mirai Moriyama has won several film awards for his work as an actor. His cross-disciplinary career has included performing a solo dance requiem at the opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, directing the Re:Incarnation (2021) performance at Kiyomizudera Temple in Kyoto, and launching and operating the Artist in Residence KOBE facility, opened in 2022. This time, Moriyama will organize the Sanbutaro Festival, a performance event aiming to rethink the relationship between community and culture, on the Nagi Symbol Road that looks out toward Mt. Nagi. Sanbutaro is the name of a giant who appears in a legend told in Nagi, and the name is also used to refer to folk tales about this giant. During his visit to Nagi, Moriyama met with local artists including practitioners of Yokosen Kabuki, an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property of Okayama Prefecture, and Kabukunza, a drumming group based in Nagi. Through collaboration with these artists, Moriyama created a new Kabuki play, dance, and performance based on Sanbutaro to connect with the community. The festival will be co-hosted by the Agriculture and Forestry Festival and ARTdeMEAT, two events that highlight food products from Nagi. Combining music, theater, dance, and food, the festival will be shared with participants and the local community to express gratitude and reverence for nature in the shape of Mt. Nagi. Additionally, an archival recording of the work will be exhibited in the lounge of the Nagi Museum of Contemporary Art.

<https://www.miraimoriyama.com/>



AKI INOMATA

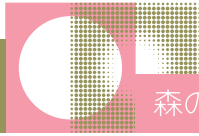
born in Tokyo in 1983,
lives and works in Tokyo

3. Area in the vicinity of Nagi MOCA, Nagi Town



AKI INOMATA, *Thinking of Yesterday's Sky*, 2022– ongoing

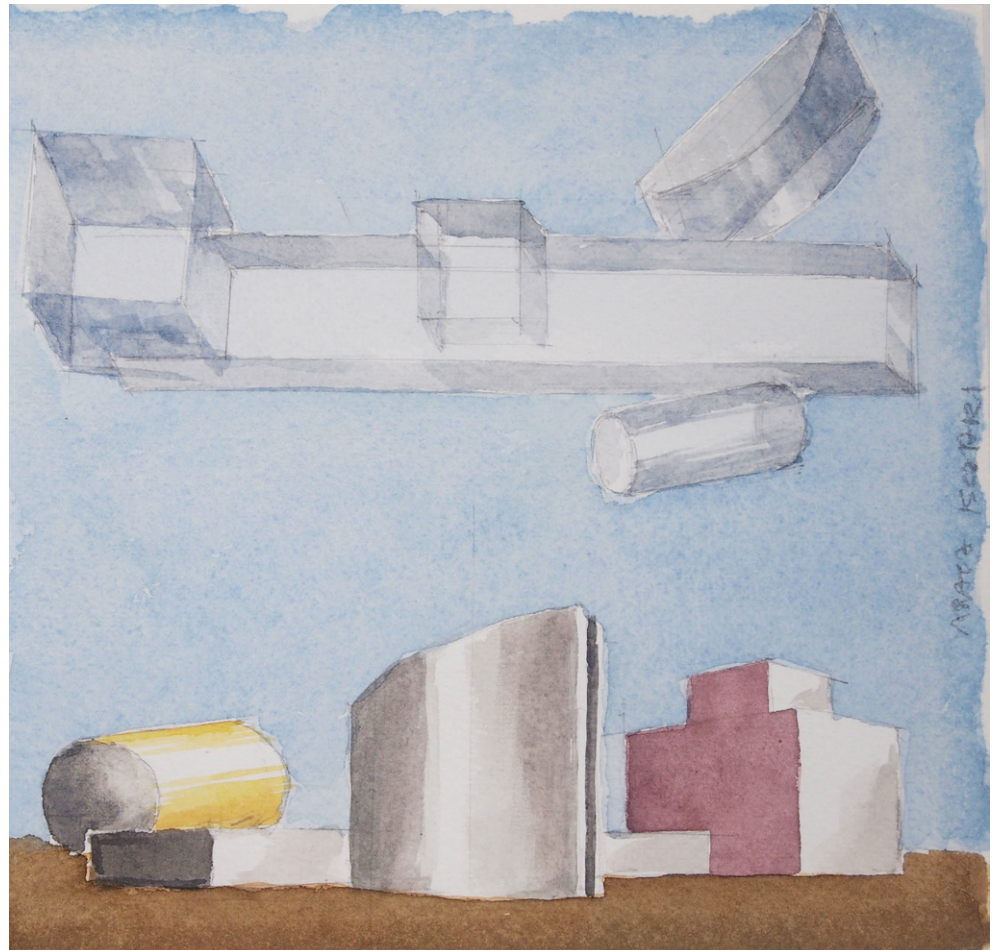
Aki Inomata earned her Master of Fine Arts from the Tokyo University of the Arts' Department of Inter-Media Art in 2008. She is a project associate professor at Digital Hollywood University and a visiting researcher at Waseda University. Questioning the anthropocentric perspective, her practice centers on collaboration with the activities of non-human creatures and natural phenomena. Her major works include "Why Not Hand Over a 'Shelter' to Hermit Crabs?" (2009–), in which she gave hermit crabs transparent shells modeled after New York and other cities and watched them move from one shell to the other—a commentary on contemporary questions revolving around issues such as nationality and territory. "Thinking of the Yesterday's Sky" (2022–) is a drinkable sculpture for which a 3D printer is used to reproduce the previous day's sky in water poured into a glass. It sprung from a realization the artist had while looking out the window during the Covid-19 pandemic and being fascinated by the clouds and patterns in the sky that never looked the same as yesterday. Fascinated by the vastness of the sky in Nagi and by how the clouds move in a distinctive way in this mountainous region, Inomata spent time in the area working on her artwork in 2022. She developed the liquid-3D printer she uses to create the clouds herself, following a long process of trial and error. The clouds in her glasses change shape and eventually disappear with the passage of time, serving as devices for sharing the transience and irreplaceability of the everyday. Aki Inomata's works are included in collections such as those of MoMA in New York, the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, the Art Gallery of South Australia, and the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto.



Arata Isozaki

born in Oita, Japan in
1931, died in 2022

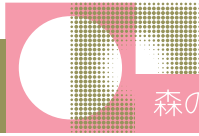
3. Area in the vicinity of Nagi MOCA, Nagi Town



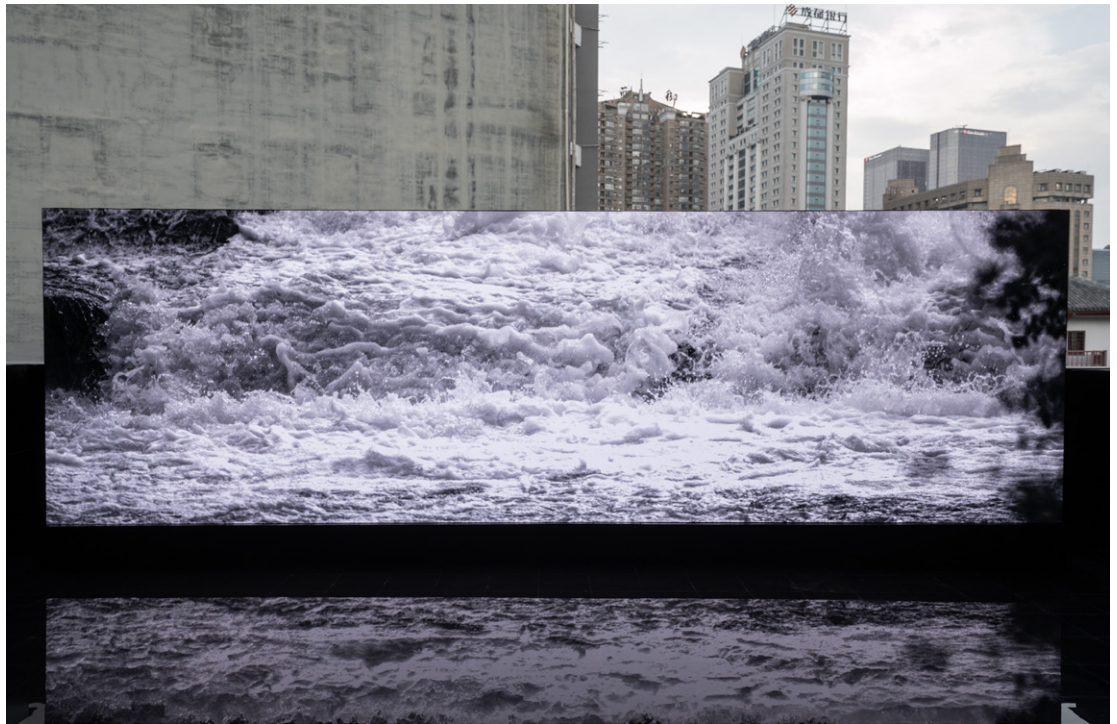
Arata Isozaki, *Nagi Museum of Contemporary Art*, 1993
Watercolor on paper
17.4 × 18.0 cm
© Estate of Arata Isozaki

Arata Isozaki established his own atelier in 1963, going on to design works of architecture such as the main branch of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and the Barcelona Olympic Stadium and to work in urban planning on projects including the urban design of Zhengzhou City, Henan Province, in China. He designed the Nagi MOCA building, one of the festival's venues, in 1994, achieving a bold fusion of architecture and art by selecting three artists to contribute site-specific artworks to the building. He worked together with sculptor Anish Kapoor on Ark Nova (2011–13), a mobile concert hall conceived to tour regions affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of 2011. This donut-shaped inflatable dome, 18 meters high, 30 meters wide, and 36 meters long, consists of red polyester membrane and is a giant movable space. In addition to collaborating with artists, Isozaki himself created the participatory installation Incubation Process (1962) as a response to the Metabolist movement in architecture. The work is composed of nails, wire, and plaster on a board with an aerial photograph of Tokyo pasted onto it. At the Milan Triennale in 1968, Isozaki presented the installation Electric Labyrinth. He also worked actively as an artist and curator, curating exhibitions including "MA – Space-Time in Japan." The exhibition at this year's festival will pay homage to Isozaki, who passed away in 2022, featuring drawings, architectural models, spatial photographs, interviews, and video footage to recount his involvement in art and architecture. Isozaki was the recipient of the 2019 Pritzker Prize.

<https://isozaki.co.jp/>

**3. Area in the vicinity of Nagi
MOCA, Nagi Town****Ryuichi Sakamoto + Shiro Takatani**

Ryuichi Sakamoto:
born in 1952 in Tokyo,
died in 2023,
Shiro Takatani:
born in 1963 in Nara,
lives and works in Kyoto

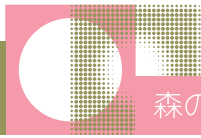


Ryuichi Sakamoto + Shiro Takatani, *TIME-déluge*, 2023
Installation view of the exhibition *Ryuichi Sakamoto: SOUND AND TIME* at M WOODS in Chengdu, China
Photo: Shiro Takatani

Musician Ryuichi Sakamoto and artist Shiro Takatani of the Dumb Type collective first collaborated in 1999, when they worked together on *LIFE*, Sakamoto's first opera. They joined hands for a great number of media art and installation works after that, and at the 2021 Holland Festival presented the world premiere of the stage production *TIME*, a piece they conceived and created together and for which Sakamoto wrote all the music. Pursuing the potential of non-linear forms of expression as intended by Sakamoto, they constructed a stage space by seamlessly connecting elements of installation, performance, sound, and visual art. Water flowing on the stage, and Mayumi Miyata crossing it while playing the sho symbolize nature (physis), while Min Tanaka's figure, in his failed attempts to overcome nature, stands for humanity (logos). The festival will feature the video and sound installation *TIME-déluge* (2023), which is based on *TIME* and will be displayed in the "Earth" room at the Nagi Museum Of Contemporary Art. Slow-motion images of flooding water captured by a high-speed camera are projected onto a 2-meter-high, 6-meter-wide LED video wall installed over a calm basin of water, and accompanied by the sound of a flute played by Rokurobyoe Fujita, the 11th head of the Fujita Noh flute school, who passed away in 2018. The tones will resonate off a string of stainless-steel wire arcs by Aiko Miyawaki installed in the same space, inviting the viewer to reflect on art and nature.

Ryuichi Sakamoto: <https://www.sitesakamoto.com/>

Shiro Takatani: <http://shiro.dumbtype.com/>

**3. Area in the vicinity of Nagi
MOCA, Nagi Town**

Leandro Erlich

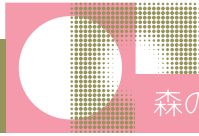
born in Argentina in
1973, lives and works
between Paris, Buenos
Aires and Montevideo



Leandro Erlich, *The Nature Above* (conceptual drawing), 2024

Raised in a family of architects—his father, aunt, and brother are also architects—Leandro Erlich creates visual and experiential spaces out of orthodox components, just like architects design spaces by combining elements such as walls, windows, and doors. His works, however, such as “Swimming Pool” (2004) in the collection of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, do not stop at the level of space, but have the power to transform the viewer’s perception of reality itself. This time, Erlich will present *The Nature Above*, a 300-square-meter forest installation inside the Spark Nagi indoor gateball field. A September 2023 visit to the venue, with its trussed ceiling and huge, pillarless interior, inspired Erlich to conceive of this work, which revisits the often-overlooked aspect of a natural landscape and emphasizes its importance. As viewers cross a suspension bridge surrounded by forest, they see some 300 trees suspended from the ceiling directly above their heads. Meanwhile, mirrors under the bridge invert the space, achieving a sense of floating in the air, and the primordial presence of nature emerges from a new perspective. Erlich’s works are in the collections of museums including the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, the Tate Modern in London, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa.

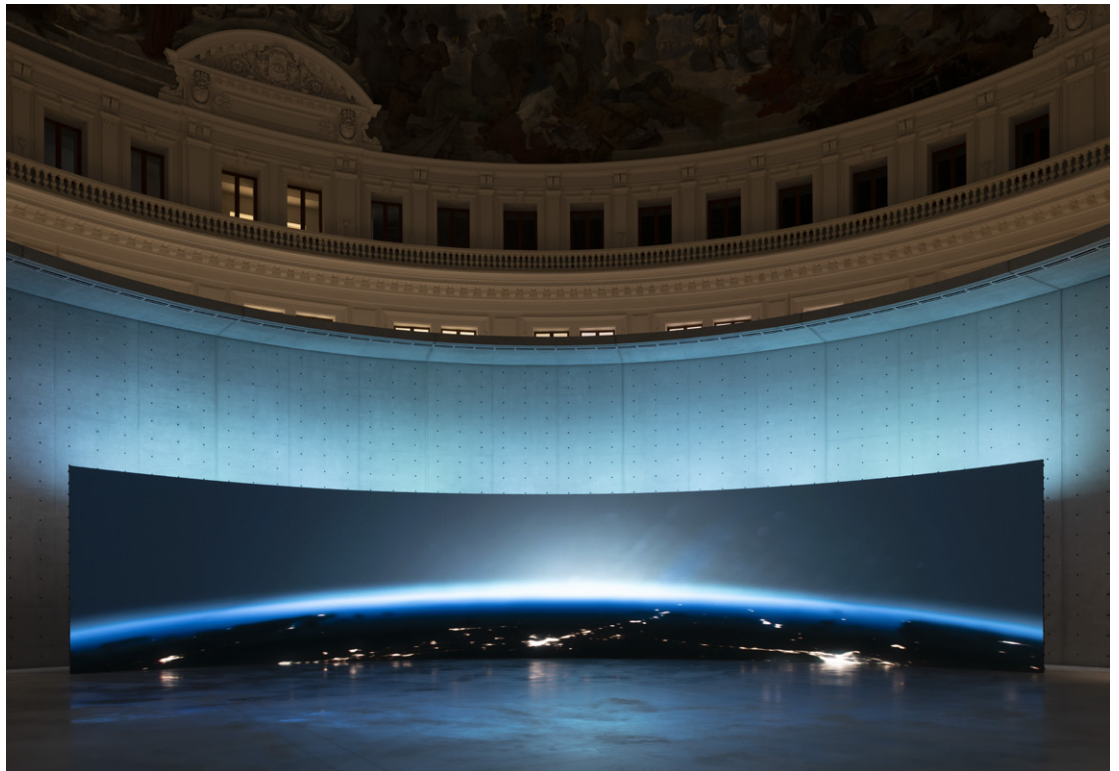
<https://www.leandroerlich.art/>



Anri Sala

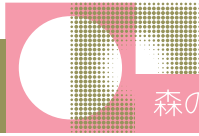
born in Albania in 1974,
lives and works in
France

4. Makido Cave, Ikurado Cave area, Niimi City



Anri Sala, *Time No Longer*, 2021
Computer-generated imagery, multichannel sound, dynamic lights 13 min
Courtesy of Marian Goodman Gallery
Produced with the support of [N.A!] Project
Credits line for the images : Exhibition views from "Time No Longer" at Bourse de Commerce, 2022
Courtesy of Anri Sala & Bourse de Commerce-Pinault Collection
© Anri Sala / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2022
Photo: Andrea Rossetti

Anri Sala constructs works that focus on the intersections of images, music, and space and explore the interplay between the visual and auditory senses. Many of his works are rooted in a historical or social context and are concerned with individual and collective memories and how they are experienced. His art is designed to evoke a sense of unease or to inspire new perceptions in the viewer through the subtle displacement or synchronization of sight and sound. Sala is also committed to exploring the physical and emotional aspects of music by working with instruments and collaborating with musicians. This time he will present an installation inside the Ikurado Cave, a 1,200-meter-long cavern with a 90-meter difference in elevation, and a designated Natural Monument of Okayama Prefecture. In this interactive work, the viewer is given a backpack to carry while making their way through the cave staged by Sala. Inside, sound and light elements react to the viewer, creating an immersive auditory and visual experience, as if you were exploring an unknown cavern. At the end of the road, a video work is displayed as the climax of the installation. This work offers a novel sensory experience in keeping with the time-space of a limestone cave formed by nature over the course of eons.



4. Makido Cave, Ikurado Cave area, Niimi City

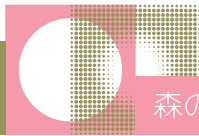
Keita Sugiura

born in Okayama in
1980, lives and works in
Okayama

Keita Sugiura is a photo artist. After graduating from high school, he went on to college with the intention of becoming a teacher, but an encounter with the Provoke movement of photographic expression, whose members once included Takuma Nakahira and Daido Moriyama, prompted him to take up photography. Sugiura is particularly fond of taking photographs in Okayama, where he was born and bred, and continues to explore the theme of connections between people and nature. He is particularly interested in the strange forms of nature created by humans, and is currently focusing on photographing the man-made forests in the mountains of the city of Niimi. His exhibition at the festival features six photographs from Niimi Mountains, a series depicting those mountains. Since distant antiquity, people have considered mountains sacred for their governance of the weather. Sugiura too has felt a close relationship with the mountains, but they have also been objects of fear and awe for him. The surprise he felt when he learned that the Niimi mountains were in fact covered by planted forests and had thus “lost” their divinity served as the impetus for his work. His photos of the peaks at night, their dense growth of trees, and the serenity that pervades the landscape, taken with a large-format camera, correspond to our idea of natural mountains. This nature, however, is the product of human intervention; a fact that encourages deep reflection on the impact of human activities on the global environment. Sugiura is the recipient of awards including the Okayama Prefecture Mr. I Award for Nurturing Emerging Artists (2009) and the Fukutake Cultural Encouragement Award (2010) from the Fukutake Education and Culture Foundation.



Keita Sugiura, *From Niimi Mountains*, 2017

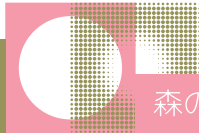
**4. Makido Cave, Ikurado Cave
area, Niimi City**

NINAGAWA Mika with EiM

Exhibition View of Mika Ninagawa Exhibition: *Eternity in a Moment* (TOKYO NODE, 2023–2024)

Mika Ninagawa is a photographer and film director. Her wide-ranging activities encompass work in fields including video and spatial installation as part of the EiM creative team, which she established together with data scientist Hiroaki Miyata and set designer ENZO. Through her work, Ninagawa has elevated the fleeting beauty of everyday life into something eternal. The world she creates leaves an unforgettable and powerful impression on the viewer with its strong contrasts and vivid colors. Dwelling in the Abyss, *Dreaming of the Other Side* is a large-scale installation work set in a limestone cave. It transcends the boundaries of reality through the process of entering another world, evoking emotions deep within those who experience it. The viewer is led into a space enveloped in blue light, and then swallowed up by a red expanse beyond it, filled with hundreds of spider lily flowers. The silence of this mysterious space at the far end of the installation resonates with the red flowers that in Buddhism symbolize the world beyond ours. Set in the Mankido cave that the writers Tekkan and Akiko Yosano described as “a bizarre sight; like a road to the underworld,” Ninagawa’s work adopts the limestone cavern shaped by nature as a gigantic stage to present a singular sensory experience in which the past and present, dreams and reality, intersect like on a journey through some nether realm. Going beyond mere visual beauty, the installation affords viewers an opportunity to reflect on their own existence and outlook on life and death.

<https://mikaninagawa.com/>



4. Makido Cave, Ikurado Cave area, Niimi City

Michael Lin

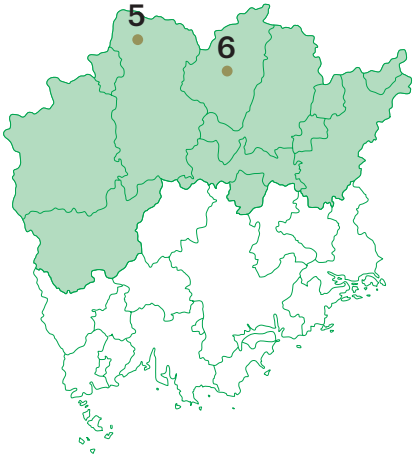
born in Tokyo in 1964,
lives and works in Taipei
and Brussels



Michael Lin, *Gathering*, 2021

Michael Lin turns away from painting as an object of contemplation toward one of painting as a bounded, physical space, one we can settle into and inhabit. He orchestrates monumental painting installations that re-conceptualize and reconfigure public spaces. Born in Japan and raised in Taiwan and the U.S., he returned to Taiwan in the early 1990s and began his artistic career there. By enlarging traditional Taiwanese textiles used in everyday life and painting them in public spaces, he has established a form of pictorial expression that transfers the meaning of these patterns. He arrived at this form after exploring his own identity and means of expression as an artist living in a different cultural sphere. Through research, Lin incorporates the traditions and cultural motifs of the region in which he works into his art, as he does with the characteristics of specific spaces and their relationship to a place. This time, Lin will present a work inspired by a book of illustrations on kusaki-zome plant dyeing (by Kichisaburo Kuriyama, second-generation artisan of the Kuriyama workshop), which was shown to him by the owner of a kimono store he visited while conducting research in the city of Niimi. The work will be placed in the atrium leading from the second to the third floor of the public library building serving as the venue and will remain in place after the festival, adding a new element to the building. Lin's works are on permanent display at several museums in Japan, including the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, the Towada Art Center, and ALTERNATIVE-STATE in Beppu.

<https://www.ateliermichaellin.com/projects>



5. Hiruzen area, Maniwa City

An area home to the GREENable HIRUZEN tourism and cultural facility, where sustainable values come to life.

**Katsukichi Higashi / Shiori Higashiyama
Rinko Kawauchi / Yoshihiko Ueda /
Kazuyo Sejima**



Katsuyama Historical Preservation District, etc (Sub - Venue)

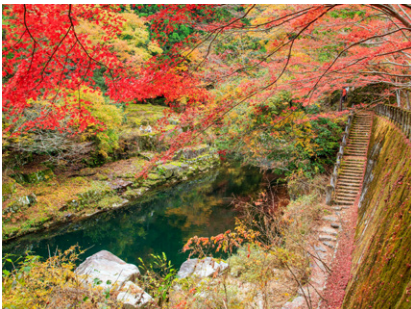


GREENable HIRUZEN

6. Okutsu area, Kagamino Town

A place of beautiful, crystal-clear water and spectacular seasonal foliage in autumn, with wondrous valley views.

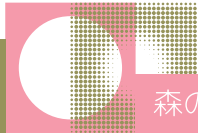
**Chien-Chung Liao
Jukan Tateisi**



Okutsukei Valley



Okutsu Promotion Center



5. Hiruzen area, Maniwa City

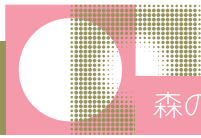
Katsukichi Higashi

born in Oita in 1908,
died in 2007

Katsukichi Higashi worked as a woodman from his teenage years. After retiring, he took up residence in a nursing home where, at the age of 83, he began painting in earnest. Over a period of 16 years until his death at 99, he made more than 100 watercolor paintings based on landscape photographs he saw in newspapers and magazines. His paintings mainly depict mountain and rural landscapes centering on the town of Yufuin, and are characterized by the unique perspective on nature he developed working in the forest for many long years. This year's festival will feature several of his works depicting forests, selected from his oeuvre of more than 100 paintings. The simple and plain forms of works such as "Oni Sugi (Demon Cedar)" and "Mt. Yufu from Kawanishi" capture the essence of forests and satoyama landscapes with their strong lines and clear composition. These canvases convey the artist's deep affection for and insight into the trees and landscapes depicted, as if he was looking at them from the inside. Higashi's works have been exhibited at venues including the Hita Civic Cultural Hall (in 2009) and the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (2001). Forest makes up some 80 percent of the municipality of Maniwa, where forestry has long been a significant industry. Higashi's work, which shows forests and humans coexisting peacefully, will be displayed at a venue built with cross-laminated timber from Maniwa. Katsukichi Higashi's works are held by the Yufuin Art Stock Collection.



Katsukichi Higashi, *Oni Sugi (Demon Cedar)*, 2004, Yufuin Art Stock Collection



5. Hiruzen area, Maniwa City

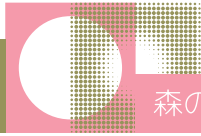
Shiori Higashiyama

born in Hyogo in 1990,
lives and works in Tokyo



Shiori Higashiyama, *Boundary line*, 2021

Shiori Higashiyama received her master's degree from Tokyo University of the Arts in 2016. She creates paintings mainly with colored pencils and watercolors on paper, drawing inspiration from personal lives and pursuits she finds in old letters and diaries collected at flea markets and auctions. In many of her works the picture is divided into a number of cells, with objects such as trees, flowers, and tents depicted repeatedly with detailed brush strokes in each one. By giving each cell a different perspective, she achieves a multilayered landscape in which different perspectives coexist, representing the coexistence of diverse entities. The three works on view at this year's festival are "Formation Chart" (2023) and "Boundary line" (2021), in which trees and other organic motifs are depicted in linearly divided cells, as well as "Dimensions" (2023), which departs from geometric organization by featuring a net-like, organic cell design. Colors including green, blue, and brown form the basis for her systematic images, in which various elements of greenery (forests) and cities are combined to achieve a fun and intellectual, puzzle-like impression. As if echoing the ever-changing exhibition space, composed of a series of triangular galleries, the works pose questions about the ambiguous nature of the fluid boundaries between individuals and between nature and humans, which have both internal and external effects.



5. Hiruzen area, Maniwa City

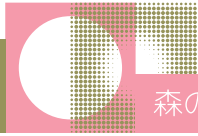
Rinko Kawauchi

born in Shiga in 1972,
lives and works in Chiba



Rinko Kawauchi, *Untitled*, 2024

Rinko Kawauchi's work is characterized by soft light and hues, consistently capturing the mystery, brilliance, fragility, and power of life. Her restrained, lyrical style conveys the minute and microscopic, elevating the everyday into something sublime by connecting each moment to eternity. In the unstable and ambiguous present, in which life and death coexist, Kawauchi's quietly empathetic depiction of how all things on Earth are connected makes for a powerful message. Beginning in 2023, Kawauchi visited Okayama Prefecture several times in preparation for this festival, taking photographs of places and phenomena such as the controlled burning of the Hiruzen Highlands in the municipality of Maniwa, fireflies in Hokubo, the Fudo waterfall in the village of Shinjo, and the Hadaka Matsuri ("Naked Festival") in the city of Okayama. She will be exhibiting 36 new works, including prints, works on lightweight pongee fabric, and video pieces. For the artist, seas of clouds, waterfalls, and the movement and energy of the people at the Hadaka Matsuri are "momentary sparkles of life" that embody the cosmology of the region. Kawauchi is the recipient of prizes including the 27th Kimura Ihei Photography Award in 2002 and the Outstanding Contribution to Photography Award at the Sony World Photography Awards in 2023. Her works are in the collections of museums including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, and the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art.



5. Hiruzen area, Maniwa City

Yoshihiko Ueda

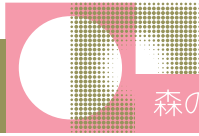
born in Hyogo in 1957,
lives and works in
Kanagawa

Yoshihiko Ueda is a photographer. He graduated from the Osaka Visual Arts Academy in 1979 and studied under Masanobu Fukuda (1939–2001) and Taiji Arita (1941–2011) from 1979 to 1981. He established his own practice in 1982, and has been a professor at the Department of Graphic Design, Tama Art University, since 2014. Ueda has contributed commercial work for clients including Suntory Oolong Tea, Muji, Shiseido, and Canon, and debuted as a film director in 2021 with *The Garden of Camellia*. He is noted for *Quinault* (1989), a series that captured the sacred Native American rainforest of Quinault, and the related *Forest: Impressions and Memories, 1989–2017* (2018), for which he shot the three prehistoric forests of Quinault, Yakushima, and Kasuga Taisha. By spending a large part of the past 30 years in interaction with forests, not least by taking photographs in them, Ueda has developed a unique perspective on capturing vegetation and light shining through trees. This time he photographed two types of woods in the northeast of Okayama Prefecture: the Wakasugi Natural Forest and an artificial forest. In the natural forest, trees grow freely and sunlight filters through the trees. In the artificial forest, the trees are arranged in rows and light shines directly into open spaces left by thinning. The former resembles the primeval forests that the artist has focused on in the past—“There were trees that appeared to welcome me as I roamed the mountains,” in Ueda’s words—while the latter shows traces of coexistence between humans and nature.



Yoshihiko Ueda, *Quinault, No. 1*, 1991

<https://www.yoshihikoueda.com/>



5. Hiruzen area, Maniwa City

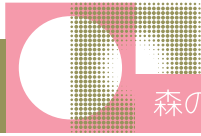
Kazuyo Sejima born in Ibaraki



Kazuyo Sejima, *Inujima Project* (Okayama, Japan) ,2010

Kazuyo Sejima received a degree in architecture from the Japan Women's University in 1981 and opened her own studio in 1987. In 1995, she founded SANAA together with Ryue Nishizawa, and in 2010 she was appointed director of the 12th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale. Sejima's father was from the former town of Katsuyama in what is now the city of Maniwa, and she has been familiar with the area from an early age. She now also serves as a tourism ambassador for the city. Guided by the theme of harmonious continuity between architecture and the natural environment, Sejima has developed an international oeuvre of architectural designs that interpret and reflect their natural and social environment from a distinctive perspective, including the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa. She also designs furniture, saying that she wants to "create chairs that look like animals, like living creatures, and design spaces where they join with humans and enjoy the place." The chairs she designed for this year's festival were made from wood provided by the local company Innosho Forestry and manufactured by Sada Kenbi Co. The chairs have distinctive legs, resembling those of a walking animal, and their seats, decorated with animal-like patterns, are designed to drain rainwater, making the chairs both decorative and functional. They will be placed in front of houses along the Katsuyama Kaido, a historic Edo-period (1603–1868) road where each house displays its own noren curtain, inviting visitors into a new landscape. Sejima is the recipient of awards including the Prize of the Architectural Institute of Japan*, the Venice Biennale Golden Lion Award*, the Pritzker Prize, France's Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Letters, and the Medal with Purple Ribbon. (*as SANAA)

<http://www.sanaa.co.jp/>



6.Okutsu area, Kagamino Town

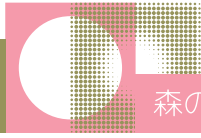
Chien-Chung Liao

born in Taipei in 1972,
lives and works in Taipei



Chien-Chung Liao, *Looking towards the Home*, 2023
Photo: mt.project

Chien-Chung Liao is a graduate of the Taipei National University of Arts. He applies mainly carpentry techniques, which he obtained by studying woodworking, to his artistic work. With exquisite craftsmanship, he vividly simulates machines and vehicles often seen in the city, exploring the ambiguous relationship between the simulations and the real objects. The audience experiences the process of realizing that what appears to be real is in fact an elaborate imitation. With this process, the artist hopes to stimulate people to rethink the environment they have taken for granted and to evoke viewers' personal stories and the social implications that underlie the subjects. The work he presents at this year's festival is a large sculpture some 6.5 meters in height, taking as its motif the crested kingfisher, a bird that symbolizes the lush nature of Kagamino. It will remain at the site after the end of the festival in the form of a public artwork. An inhabitant of mountain streams, the crested kingfisher is the official bird of the town of Kagamino and has been designated a Natural Monument of Okayama Prefecture. Its habitat extends across the town (the former village of Tomi). In addition, the artist has planted kobushi (*Magnolia kobus*) trees amidst his work, so that as the trees grow, the artwork will become progressively at one with nature. Liao's piece blends in with its surroundings while giving a voice to nature; a voice that should be heard and remembered by the residents of Kagamino as well as visitors to the town.



6.Okutsu area, Kagamino Town

Jukan Tateisi

born in Chicago in 1986,
lives and works in Tokyo
and London



Jukan Tateisi, *Abiotope*, 2019
© JukanTateisi

Jukan Tateisi holds a Master of Arts degree from the Royal College of Art in London. He produces works that take as their theme the dissolution and synthesis of dichotomic borders such as virtual and real, and natural and artificial. His main works include *Beach on Beach*, which superimposes beach layers; *To The Fog*, in which he delivers a personal monologue directed to fog through a public broadcasting system; and *In(to)stallation*, which brings the space for viewing art into a forest. His activities extend across several domains, such as music, film, performing arts, and food products. This time, Tateisi presents a sound installation inspired by a visit to the Okutsukei Valley in the town of Kagamino, where he heard the sound of the flowing river, rustling leaves, and animals and insects chirping amidst the magnificent nature. In the forest, famed for its autumn foliage, stands an object traced from the rocks of the river. The viewer is reflected in its mirrored part along with the scenery of the Okutsukei Valley. By listening to the sounds coming from within the world reflected in the mirror, the viewer is reminded of the harmony of nature, nurtured since time immemorial. And by looking objectively at their own reflection in the mirror, they are reminded that they too are living alongside beautiful nature, their surroundings, and other people.



Parfait

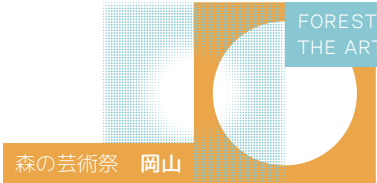


Pâtissier
Naritoshi Suzuka

Okayama native Suzuka led the Japanese team that won first prize at the 18th La Coupe du Monde de la Pâtisserie (World Pastry Cup), held in Lyon, France in January 2023.



Logo Design



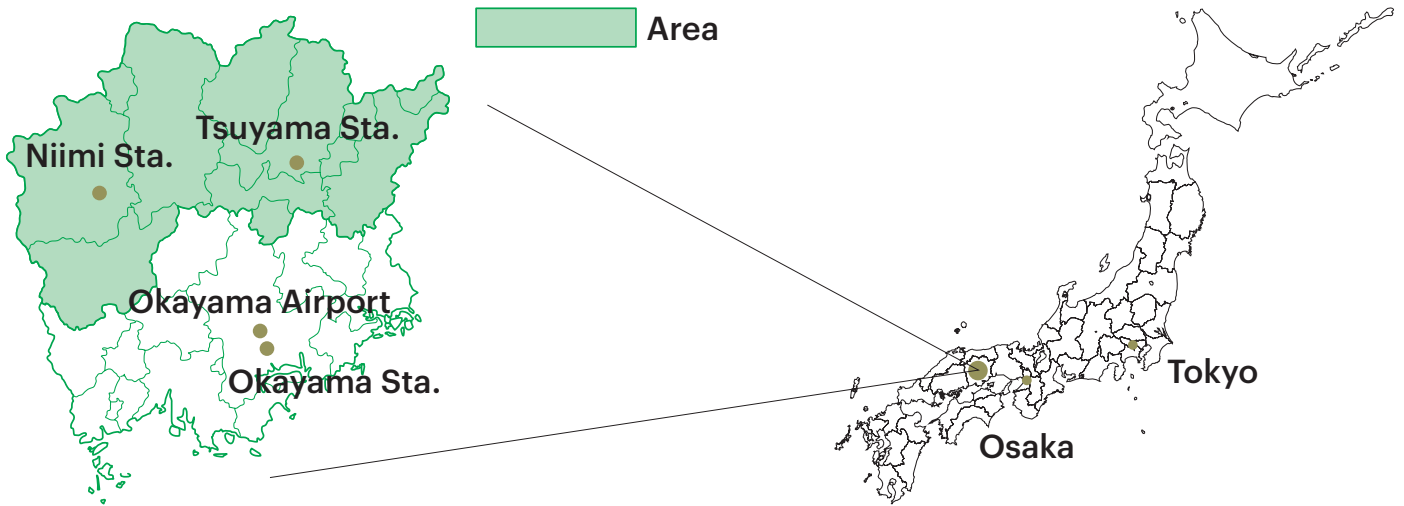
Designer: Barnbrook Studio (UK)

The visual identity of the festival is inspired by the duality of light and shadow. The delicate fabrics of the local Hinoki studio influenced a series of visual meshes that are used with fresh, contemporary colours creating a feeling of lightness and transparency. These are combined with photography of Okayama’s nature to represent the festival’s symbiotic relationship with the landscape.

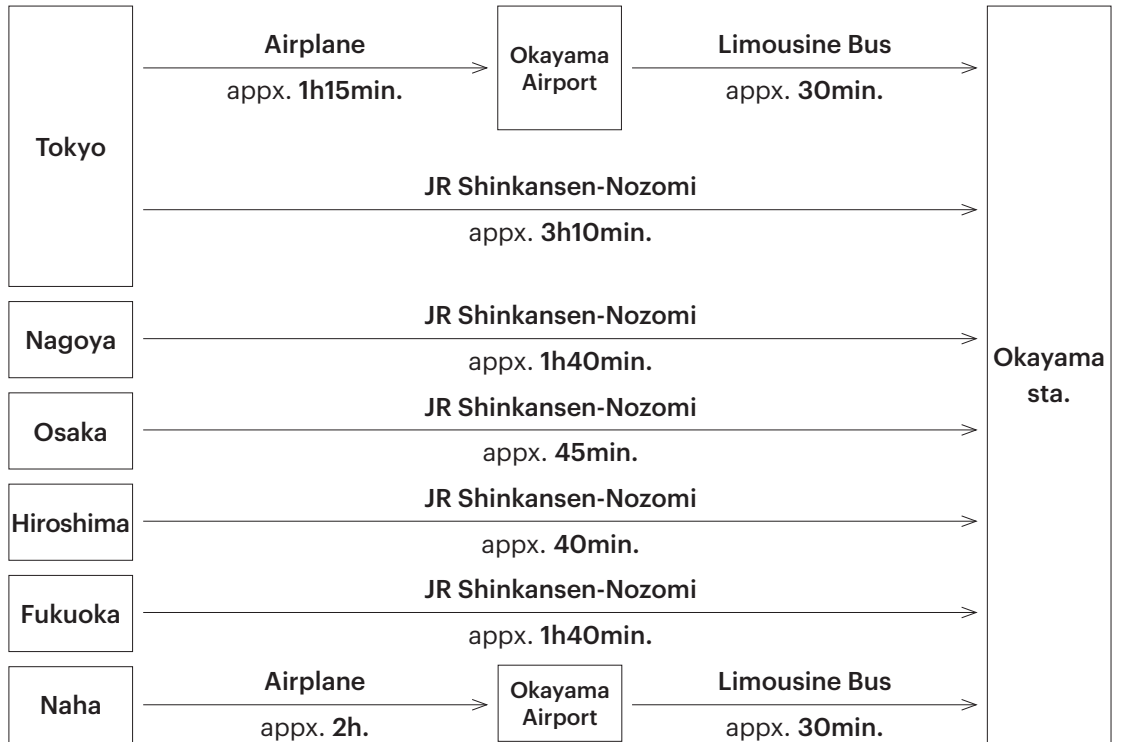
Concept

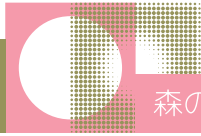
The visual identity of the festival is inspired by the duality of light and shadow. The delicate fabrics of the local Hinoki studio influenced a series of visual meshes that are used with fresh, contemporary colours creating a feeling of lightness and transparency. These are combined with photography of Okayama’s nature to represent the festival’s symbiotic relationship with the landscape.

Access

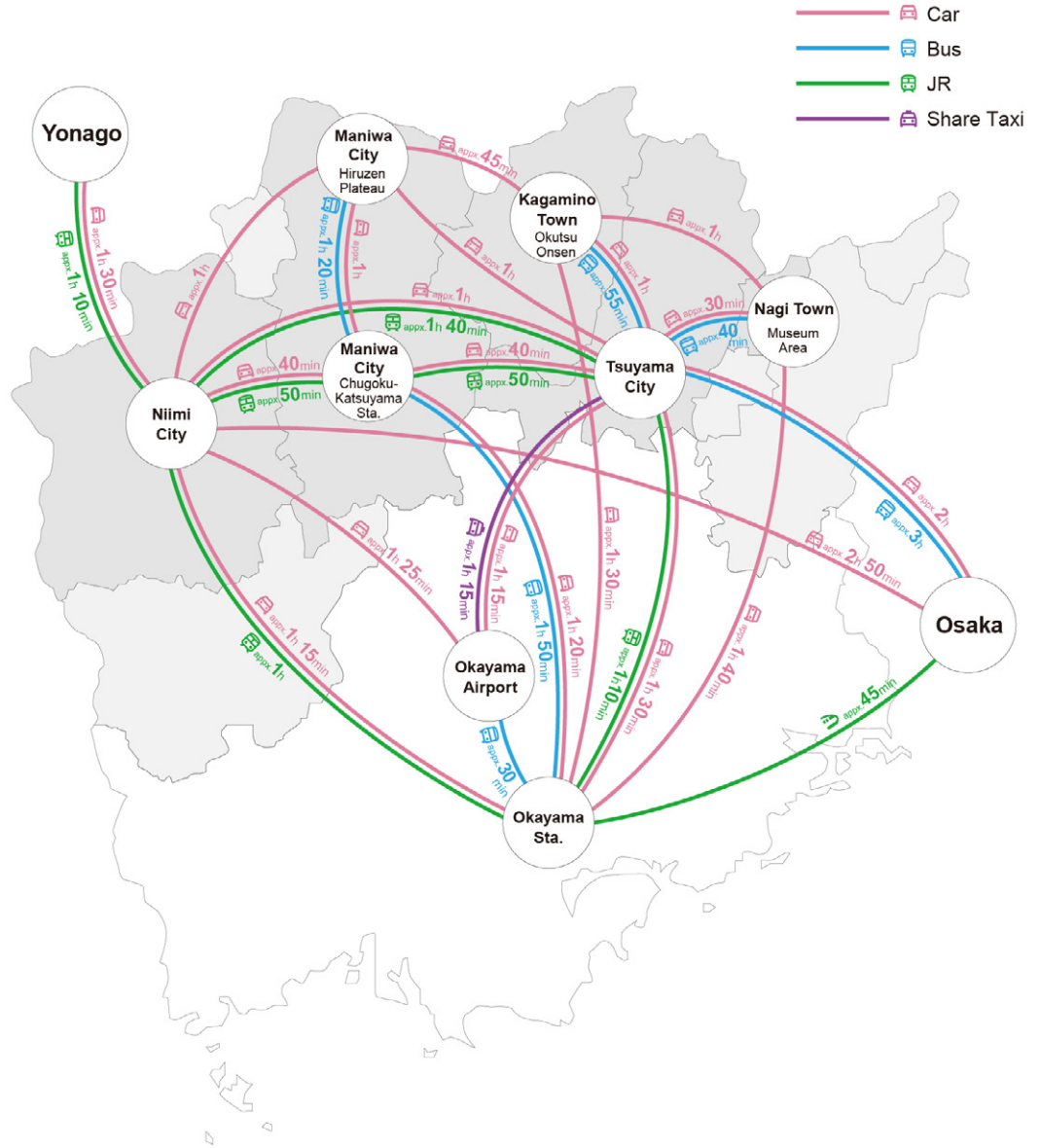


from Major Cities
to Okayama





to Each Areas





Sales Period

Advance sales

June 7 (Fri.) – September 27 (Fri.)

Day-of sales

September 28 (Sat.) – November 24 (Sun.)



*Please make sure to confirm admission fees for each facility in advance.

*Admission is free for those with a physical disability certificate, medical rehabilitation handbook, mental disability certificate, or documents proving that they have an intractable disease, and for one caregiver. (The disability certificate application MIRAIRI ID can also be presented to receive this exemption.)

*Tickets are not necessary to view artwork installed in public places.

*Visitors of high school age or younger, or who have disabilities, etc., may still be required to pay for single-venue tickets for some facilities with admission fees.

*Tickets cannot be refunded or reissued after purchase.



Press Contact

For details on tours and other matters, please contact us at:
info@yna.tokyo

Press release provided by the Office of the Executive Committee,
Forest Festival of the Arts Okayama: Clear-skies Country