

The 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia The Japan Pavilion to Exhibit Works by Ei Arakawa-Nash

The Japan Foundation (JF) will organize the Japan Pavilion exhibition at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, to be held in Venice, Italy, from May to November 2026. Following the selection process by the International Exhibition Project Committee, we are pleased to announce that Ei Arakawa-Nash has been selected as the artist to represent Japan. Information regarding the curator will be announced at a later date, and we are considering public events, such as discussions with the artist, after the decision has been made.

*Note that “Arakawa-Nash” is a hyphenated family name, so please always refer to the artist as “Arakawa-Nash” and not just “Arakawa.”

■ Outline of the Japan Pavilion for the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Exhibition period: Saturday, May 9 – Sunday, November 22, 2026

Venue: The Japan Pavilion at Giardini di Castello

Artist: Ei Arakawa-Nash

Organizer/Commissioner: The Japan Foundation

Japan Pavilion official website: <https://venezia-biennale-japan.jpf.go.jp/e/>

■ Outline of the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

Exhibition period: Saturday, May 9 – Sunday, November 22, 2026

Venue: Giardini di Castello, Arsenale, etc.

Director: Koyo Kouoh (Executive Director/Chief Curator, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa)

Theme: To be announced (expected on May 20)

Press inquiries:

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■ Artist Profile



Photo: Ricardo Nagaoka

Born in 1977 in Fukushima, Japan.

Japanese American queer performance artist based in Los Angeles.

By continuously working with others, he destabilizes the subjective “I.” His group performances emphasize the ever-present precarity of art objects and artist subjectivities. He is a professor in the Graduate Art program at ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, Los Angeles.

He recently participated in exhibitions at; Haus der Kunst (Munich, 2025), National Art Center, Tokyo (2024), CHAT - Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile (Hong Kong, 2024), Tokyo Photographic Art Museum (2024), Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg (2023), Museion Bozen (Bolzano, 2023), Artists Space (New York, 2021), Tate Modern (London, 2021), Musée d’Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean (Luxembourg, 2021), Honolulu Biennial (2019).

■ Artist Message

I thought I would never have a chance to represent Japan at the Venice Biennale after I gave up my Japanese nationality a few years ago. I am excited about this opportunity to converse with historical performances at the Biennale, such as Kusama’s guerrilla performance in 1966 or the space Rei Naito presented in 1997.

Since the pandemic, the selection process for the Japan Pavilion has drastically changed. Now, the artist chooses a curator and runs around for fundraising. This task of representing the country is getting more complicated. But from a different perspective, this means the artist has more agency to turn their ideas into a show. Like Dumb Type and Yuko Mohri, the previous artists, I want to bring something new and open in terms of the administration and history of exhibition-making at the Japan Pavilion.

Now, my husband and I busily raise two children who are new members of the Asian diasporic community in Los Angeles. Recently, we re-watched the 1962 film “Being Two Isn’t Easy,” written by Natto Wada. Her script will be a reference point for my performative engagement at the Pavilion in 2026.

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[About the selection process]

The International Exhibition Committee, composed of six members appointed by the Japan Foundation (listed below in 1), initially narrowed down multiple artists nominated by 26 recommenders from both within and outside Japan to seven candidates/groups (listed below in 2). Each candidate was requested to confirm their potential participation and submit a basic exhibition plan. After evaluating the individual plans during the second selection meeting, Ei Arakawa-Nash was ultimately selected.

*Commentary on the selection process will be published on JF's website at a later date.

<https://www.jpjf.go.jp/e/project/culture/exhibit/international/venezia-biennale/art/>

1. International Exhibition Committee members (in alphabetical order)

Mami Kataoka, Director, Mori Art Museum

Mika Kuraya, Director, Yokohama Museum of Art

Yusuke Minami, Former Director, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art

Shinobu Nomura, Senior Curator, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery

Akira Tatehata, Director, Museum of Modern Art, Saitama

Meruro Washida, Director, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

2. Final candidates (in alphabetical order)

Ei Arakawa-Nash

Kei Imazu and Bagus Pandega
mé

Meiro Koizumi

Lieko Shiga (withdrew)

Shimabuku

Chikako Yamashiro

[About the Venice Biennale (La Biennale di Venezia)]

The Venice Biennale is an art festival held in various locations across the island city of Venice, Italy.

Since the first art exhibition was held in 1895, it has marked nearly 130 years of history. In recent years, international art festivals focused on fine arts have taken place in various parts of the world, but the Venice Biennale is the most renowned and has served as a model for these events. The term "Biennale" is Italian for "once every two years," and many similar art festivals are called "Biennale" or "Triennale" (once every three years), following the example set by the Venice Biennale. Currently, it includes independent components such as art exhibitions, architecture exhibitions, music festivals, film festivals, and theater festivals, but the art exhibition in particular draws attention from the global art world as a venue for surveying contemporary art trends and as one of the few international exhibitions that adopts a national participation format.

Japan made its first official participation in 1952, and following the completion of the Japan Pavilion in 1956, has continued to participate in every exhibition to date. The Japan Foundation has been organizing

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the Japan Pavilion exhibition since 1976. For information about the artists who have represented Japan at the Japan Pavilion in the past, please refer to the archive site. Yayoi Kusama exhibited in 1993. ART | The Japan Pavilion Official Website – La Biennale di Venezia : <https://venezia-biennale-japan.jp/e/art>

[About the Commissioner]

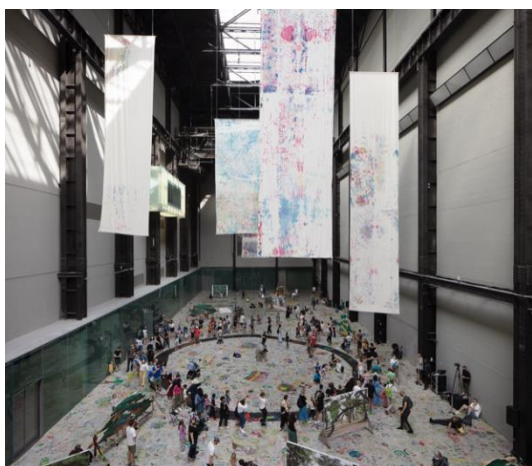
The Japan Foundation (JF), the organizer and commissioner of the Japan Pavilion for the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, is Japan's only institution dedicated to carrying out comprehensive international cultural exchange programs across the globe. The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 as a special legal entity supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and reorganized as an incorporated administrative agency on October 1, 2003. With 26 overseas offices in 25 countries, the Japan Foundation's mission is "to cultivate friendship and ties between Japan and the world." It creates opportunities for people-to-people exchanges through various projects and information services to deepen mutual understanding between the people of Japan and other countries.

■ Images for press use of the Japan Pavilion at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

All the images in this article is available for public relations use.

For inquiries, please contact Ms. Kumakura or Mr. Fukushima at press@jpf.go.jp.

Images can only be used along with press articles about the Japan Pavilion for the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia.



Ei Arakawa, *Mega Please Draw Freely*, 2021
installation/performance view
Tate Modern, London, Photo: Brotherton-Lock
Courtesy of the artist



Ei Arakawa-Nash, *Plush Subjectivity*, 2024
performance view
Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile, Hong Kong,
Photo: Spark Photography
Courtesy of the artist

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Ei Arakawa-Nash, *LGBTQIA+ Baby Shower Event*, 2024
performance view
The National Art Center, Tokyo, Photo: Shu Nakagawa
Courtesy of the artists and The National Art Center, Tokyo



Ei Arakawa-Nash, *Panel (Ellsworth Kelly, Spectrum I, 1953)*, 2024
installation/performance view
The National Art Center, Tokyo, Photo: Shu Nakagawa
Courtesy of the artists and The National Art Center,



Ei Arakawa-Nash, *Paintings Are Popstars*, 2024
installation view
The National Art Center, Tokyo, Photo: Shu Nakagawa
Courtesy of the artists and The National Art Center, Tokyo



Ei Arakawa, *Performance People*, 2018
Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf
Photo: Katja Illner,
Courtesy of the artist

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Ei Arakawa, 2021
installation view at Post-Capital,
The Grand Duke Jean Museum of Modern Art,
Luxembourg
Photo: Rémi Villaggi, Courtesy of the artist



Ei Arakawa, *See Weeds*, 2011
installation/performance view
Les Abattoirs, Toulouse, Photo: Marc Boyer
Courtesy of the artists

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