

The 61st (2026) International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, The Japan Pavilion by Ei Arakawa-Nash to be co-curated by HORIKAWA Lisa and TAKAHASHI Mizuki



With Isamu Noguchi's *Octetra* at Kodomonokuni (Children's Land), Yokohama, Japan; Photo: Hako Hosokawa

As announced in [our previous release \(4/24\)](#), the artist Ei Arakawa-Nash has been selected to exhibit in the Japan Pavilion at The 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia – organized by the Japan Foundation (JF). Following this announcement, we are pleased to announce that HORIKAWA Lisa and TAKAHASHI Mizuki will co-curate the exhibition, following their nomination by the artist.

[The International Exhibition Project Committee commented](#) that Arakawa-Nash's exhibition plan for the Japan Pavilion “features ‘performances’ by the artist's young twins as well as many baby dolls” and is “a sharp, humorous artistic critique based on an awareness of issues faced by LGBTQ people and the Japanese diaspora.”

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Japan Pavilion in 2026, for the first time, the Pavilion will feature a team composed of an artist and curators who are based outside Japan. We look forward to the dynamic synergy and creative chemistry born from the diverse perspectives of this collective.

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

Co-curators: HORIKAWA Lisa, National Gallery Singapore, Senior Curator and Director (Curatorial & Collections)

TAKAHASHI Mizuki, Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile, Hong Kong, Executive Director and Chief Curator

Organizer/Commissioner: The Japan Foundation

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

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■ Co-Curators' Biographies



Photo: Hako Hosokawa

HORIKAWA Lisa

Horikawa Lisa is Senior Curator and Director (Curatorial & Collections) at the National Gallery Singapore, overseeing the strategic development of collections including artworks and archives. Her current research interest is on the comparative examination of intersecting modernisms in Southeast Asia, East Asia and beyond, particularly in the 1930s to 1940s. She was a lead curator of *Between Declarations and Dreams: Art of Southeast Asia since the 19th century* (2015), *(Re)Collect: The Making of Our Collection* (2018) and co-curated *Reframing modernism: Painting from Southeast Asia, Europe and Beyond* (2016) and *City of Others: Asian Artists in Paris 1920s-1940s* (2025). Prior to joining the Gallery, she was curator at Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan from 2003 to 2012 and a part of the Long March Project's curatorial team in Beijing from 2002-2003.



Photo: Hako Hosokawa

TAKAHASHI Mizuki

Takahashi Mizuki is Executive Director and Chief Curator, Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile (CHAT) in Hong Kong, taking charge of supervising the museum's institutional direction, organisation structure and curatorial programmes since 2020. From 2017 to 2020, as co-director, she was in charge of setting CHAT's mission, vision, and artistic direction and management as well as executing exhibition, co-learning and public programmes. In Japan, she worked for Mori Museum Project Office (1999-2003), Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito (2003-2016). She has curated numerous exhibition in and outside Japan including at CHAT, "Jakkai Siributr: Everybody Wanna Be Happy," 2023, "Yee I-Lann: Until We Hug Again," 2021, "Sudō Reiko: Making NUNO Textiles," 2019, "Unfolding: Fabric of Our Life," 2019, at the Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito, "Tadasu Takamine's COOL JAPAN," 2012, "8 Days : Beuys in Japan," 2009.

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■ Message from the Artist and Co-Curators

Comments by Ei Arakawa-Nash

I am happy to engage in dense communication with these two curators, just when my 6-month-old twins are developing their nascent sense of selves. I am sure that my twins feel my joy as well. The time difference between four to five cities is already a daunting juggling act, but with all the support we will receive, we hope to make the 2026 Japan Pavilion a uniquely generative and thriving exhibition!

Comments by HORIKAWA Lisa

Since coming to Singapore 13 years ago from Japan, I have been tracing the implicated relationship between art, modernism and colonialism in Southeast Asia and beyond, including Japan. My friends in Japan sometimes ask me: "how long do you plan to be in Singapore?" I tell them I don't intend to return in the foreseeable future, because there is still so much to do, and perhaps I am enabled to find such potential precisely because I am in Singapore. For Venice, Arakawa-Nash Ei invited me to imagine the past, present and future of the "Japanese diaspora"—a topic that carries personal urgency for me. The history of diaspora around Japan has often been written in heavy terms: *kimin* (discarding of people), *shokumin* (colonist) or *imin* (immigrant/emigrant). Arakawa-Nash Ei has a particular way of transcending borders through humour in his work, by opening himself up to others, involving and affecting the subjectivities of both self and other. While I feel the weight of responsibility regarding the task ahead, I am excited to see how his approach will unfold on our imaginings of "diaspora," and how the three of us, all standing on the periphery of Japan, can contribute to the history of the Japan Pavilion in Venice.

Comments by TAKAHASHI Mizuki

It has been nine years since I started working in the museum business as an immigrant and foreign worker in Hong Kong. In this city, I have been curating exhibitions with Asian contemporary artists, addressing the history, politics, tradition, technique, gender and labour of issues around textiles for the heritage museum housed in a renovated spinning factory building. While working and living here, I am often made aware of my Japanese identity in various daily aspects, whilst recalling the memory that my senior colleague in my previous workplace in Japan joked at me by saying "You are a Gaijin (foreigner), TAKAHASHI san!". I am still puzzled about what he really meant. Anyhow, even minor events have made me ponder what is Japanese, what is Japan, and what is a nation or home.

For me, Ei Arakawa-Nash is an artist who sincerely has been pursuing and practicing the avant-garde in contemporary art by relating it with his life. I also reckon that making his work requires a lot of aid, help, and support from various people. In other words, creating his exhibition is like co-raising a baby in society by supporting each other. I feel a great joy and responsibility to participate in this challenging yet exciting co-parenting process with my co-curator, Horikawa Lisa, Ei's collaborators, and the visitors of the Japan Pavilion in the Venice Biennale.

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■Information

【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.

Produced by: La Biennale di Venezia Foundation

Theme: In Minor Keys

In October 2024, the Venice Biennale Foundation appointed Koyo Kouoh—Executive Director and Chief Curator of the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa—as Artistic Director of the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. Ms. Kouoh had commenced preparations for the exhibition; however, she passed away unexpectedly in May 2025.

With the full support of Ms. Kouoh's family, the Foundation has announced that the 61st edition will be presented in accordance with the overarching title, curatorial vision, and team of experts selected by Ms. Kouoh.

For further information, please visit:

<https://www.labiennale.org/en/news/biennale-arte-2026-minor-keys>

【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 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.

【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.

■Press images

Images for press use of the Japan Pavilion at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia
All the images in this article are 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

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