

After a preliminary meeting, the six members of Japan Foundation's Advisory Committee on International Art Exhibitions held two screening meetings to select an artist. They made their selection from the list of candidates produced by twenty-four Japanese and international nominators commissioned by the Japan Foundation. The Japan Foundation's request was for either an individual artist or an established collective of artists, and for the artist (or collective) to be an appropriate representation of trends in contemporary art in Japan. Having a certain amount of international experience would also be desirable. This policy fundamentally adhered to the selection policy for earlier Biennales.

Prior to the screening meetings, the advisory committee members were able to view the list and the nominators' comments giving the reasons for their nominations. The first screening meeting began with the committee members each stating their overview, after which they worked step by step to narrow down the list. This process of discussion and deliberation eventually produced a list of five candidates. Each of the five candidates would then be approached to confirm that they would accept the appointment if selected, and they were each requested to submit a basic exhibition plan.

One of the candidates was unable to schedule sufficient time to produce a plan, so the second screening meeting examined the four plans that had been submitted. After critiquing each of the plans separately, the committee commenced discussions to deliberate on the plans as a whole, including direct comparisons. The discussion included whether a plan would stand up to assessment in an international context, whether it sufficiently asserted the candidate's identity as an artist, whether an effective exhibition would be feasible in the Japan Pavilion's exhibition space, and whether realizing the plan would actually be practicable. There were some areas where opinions were divided, and a number of votes were taken before the committee eventually made a majority decision to select Yuko Mohri.

Mohri's plan involves plugging electrodes directly into decomposing fruit in order to convert changes in the water content of the fruit into electrical values that could be used to generate sounds and lights, creating constantly changing acoustic sculptures. The merging of vegetable life with electrical technology is highly relevant to issues that are of growing concern to us all today. In addition, as the artist points out, the process through which fruit emits sweet rotting smells as it steadily reverts to earth represents the cycle of life and death. Moreover, her plan can also be seen as a sharply critical comment on environmental issues. One of the distinctive features of the Japan Pavilion is the opening that passes through the structure from the ceiling to the partly-underground pilotis area. Yuko Mohri's plan is unprecedented in the bold and dynamic use that it makes of that feature.

Akira Tatehata

(listed in alphabetical order, without honorifics)

●Finalists

Sachiko Kazama
Tomoko Konoike
Yuko Mohri
Aya Momose
Lieko Shiga *

\*Ms. Shiga declined to be a candidate because the selection period coincided with the opening of another exhibition, making it difficult for her to consider the Japan Pavilion exhibition proposal.

●Japan Foundation's Advisory Committee on International Art Exhibitions

Mami Kataoka
Toru Matsumoto
Yusuke Minami
Shino Nomura
Akira Tatehata
Meruro Washida

●Nominators

Natsumi Araki
Osamu Fukunaga
Kenjiro Hosaka
Shihoko Iida
Gregor Jansen
Yukie Kamiya
Tadashi Kanai
Michiko Kasahara
Reuben Keehan
Eriko Kimura
Mika Kuraya
Seiha Kurosawa

Akiko Miki
Yuri Mitsuda
Aomi Okabe
Eriko Osaka
Gabriel Ritter
Noi Sawaragi
Ryo Sawayama
Atsuhiko Shima
Hirokazu Tokuyama
Yuka Uematsu
Tomoko Yabumae
Junya Yamamine