

Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

MOT Annual 2023

Synergies, or between creation and generation

Sat. 2 December – Sun. 3 March, 2024

The MOT Annual is a series of group exhibitions that began in 1999, highlighting diverse aspects of contemporary art in order to elicit inquiry and discussion. The 19th edition of this exhibition will examine the relationship between the theme of “creation” through the imagination and handiwork of artists, and the “generation” that automatically comes into being, in a kind of reflection on the state of NFTs, artificial intelligence, artificial life, and life science, which have been a talking point in society in recent years.

Media art and the domain of media arts, which started gaining widespread recognition among the general public around the 1990s, continue to expand, and are currently in a transitional stage of reappraisal and historicization through the processes of restoration and archiving. In addition, among the works that come together at international exhibitions and competitions, many works that remind us of big data, AI, machine learning, A-Life, and group intelligence can be seen. While there are certainly some works that are realized through delicate handiwork, the notion of contemporary information processing is also at the root of these works. This exhibition presents approximately 50 works and materials by 11 artists, focusing on their diverse attempts to capture our imagination more than ever before by looking at both creation and generation, and externalizing their ideas through a formative vocabulary while using technology.

With the spread of programming education since 2020, platforms for artistic expression continue to transform for the next generation. At this exhibition, we will develop projects and events that are not limited to real, actual exhibitions, but also take into consideration the metaverse and spatial archives that will expand digitally. We hope that this exhibition will provide an opportunity to rethink the notions of creation and generation, and analog and digital, which have tended to be viewed as opposites, and to look beyond them towards the kinds of synergies that can be created between the two, thereby questioning the breadth and extent of our perception.

Three highlights of the exhibition

1 – New works: original installations for this exhibition

New works and installations for this exhibition by young artists between the ages of 10 and 30's who are active in the fields of creation and generation will be exhibited (for details, please refer to “2 – Development” and “Participating Artists and Works”). The showcase is designed to give viewers a sense of the expansiveness and flow of this field of artistic expression that is not limited to pursuing the “cutting edge” while using technology.

2 – Development: cross-disciplinary works that entice and appeal

In addition to real, actual exhibits such as installations, a diverse group of works in various formats will be exhibited, including ① drawings developed as NFTs that demonstrate the potential of digital technology; ② multilayered forms of artistic expression that exist on a real-time network and move between the museum's exhibition spaces; ③ works that exist in the space between handiwork and digital technology; ④ extensions of our perception, body, and real space, and a variety of other experimental attempts at transcendence. In addition, a small exhibition of archival materials (in the second floor exhibition galleries) will introduce the activities of pioneering art collectives that developed practices with a view “between creation and generation” during the prewar and postwar periods and up until the present day.

3 – Collaboration: Various events and related programs

In addition to the exhibiting artists, researchers specializing in VR, space, and other fields will be invited as guests for panel discussions to learn about the origins of unexpected ideas and specialized fields in an easily understandable manner. In addition, “Deviation Game” presentation will be held to explore the mutual evolution of AI and humans through games in which they compete against each other.

Related programs: MOT Annual extra

During the exhibition period, MOT Annual extra (from December 9, Exhibition Gallery B2F, admission free) will be held to introduce ongoing projects being developed on ever-changing platforms of artistic expression with the support of outside organizations (for details, please refer to “Related Programs” below).

Artists and exhibited works

Minami Arai

Born in 1990. With the spread of digital technology, the act of what it means to “write” has changed, and Arai has focused on handwritten manuscripts that represent the act of writing, developing works in which she sculpts the handwriting of literary figures like Osamu Dazai or Soseki Natsume that has been replaced by printed type, in the order in which they were written, using wire. At this exhibition, Arai showcases her new works as well as the back-and-forth between digital and manual methods inherent in herself.



1. Minami Arai, *Osamu Dazai “No longer Human”*, 2012
Photo: Sho Sato

(euglena)

Born in 1993 in Japan to Chinese-Thai and Peruvian-Japanese parents, (euglena) lives and works in Tokyo. Based on the concept of “reaffirming oneself in innocence,” she creates interactive works constructed with dandelion fluff that are not artificially powered, and also works on the themes of psychology and the body. For this exhibition, she invites viewers to experience a kind of inner time by visualizing the flow of time that departs from the cycles of technology, including recent works using cotton wool that did not turn into seeds.



3. (euglena), *watage20210101 “aloof6”*, 2021

Akinori Goto

Born in 1984. Goto has been presenting a series of works that shuttle between primitive visual media and contemporary technology, focusing on the notions of movement, time, invisible phenomena, and the relationship between the physical and the digital. This exhibition will also include a large outdoor sculpture that transforms along with the light by day and night.



2. Akinori Goto, *Heading*, 2022

Unexistence Gallery: Iku Harada / Naoya Hirata / Asako Fujikura / yang02

An entrance to the “Unexistence Gallery,” which is always present on the network and can be viewed from anywhere, appears in the exhibition space where people confront the works. These artists who tackle the theme of “dimensional reciprocity” with different approaches will present various “places of meaning” of “new existence” that transcend the substantial.



4. Unexistence Gallery: Iku Harada / Naoya Hirata / Asako Fujikura / yang02, *New Existentialism*, 2021-

yang02

Born in 1984. yang02 has been highly acclaimed both in Japan and abroad for his works that question the relationship between humans and technology, the nature of the body and the subjectivity of artistic expression, and autonomous devices in which information technology replaces human action. For this exhibition, he will present a series of new works focusing on the theme of power generation, including an installation of a large-scale gravity generator.



5. yang02, *TEFCO vol.1~The Dawn of Gravity Generator~*, 2023 Photo: Rakutaro Ogiwara

So Kanno+Akihiro Kato+Takmi Watanuki

Following the digital artificial life NFT Robot Kazokutchi (2022), which was highly acclaimed both in Japan and abroad for its humorous questioning of what new technology might mean in society, this exhibition will present a story that reexamines contemporary society through the unique “Sentai” (Power Rangers) series of cleaning robots, which are the most common robots in regular homes.



7. So Kanno+Akihiro Kato+Takmi Watanuki, *Kazokutchi*, 2022 Photo: Ioto Yamaguchi

Shin Hanagata

Born in 1995. Hanagata is a Japanese artist who has been searching for a new body through technology in an accelerating capitalist society, and has been developing practices and performances about the body that is becoming less “I” and less “human,” while shuttling back and forth between self and other, and between human and non-human. At this exhibition, he will exhibit an attempt to reconstruct human movement, shifting the position of vision by attaching a camera and head-mounted display to the body.



6. Shin Hanagata, *still human*, 2021-

Zombie Zoo Keeper

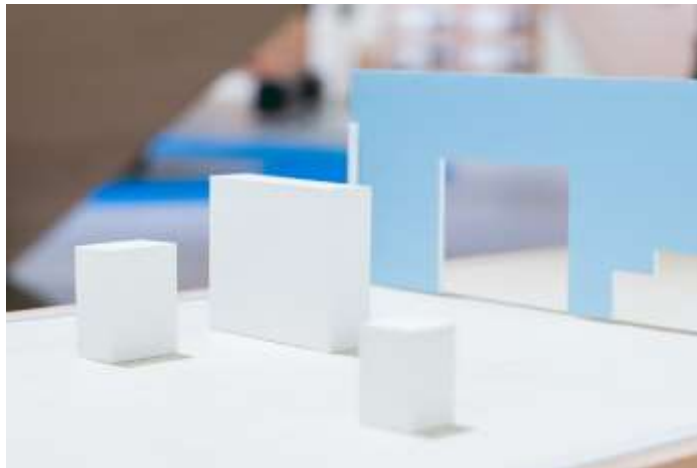
Born in 2012, he started the NFT art project “Zombie Zoo” (2021) with his mother as a summer project during his vacation at the age of 8, and created numerous “zombie x animal” dot paintings using a tablet app. He soon attracted the attention of art collectors and worldwide fame as an NFT artist. In addition to his international expansion into music videos and games, this exhibition will also showcase a number of new works.



8. Zombie Zoo Keeper, *Zombie Zoo #0082 / #0123 / #0011 / #0081 / #0007 / #0012 / #0059 / #0035*, 2021 ©Fictionera

Masaya Ishikawa / Hiroshi Sugihara / Hiroaki Nakaji / Campbell Argenzio / Shohei Takei

These creators, active in a diverse range of fields, managed to create a device reminiscent of computer graphics and time-lapse photography, consisting of three squares that move freely through a gate approaching on a conveyor, and one square that moves at a brisk clip in accordance with a gate that is visible only on the animation. For this exhibition, the highly acclaimed work *The Square Makes it Through*, which made us aware of the existence of invisible “rules,” will be exhibited in a more spatial manner.



9. Masaya Ishikawa / Hiroshi Sugihara / Hiroaki Nakaji / Campbell Argenzio / Shohei Takei, *The Square Makes it Through*, 2021
Photo: Takako Imoto

Etsuko Ichihara

Born in 1988. Ichihara continues to decipher Japanese culture, customs, and beliefs from her own unique perspective, and present new discoveries through the use of technology. She has received international awards and attention for her work, which is widely enjoyed for its outlandish ideas and unique designs based on Japanese culture, and has also participated in government projects. For this exhibition, she will present a new work about enjoying the gastronomic delights of a dystopian age.



10. Etsuko Ichihara, *Future SUSHI*, 2022
Photo: Masashi Kuroha Courtesy of Mori Art Museum

Kotao Tomozawa

Born in 1999 in Bordeaux, France. Tomozawa paints oil paintings with a unique texture in which organic motifs of slime-like substances and dolls/humans are intertwined. She received numerous awards while still in school, and has been highly acclaimed in numerous solo and group exhibitions. Tomozawa has been active in a variety of fields, including underground culture, and has formed an experimental music unit with Naohiro Ukawa. She is scheduled to graduate from the Graduate School of Fine Arts, Tokyo University of the Arts in the spring of 2024.



11. Kotao Tomozawa, *slime CXXXV*, 2022

Exhibition of archival materials

This exhibition introduces the activities of pioneering art collectives that developed practices with a view “between creation and generation” over the course of approximately 100 years from the prewar period to the present, through a small exhibition of materials.

Venue | Exhibition Gallery 2F

Event

MOT Annual Crosstalk

A series of artist talks by participating artists will be held during the exhibition. We will also welcome experts from diverse fields such as VR, AI, artificial life, space humanities and social sciences, and quantum art, and ask them about the points of contact between art and these fields and their future prospects.

MOT Annual x VR Culture Forum Talks

Researchers in the field of virtual reality and artists participating in this exhibition will show and talk about the origin of their ideas, and introduce the ever-changing research and artistic expression in this field in an easily understandable manner through discussion.

Featuring: Akinori Goto (artist), Minami Arai (artist), Junichi Yamaoka (Senior Assistant Professor, Keio University Graduate School), Emi Kusano (artist), Hideyuki Ando (Professor, Osaka University of Arts), Tomoko Hashida (Professor, Waseda University), and curators of the museum

MOT Annual x Deviation Game

Named “Deviation Game” after “The Imitation Game” by Alan Turing, the father of computer science, this project explores the mutual evolution of AI and humans. Through this game that involves drawing a picture of a certain theme in a way that AI cannot understand but humans can, we will consider the history of technology and artistic expression, which have repeatedly imitated and deviated from each other.

Performances by Tomo Kihara + Playfool “Deviation Game” and others

Related Programs: MOT Annual extra

During the MOT Annual exhibition, we will introduce ongoing projects that are being developed on ever-changing platforms of artistic expression with the support of outside organizations. Various projects, related exhibitions, and events will be held, including an art award based on the theme of the metaverse.

Dates: December 9 (Sat) - March 3 (Sun), 2024 *The period differs from MOT Annual 2023.

Venue: Exhibition Gallery B2F, Foyer, etc. Admission free

Details of the projects to be introduced, including the following, will be posted on the website as they become available.

NIPPON TV IMAGINARIUM AWARD 2023

As part of the project introductions, an exhibition will be held to introduce the XR Award (award-winning works and jury works*), which was established to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the founding of Nippon Television.

(“Imaginarium” is the ideal state of visual media proposed by artist Katsuhiko Yamaguchi)

* Award Jury Exhibition: Emi Kusano

Born in 1990 in Tokyo, Japan, Emi Kusano’s creative work focuses on retro-futurism, youth culture, and the latest technology. She made her debut as a street photographer in Harajuku when she was in high school, and exhibited at Museum at FIT and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Kusano focuses on AI art and has exhibited worldwide, including auction house Christie’s, Bright Moments, and Unit London.



©Emi Kusano

FUTURE LIFE FACTORY, Design Division, Panasonic Corporation “KOTOBATABI”

Experience an augmented reality (AR) interactive tool where everyone’s words float in a cloud, triggering accidental discoveries.

Information

Exhibition Period	Saturday, 2 December 2023 - Sunday, 3 March 2024
Closed	Mondays (except 8 Jan, 12 Feb) and 28-31 Dec, 1 and 9 Jan, 13 Feb
Opening Hours	10 AM – 6 PM (Tickets available until 30 minutes before closing.)
Admission	Adults – 1,300 Yen / University & College Students, Over 65 – 900 Yen / High-school & Junior High-school Students – 500 Yen / Elementary School Students & Younger – free
Venue	Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Exhibition Gallery 3F, and others
Organized by	Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo operated by Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture
Co-organized by	Computer Graphic Arts Society (CG-ARTS)
Granted by	Japan Arts Fund
Cooperated by	NIPPON TV, FUTURE LIFE FACTORY, Design Division, Panasonic Corporation and more
Curated by	Tomoe Moriyama (Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo)
Curators in charge	Kiyoe Shimbata, Yoshitaro Inami (Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo)



Concurrent Exhibitions

<i>Yasuko Toyoshima: Origination Method</i>	Exhibition Gallery 1F (9 December, 2023 – 10 March, 2024)
<i>MOT Collection</i>	Collection Gallery (2 December, 2023 – 10 March, 2024)

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